

Jr. Bills reload for long run

Four senior captains have SLUH looking for strong finish

By Joe Harris
Staff writer

Most cross country teams would consider it a rebuilding year after losing its top five runners, including a 16th place finisher, but not St. Louis University High.

CROSS COUNTRY "Last year at (the state meet) I was looking at this year and I really wondered what would happen this year," said SLUH coach Jim Linhares. "But SLUH put together a great track season with the juniors and sophomores and a great summer."

SLUH's cupboard certainly isn't bare with four senior captains leading the way in John Oliver, Dan Flanagan, Chris Arb and Andrew Linhares.

Oliver's biggest question is not with his running, but with his health.

"Oliver has dealt with injuries in all of his years except his freshman season," Linhares said. "This year he's healthy and ready to go."

Flanagan was on SLUH's sectional team last season so he has big race experience.

"He was our No. 8 guy last year, so we are looking for big things out of him," Linhares said.

Arb was poised to make an impact last season before his season was cut short.

"Chris had a prolonged illness that knocked out the middle of the season for him," Linhares said. "He was able to come back for state, but wasn't 100 percent."

Andrew Linhares is the coach's son and was a part of SLUH's all-state 4x800-relay squad during the track season.

"He was up on varsity until he got a stress fracture," Jim Linhares said. "He rehabbed it, came back at the end of last season, and was really competitive with some of our top guys last

year."
Juniors Alex Muntges and Charlie Samson figure to be a part of SLUH's top seven. Samson was also a part of SLUH's all-state 4x800 relay.

Muntges "is extraordinarily fit," Linhares said. "He's probably the fittest guy on our team."

"I think (Samson) really made progress during the track season. He did a lot of work over the winter on his technique."

Linhares said SLUH is deep and that four or five other runners might have a crack at the top seven.

"It is a shame that some of our runners won't be a part of (the top seven)," Linhares said. "But they'll be behind their teammates."

SLUH's team goal is not based on top finishes.

"My goal as a coach is to see these guys become the best runners they can be and we'll take whatever results we can get," Linhares said.

Linhares enters his 21st season at SLUH, but he said it never gets old.

"There are new things every year; we are always learning," Linhares said.