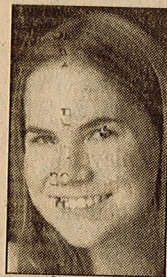


ALL-METRO GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY FIRST TEAM

Katy Bundy
Marquette senior



Finished third in Missouri Class 4 (19:26); first at Jefferson Barracks District and Sectional, Parkway Central Invitational, Hancock Invitational, Marshall County (Ky.) Invitational and McCluer North Invitational; Last year won the Class 4A state title; Only second was at First Capital Invitational, where she ran to pace, not place. College choices: Kansas, Arkansas, Missouri and Colorado.

Aisha Franklin
East St. Louis senior



She set the school record for three miles, 17:59, at state, finishing 25th in Class AA; sixth at the Ladd Invitational; third at St. Clair County meet; second at Southwestern Conference meet, first at the Edwardsville Regional; sixth at the Centralia Sectional.

Nichole McKinney
Marquette junior



McKinney placed 31st at the state meet; second at the Jefferson Barracks District (19:54); second at Parkway Central Invitational, Marshall County Invitational, Suburban West Conference championships; third at the Jefferson Barracks Sectional.

Jennifer Reekie

BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR

Pifer put together a season of victory after victory

BY KEVIN E. BOONE
Of the Post-Dispatch

If he could simulate himself in a game of Play Station animation, Edwardsville High runner Stephen Pifer might have to take his talent to another level to beat some of the top high school cross country runners in the history of the sport.

For instance, how would he do against Lebanon's Craig Virgin, a former world champion and Olympic runner who still holds the Illinois high school record of 13 minutes 50 seconds set three decades ago?

"It would take a lot of guts to match strides with Craig Virgin," Pifer said.

Virgin attends the state meet every year and has served as a commentator at the event.

"You can't be afraid to go out hard and be able to keep pushing," Pifer said. "I'd need a lot of guts. Some of the advice Craig gives you is hard to take because it's stuff that only he could do."

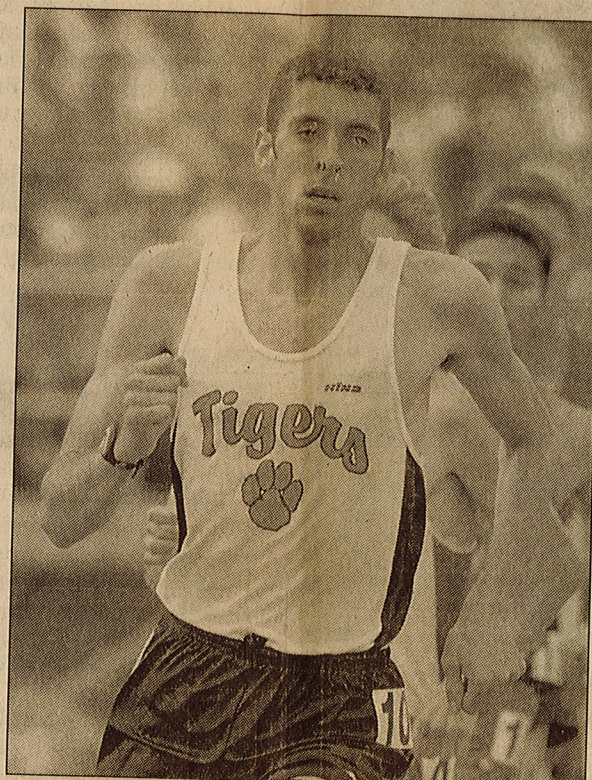
"He's talking about going out the first lap in 62 seconds; that's on a 4:08 pace for the first mile. He could do things that I'm trying to get to the point of doing."

Even in humility, Pifer shows a competitive edge, a style that sets him apart from other runners as the Post-Dispatch boys high school cross country runner of the year.

After finishing third in the Illinois Class AA meet as a junior, Pifer dominated as a senior, winning every race but one. His capped his season with a Class AA championship.

Only Adam Perkins of Liberty out-distanced him, at the Hancock Invitational. And last week Pifer avenged that defeat by out-pacing Perkins at the Footlocker Regional Cross Country Championships in Parkside, Wis. Pifer placed seventh, covering the grueling 5K in 15:42 to qualify for the National Championships later this month in San Diego. Perkins was 34th.

How good was Pifer this season? While every course is different, Pifer put together an impressive string of victories: the Granite City



MARK COWAN

Edwardsville's Stephen Pifer capped his season with an Illinois Class AA title.

Invitational (14:56), the Tiger Fall Classic (15:45), the Peoria Woodruff Invitational (14:41), the Edwardsville Invitational (15:44), the Peoria Invitational (14:20), the Madison County meet (15:22), the Southwestern Conference championships (14:39), the Edwardsville Regional (15:21), the Lebanon Sectional (14:44) and the state meet (14:33).

