

Harrierbills strive for strength, in numbers

Stephen Kuehner
Reporter

So you just run?" It is the question posed to all cross country athletes when they explain their sport to a non-runner.

"There's a lot more to it," the runner says. "The opening sprint, the finishing kick, popping up hills, and making a move at the two-mile mark to pick up four more places." Most walk away from this exchange still thinking of cross country as merely running. Perhaps legendary distance runner Steve Prefontaine came closest to expressing the difference when he stated, "I don't just go out there and run. I like to give people watching something exciting." This afternoon, twenty-one members of the Saint Louis U. High community will attempt that very feat.

As they step up to the line, hearts thumping in anticipation of the starting gun's report, these athletes will also prepare to dazzle the spectators with their performances.

"We're definitely looking to work more as more of a team," says junior Austin Cookson. "The last few years, we've been

more individual. We want to stick together as best we can to score our best as a team, not just individually."

A pack of teammates crossing the finish line together is a rare sight in high school cross country, but the SLUH team has made this objective their very aim. The team website even declares 2007 "The year of the pack!"

The junior varsity runners have set their sights no lower. Team captain Stephen Schumacher declared "a pack at the front" as the goal of the JV team.

But such an ambitious goal is not easily attained. A runner must put in hundreds of miles in order to finish in the front of a junior varsity race, and even more to accomplish the same at the varsity level.

And the U. High team has done just that.

After training all summer (some runners totaling over 500 miles), team practices began in early August. Despite the searing heat and excessive humidity, the team never cut the distance or eased the pace of a workout, finding relief only in the promise of "Weh-

ner-ade" awaiting them upon their return to SLUH.

Earlier this week, one practice prompted junior Matt Kliethermes to claim, "Today was an easy day. It was only 98 degrees and I only had to go seven miles."

With Saturday's predicted high of only 87 degrees, the team appears to be in place to make a strong showing at the First Capital Invitational. Seniors Mike McCafferty, Chris Murphy, and Dan Warner, juniors Austin Cookson and David Kuciejczyk-Kernan, and sophomores Bill Gabler and Ben Ford will open up SLUH's varsity season at 4:30 p.m. at McNair Park in St. Charles. Another 14 runners will begin the junior varsity season one hour later.

And they will not just run. They will give the crowd something exciting to watch.

PN Quip Of the Week:

*"I not only teach The Odyssey—
I drive it."*

~Mr. Kovarik~

Swimmers swelter in practice, shine at meet

Tim Dale
Reporter

Being a swimmer at St. Louis U. High means that you come to expect and even love the odd mishaps and malfunctions of Forest Park Community College. This year, the team was not let down. As the swim team walked into Fopo for the first time in early August, they immediately noticed something was a little off.

The air conditioner had broken in Forest Park Community College, making dry-land practice a sweaty mess.

"It's really hot in here," said junior Michael O'Neill. "It's 110 degrees outside for the football players, but it's 120 degrees in here for us to swim."

However, there are a couple of plusses this year at Fopo. There will be new locker rooms after construction is over, and the pool actually had water in it for the first day of practice.

The Speedobills were put into long, hard practices right away to develop underclassman talent and help compensate for the seniors lost last year. Jake Roeckle and Jim

Heafner helped lead last year with fast times and well-rounded abilities, so the Swimbills will look all season to the new senior class and the loaded junior class for new talent.

The Jr. Bills had their first meet of the season Wednesday at Parkway South with Jackson and Parkway South. SLUH outnumbered the other two teams with nearly 70 swimmers and divers on the team. Though the other two teams were relatively small, they were also packed with talent. Every finish was close, whether for first place or fifth.

A couple of races ended in state qualification times for SLUH. The medley relay team of juniors Trent Going, Pat Nugent, Will Derdeyn, and co-captain Tim Dale finished first with a state time of 1:45.32. Derdeyn also qualified for state in the 200-yard individual medley with a time of 2:06.33.

Going barely missed state with a strong swim in the 100 backstroke, and co-captain Mike Sizemore swam a beastly 100 freestyle, which came down to the last couple of feet where he was barely touched out.

Diving was solid as usual. Junior Mick

Dell'Orco was wowing the crowd with his mid-air acrobatics, and had a solid set until the very last dive. Junior Ryan Berger also blew the spectators minds with his tight twists and fast flips. Sophomore Collin McCabe also contributed with his mid-air contortions.

Commented head coach Fritz Long, "The first meet went great. We came out with a win, and we got to have a lot of exhibition races to get all the guys swimming. There were a few surprises which, for me, were a lot of fun to watch, but more importantly, I really liked watching the team come together. Everyone was cheering along the side of the pool; we definitely made the most noise on the pool deck. I'm really excited for the rest of this season because this team has some spirit."

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"The United States is a land of free speech. Nowhere is speech freer—not even here where we sedulously cultivate it even in its most repulsive form."

~Winston Churchill~