

# St. Louis U. High runs off with Class 4 title

SLUH's 65 points is 10 better than Lee's Summit North

BY CRAIG MARTIN • Special to the Post-Dispatch

**JEFFERSON CITY** • St. Louis University High felt it had the best cross country team in the program's history last year despite a second-place finish. This year the Junior Bills validated that sentiment with a Missouri state Class 4 victory Saturday at Oak Hills Golf Course.

SLUH won its fourth cross country title with 65 points, bettering Lee's Summit North by 10 points. Rock Bridge was third with 125, and Parkway West captured fourth with 135.

"We've never had a state meet with a defining race with a low point total," said SLUH coach Jim Linhares, who was going to be recognized upon the team's return to St. Louis for his 25 years with the program. "We had three elite places and our fourth and fifth (runners) going to their last reserves to pass people at the end. This doesn't exist without last year's team."

SLUH senior Caleb Ford captured second place in 16:22, as he was not able to keep pace with Kickapoo's Danny Thater (16:12). Ford and teammate Tim Rackers (eighth, 16:41) were briefly in the lead before Thater took over halfway into the race.

"That was probably my favorite part of the race," Ford said. "When Tim and I both took the lead, it felt really good. I've run this race four times,

and I figured I'd let it go and go with what felt right at the time."

Tim McLaughlin started picking up places over the final mile of the race, and as the race turned up the large Firehouse Hill, he surged from the mid-20s to 10th place (16:47).

"I was doubting myself, but it's the state meet," McLaughlin said. "All these guys are tired, and I had people counting on me. I had to make it count."

Emmett Cookson and Tony Minnick completed the scoring in 30th and 42nd, respectively.

The St. Louis area was shut out of the girls' Class 4 team trophy presentation with Nerinx Hall providing the area's best finish in eighth place. The Markers' Colleen Quigley moved up into third place over the final hills and crossed the finish in 19:03.

"The third mile was just maintain, maintain, maintain and then go all-out," Quigley said.

Parkway Central's Emily Sisson defended her title with the second-fastest state meet time ever at 17:56 after leading nearly start to finish.

"It wasn't the plan originally, but no one else took the lead so I decided to," Sisson said. "I don't normally go for records, but it will be a confidence booster going into the postseason."