Pifer became the first runner from the Metro East to win a state championship in 14 years, the first to capture the state crown in the large-schools division.

"It was like a ripple effect when you throw a rock in the water," Pifer said. "The disappointment (of finishing third at state) a year ago kept me motivated through the winter. I won the mile in state track in the spring, and trained more in the summer than I ever did. I

just ran a lot of miles."

Running has always been Pifer's passion. He was a 4:55 miler in junior high school. Tall and rangy, he tried other sports, including basketball as a freshman and sophomore. But he soon gave up the baseline for the starting line, finishing 81st at the state meet as a freshman, 22nd as a sophomore, third as a junior and first this year.

His best cross country time this year was at the Peoria Invitational, where he posted a 14:20 on the same course at Detweiler Park where he won state. Pifer believes he could have gone as fast as 14:05.

"Wishing doesn't get you there and Stephen did more than wish," Edwardsville cross country coach Jim Price said.

"He did an enormous amount of work, including training in Colorado, and doing all the work over the summer, including a lot of strength and speed work."

Pifer became so enamored with Colorado that he recently signed a letter of intent with the Buffaloes, who finished fourth at the recent NCAA Championships.

"He's going to do fine at Colorado," Price said. "He's already run better (mile) times than his uncle, (assistant coach Tim Flamer) who was an All-American at Southern Illinois-Edwardsville. Colorado is a challenging program, but I believe he'll be on the starting varsity squad."

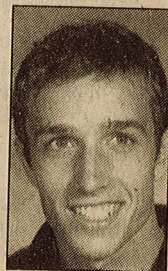
If nothing else, he could always measure himself against one of the all-time greats in a showdown of Play Station.

"It sounds like Craig was an impressive runner, a phenomenal runner," Pifer said. "But everyone has their own style. I have that get-out-and-get-after-it style. Maybe he liked to get out there faster and close it down. It takes a lot of work and dedication. You strive to be the best, and once you're in that position, you can hold your head high. I'm a state champ and you can't ask for too much more than that at the high school level."

Reporter Kevin Boone
E-mail: kboone@post-dispatch.com
Phone: 314-340-8194

ALL-METRO BOYS CROSS COUNTRY FIRST TEAM

Billy Bell
Parkway Central junior



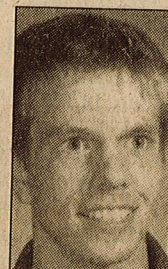
Bell placed 12th in Missouri Class 4, the highest place among area runners. He won the Parkway Central Invitational (16:33), the Fox Invitational (16:18), the Suburban West (16:36); placed second at the Jefferson Barrack District (16:09) and third at the Sioux Passage Sectional (16:41).

Justin Kunz
Lebanon senior



Finished fifth in Illinois Class A in 15:06; was third at the Benton Sectional; won the Lebanon Regional, Cahokia Conference and St. Clair County meets; second at the Wesclin and Tuscola Invitationals; sixth at the Peoria Invitational and fifth at the Tiger Fall Classic. ... was seconds better than his twin, Jeremy.

John Leicht
Parkway South soph.



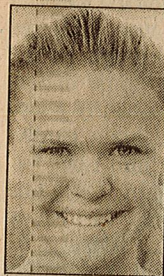
Finished 18th at the Missouri Class 4 meet (16:57); first at the Suburban South Conference meet (16:59); fourth at the Jefferson Barracks District (17:08); eighth at the Jefferson Barracks Sectional (17:03); first at the Suburban South Conference meet.

Kevin McNab



second Hazelwood East Invitational; fourth Hancock Invitational; fourth at the First Capital Invitational. She finished eighth last year at state and 17th as a freshman.

Taylor Scott Lafayette freshman



She won the First Capitol Invitational; second Northwest Invitational; third Parkway Central Invitational; fifth Hancock Invitational; first Parkway West Invitational; fourth in the Metro Invitational; fourth in the Suburban West Conference; third at Jefferson Barracks District; fourth at Jefferson Barracks Sectional; 23rd in Missouri Class 4.

Kristy Sullivan Fox senior



Sullivan finished first at the Fox Invitational (19:15); was second at the Jackson (Mo.) District (19:29); eighth at Jefferson Barracks Sectional; 14th in Missouri Class 4, (20:08); 42nd at state last year.

Jessie Violand Lafayette senior



She finished 20th in Missouri Class 4 (20:18); first in St. Louis Metro Invitational (19:28), second Parkway West Invitational (19:22); 13th Hancock Invitational (20:29); third Suburban West (19:57); eighth Jefferson Barracks District (20:16); fifth Jefferson Barracks Sectional (19:48); finished 16th in state last year.

