

CROSS COUNTRY

# Thompson Sets Sectional Mark

By Kevin E. Boone  
Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

Sioux Passage Park looked like a MASH outpost Saturday.

Athletes were strewn about the finish line either trying to catch their breath or recover from collapses induced by gut-wrenching performances during a hard-fought boys and girls Class 4A sectional meet.

There were four casualties that necessitated ambulatory care. Parkway West junior Stacy Wehking and Parkway North freshman Ryan Unterreiner appeared to be the most serious casualties, as both crumpled to the ground while making entrances into the finish chute.

For Unterreiner, one of the area's most promising underclassman runners — he finished fourth in districts last week — it was the end of a long road.

Parkway North didn't qualify for the state meet, scheduled for Saturday in Jefferson City. Unterreiner, hoping to earn a berth as one of 25 individual qualifiers, was passed while still on the ground. He wound up finishing 44th.

Wehking, whose condition was thought to be brought on by an asthma problem, qualified when Parkway West's girls won the girls sectional title with 36 points.

Hazelwood Central, behind a record-setting performance by defending Class 4A champion — and high school All-American — Megan Thompson was second with 48 points, followed by Parkway South (48) and Hazelwood East (116). East nudged out Kirkwood, which finished a gallant fifth with 120 points.

Thompson was superb, finishing in 18 minutes 5 seconds. She broke the course and sectional records of 18 minutes 22 seconds set by ex-Francis Howell standout Sue Bliss in 1987. Thompson's time was 18:05.

"It feels great!" Thompson exclaimed. "I wasn't focused on it [record], but when I heard that my time at the one-mile mark was 5:42, I just said 'yes!'"

"I think," she said, "I might try to break the state record. I think I might make it my goal."

Parkway West achieved its goal, also capturing the boys meet. The Longhorns posted 39 points, followed by McCluer North (60), St. Louis U. High (101) and Parkway South (107). The Patriots scattered their top five runners between the ninth and 26th places to sneak past Kirkwood for the final state berth. Kirkwood was fifth with 107 points.

"I don't think anyone expected a top-four finish," Parkway South coach Jim Schmuck said.

Kirkwood had beaten Parkway South 62-87 at the District 5 meet at Jefferson Barracks on Oct. 21.

"We wanted to put pressure on ourselves," Schmuck said. "Pressure is a funny thing. Either you rise to the occasion or you fail. I told our guys if they fail, we'd go home and wouldn't worry about it, but if they wanted to go to state, they had to be businessmen, go out and do their job."

Greg Levine was the lead runner for Parkway South, covering the difficult 3.1-mile course in 17:22 for a ninth-place finish.

SLUH, led by Mickey Luna's second-place performance, qualified a team to the state meet for the first time in a couple of decades.

"This is a landmark for our program," coach Jim Linhares said. Luna's time was 16:48.

Parkway West's Ron Cross, who had been nursing a sprained ankle, wasn't deterred in the boys race. He passed Luna with about 400 meters remaining and held on, winning the boys race in a time of 16:40. McCluer North's  
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Ted Dargan/Post-Dispatch  
Parkway West's Ron Cross wins the boys Class 4A sectional cross country meet at Sioux Passage Park.