

▼ STATE CROSS COUNTRY

# Jr. Bills get back on state podium

BY JASON RECKAMP  
STAFF WRITER

It seems to happen every year.

Like leaves changing colors or the temperature dropping, the St. Louis U. High and Ft. Zumwalt South cross country teams are in the thick of things come early November.

Since 2000, SLUH has finished in the top 10 every season at state. South finished in the top 10 from '05 to '02, but finished No. 13 in '01 and No. 15 in '00.

But this season, SLUH just wanted to keep its head above water at Saturday's Class 4 state meet in Jefferson City.

After all the squad was competing against the famed Bulldogs, the reigning state champion that had returned four seniors while the Jr. Billikens lost four seniors from their No. 4 finish last fall.

"Ft. Zumwalt South was really head and shoulders above everybody else," said SLUH coach Jim Linhares. "And I think everybody kind of knew that going in. They have a great team. It was pretty much Zumwalt against everybody else."

"We were just looking to get back on the podium."

Behind three personal best times, SLUH did in fact get back on podium. The Jr. Bills finished second with 114 points, behind South's 65, Lebanon (120), CBC (146), Rock Bridge (165), Lee's Summit North (166), Jefferson City (181), Oak Park (208), Blue Springs (222) and Marquette (235) rounded out the top 10.

DeSmet (276) finished 12th, ahead of Chaminade (306) and Lindbergh (307).

It was SLUH's first No. 2 finish at state. The squad won state in 1999 and 1961.

Senior Matt Lawder finished fifth, with a personal best time of 15:59.93. He was 21.81 seconds behind top finisher Kyle Rood of Zumwalt South. South City resident Dan Quigley (CBC) was sec-

## SLUH

▼ CONTINUED FROM PAGE D1

ond, finishing in 15:44.52.

"Just understanding how fast that time was, it would have won state most years," Linhares said. "That's a record on most courses."

In fact, since 2000 only three runners had broken the 16-minute plateau at the Oak Hill Golf Center. The quickest time was 15:43.19 in 2000, shattered by Rood on Saturday.

Sophomore John Clohisy also turned in a personal best, finishing 13th in 16:24.90.

Junior Chris Murphy, who ran as SLUH's No. 3 for the first time all season due to injuries, finished 50th with a personal best time of 17:02.80.

Rounding out the SLUH finishers were junior Mike McCafferty finishing 54th (17:05.82), senior Dan Viox finishing 84th (17:25.90) and freshman Caleb Ford was 98th (17:33.55).

"We couldn't have asked for more from our guys," Linhares said. "They all contributed all year and we got stronger towards the end of the year. As a coach, that's all you can ask for."



RICK GRAEFE PHOTO  
SLUH's Matt Lawder turned in a school record time during his run at the state meet. He helped the Junior Bills take second place.