10th at state (20:04), first at Stephen's Lake Park District (Columbia, Mo., 19:27); third at Columbia Bethel Park Sectional (18:53); first in the Gateway Athletic Conference;

Bundy maintained even keel

BY KEVIN E. BOONE
Of the Post-Dispatch

Since Katy Bundy rarely shows emotion during a cross country meet, it's almost impossible to know when she is charged up. "Katy's competitive fire is much more controlled and you would never know that it's there," Marquette High cross country coach Jim Cary said of his star runner. "You never hear her saying, 'I have to get pumped for this race.'"

OK, so she never punches the air with her fists or shouts to the heavens when crossing the finish line. Still, in a world filled with bravado, Bundy searches deep inside and emerges with a fierce will to win.

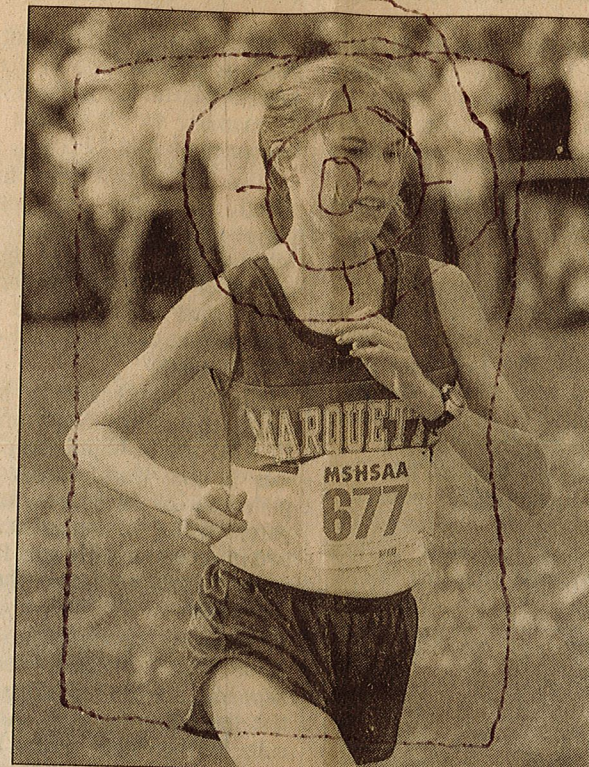
That was evident at the Missouri high school cross country championships when she broke down with emotion after finishing third in 19 minutes 26 seconds in Class 4.

Plagued by flu all the way up to race time, Bundy believed that the state championship she had won the previous year was in her grasp again. It's that competitiveness that makes Bundy a standout; it's what makes her the Post-Dispatch girls high school cross country runner of the year.

"I just wanted to come out and try," Bundy said after her final race.

Throughout the season, Bundy ran at the front of the pack, winning the Hancock Invitational, the McCluer North Invitational, the Marshall County (Ky.) Invitational, the Parkway Central Invitational, the Suburban West Conference meet and the Jefferson Barracks district and sectional meets. At Marshall County, she posted her fastest time of the season, 18:54, in lifting Marquette past Nashville Harpeth Hall, the two-time defending Tennessee champion.

"I had a good season, and my family sup-



DON ADAMS JR.

Marquette's Katy Bundy "runs with a very quiet, poised confidence," says her coach Jim Cary.

ported me even though I didn't run as well as I'd have liked at state," Bundy said.

Cary has had other standouts, including former all-state runners Sunny Gilbert and Kristin Hoogheem. He keeps coming back to the words quiet, confident and poised when describing Bundy.

"She is much quieter than Hoogheem and she has every bit the competitive fire that Sunny and those kids had," Cary said. "I've never seen a kid who was so much of a competitor that she didn't want to let others get ahead of her, but yet had the poise to let peo-

ple pass her when she needed to pace her teammates. It took me a long time to realize how competitive she really is. This kid has something special; she has that desire."

She also has talent. Bundy began running late, as a freshman when she came out for track. She finally broke 7 minutes for the mile in her final junior varsity meet of the year.

Yet there was something there, Cary said.

"She was sort of a self-made success, an inspiration to a lot of kids," he said.

Bundy had become Marquette's lead runner by her junior year, and won the state championship, the school's first in cross country, in 18:58.

She dominated as a senior, winning every race except the state meet and the First Capital Invitational, where she was trying to pace and not place. She took second.

Her unselfish willingness to lead her teammates distinguishes Bundy.

"Other kids see where Katy Bundy came from and where she has been and how your work ethic can take you a long way," Cary said. "They realize good things happen to good people who work hard, and she works hard and she's a good person and she does all the right things."

