

CAPTAINS' LETTERS

I believe that we have a state championship caliber team, but looking at the team now the next cross country season is filled with question marks. We are going into the year returning no scorers from our state team. By looking at the numbers we should be one of the most struggling teams next year. This is why you can not just look at the numbers. You look at the desire, the heart and the determination. We have these in ample supply and now is the time to show them.

So now we have a mission to train harder than this team has ever seen. The summer is our time to turn everything around. If we want to stand on that podium and get the state championship medals from the Jeff city cheerleaders we have to work now. It is gut check time. We need to sweat the details. During this summer we must get faster and stronger. Cal, lifting weights, and getting striders are huge this year. Every thing is important from getting two more pushups to set a new max to even running 700 miles. We have a dream to be the best let's run it down.

"Every morning in Africa a gazelle wakes up. It knows it must move faster than the lion or it will not survive. Every morning a lion wakes up and it knows it must move faster than the slowest gazelle or it will starve. It doesn't matter if you are the lion or the gazelle, when the sun comes up, you better be moving." - Maurice Greene (attributed to Roger Bannister shortly after running the first sub-4 mile)

Dan Flanagan

This summer is our season. We know that there are four great teams in Missouri this year: West Plains, Liberty, St. Joe's Central, and Blue Springs. We just won't be able to compete without a great summer. Right now we have two all-staters. That won't do it. If we want a shot at a trophy we need at least one more. We will get that third all-stater. I know I want it. So do Charlie and Arb. You never know what Danny and Ben are going to do. We look like crap on paper right now. We only have two state runners returning, neither of whom scored. We are going to surprise the hell out of people this year. Nobody, including us, knows exactly what we are going to have. We have ten or eleven guys who are looking to be on varsity. That will only make us better. It's going to be fun to see what happens.

I have a couple of thoughts about summer training. First, we have to run on grass! Running 700 miles on pavement is not going to work. You're just asking for an injury. Second, we must run good mileage. Running 700 miles at 7:30 pace won't cut it. We need to have guys that can go 6:30's for twelve miles. Third, I think that fatigue is going to be very present this summer. On the sheet you don't have any rest days for the top guys. I don't know if I can handle that. Physically and mentally it may be too much. I'd like to talk with you about it.

This will be a summer unlike any other.

From Andrew Linhares:

Guys, this summer is an opportunity that will result in one of two possibilities. Our team, right now, has the talent and the depth to win state. If everyone trained to their best possible potential and made every correct choice, we could have the best SLUH cross country program ever. Better than last year with Peter and Kevin and Drew, better than the O'Brien-Parr-Leinaur season, and better than the state champion Snodgrass-Tower-O'Brien-Westlund team. We definitely have the potential. But, most likely we will have a pretty decent summer where we train hard, but where we really don't make any huge steps up. We'd probably end up with an outside chance at top three in the state. This is the way summers have been going for the past couple years. I don't think this is where we want to be. We are definitely not there now, but we can get there with daily intensity and focus this summer.

I'd like to challenge everyone to run this summer like it's the state race, because in a way it is. It's true, all our success next season does not depend on the kind of summer I am talking about. Pretty much no matter what we do this summer, we will compete to lead the area all season. But when you start talking about the State meet, I believe our success depends almost directly on the degree to which we take a step up this summer. The state is at such a high level that we have to train without our eye on the area and instead with our eye on early november. The choice is ours. Do we want to just have a fun summer and come into next season in decent shape? That's fine if you do. But I know that I want more than that, and I know some other people on this team want more than that. I want to challenge anyone else who thinks they want it to grab hold and follow this season out to what it can be if we have the best summer of our lives.

From Chris Arb:

I am someone who hasn't done a great deal of training in the past off-seasons and I know that I have paid for that. As a team, summer training is extremely important for our success. Everyone needs to strive to hit the goals coach has laid out for us, and then we will be primed for a great season. Hopefully we will have the success that we achieved last year on all levels.

I am really excited to be one of your team captains for this year. I am going to lead by example, while keeping the fun involved. This should be one of the best seasons for XC.