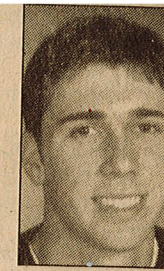
Bundy also is accomplished in the classroom, carrying a 4.3 grade-point average, including college preparatory courses.

"She'll have a semester of college credits behind her when she graduates," Cary said.

Bundy is being heavily recruited by the likes of Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas and Missouri.

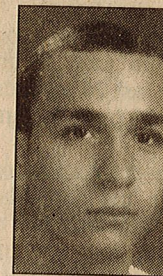
"I want to go to a school where I'm a fit for the team and I can be comfortable running with my teammates," she said.

Reporter Kevin Boone
E-mail: kboone@post-dispatch.com
Phone: 314-340-8194



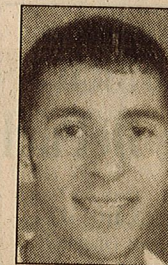
Finished 14th at the state meet (16:53; Missouri Class 4); won the Wentzville Invitational and GAC meets; was sixth at the Washington District and fifth at the Columbia

Tony Payton Eureka senior



Payton won the Northwest Invitational and Jefferson Barracks Sectional (16:32), was second in the Suburban South Conference (16:54) and the Jefferson Barracks District (16:44) and 15th at the state meet (Missouri Class 4) in 16:55. Last year, he finished 13th at state in Class 3A.

Stephen Pifer Edwardsville senior



Won every meet except the Hancock Invitational, where he was second to two-time Missouri Class 4 champion Adam Perkins (Liberty, Mo.). Opened with a victory at the Tiger Kickoff meet; then the Granite City Invitational (14:56); Tiger Fall Classic (15:45); Peoria Woodruff Invitational (14:41); Edwardsville Invitational (15:44); Peoria Invitational (14:20); Madison County meet (15:22); Southwestern Conference (14:39); Edwardsville Regional (15:21); Lebanon Sectional (14:44); and Illinois Class AA meet (14:33). Finished third at state as a junior.

Peter Schaefer SLUH senior



(16:34) and 16th in Missouri Class 4

Won the Metro Catholic Conference meet (16:36); ninth at the Hancock Invitational (16:49); first at the Parkway Central District (16:02); first at the Sioux Passage Sectional

Boys second team

Name, year, school	Quick stat
Mark Buha, junior, Chaminade	first at the Ladue Invitational; 23rd at state
Jeremy Kunz, senior, Lebanon	first at Wesclin Invitational; ninth at state
Garett Jeffries, sophomore, Marquette	22nd in Missouri Class 4
Corey Swinney, junior, St. Charles West	fifth in Missouri Class 3
Romaine Walls, senior, Hazelwood Central	Finished 24th in Class 4
Chris Stearns, junior, Fort Zumwalt South	26th in Class 4, one place from All-State
Dan Hedgecock, sophomore, Ladue	Finished 8th in Missouri Class 3

Boys honorable mention

Drew Noblot, sr., SLUH; George Capps, sr., Priory; Alex Johnson, sr., Kirkwood; Shawn Shaffer, soph., Herculaneum; Kevin John, sr., Parkway South; Kevin Crean, sr., SLUH; Kyle Gonneman, sr., SLUH; Kevin John, sr., Parkway South; Tim Levine, sr., Parkway South; Brett Murry, sr., Parkway West; Max Hacker, fr., Hazelwood West; Carl Specking, jr., Fort Zumwalt South; Dan Miner, sr., Francis Howell Central; Scott Helgeson, sr., DeSmet; Jason Hirtz, sr., Northwest

Girls second team

Name, year, school	Quick stat
Beth Shearman, senior, Parkway South	All-State, 24th, Missouri Class 4
Emily Baker, freshman, Lafayette	Finished one place out of All-State at 26th.
Lauren Hoffman, junior, Oakville	Finished 27th in Missouri Class 4
Shannon Leinert, sophomore, Eureka	Finished 32nd in Class 4; last year won 3A
Amber Warren, soph., Lutheran St. Charles	fourth in Missouri Class 2.
Jamie Kuhl, sophomore, Breese Mater Dei	first at Lebanon Regional.
Kasey Kimball, junior, Eureka	fourth at Jefferson Barracks District
Melissa McDonnell, junior, St. Charles West	13th in Missouri Class 3

Girls honorable mention

Molly Polette, jr., Lafayette; Mallori Sanford, soph., Lutheran St. Charles; Laura Ruf, sr., McCluer North; Lauren Shores, jr., Parkway South; Clare Heaney, sr., St. Joseph's Academy; Meagan Robertson, sr., Northwest