

# XC exceeds expectations at regionals

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Coming off a ninth place finish at state on Nov. 4, the top St. Louis U. High cross country runners traveled to Terre Haute, Ind. to race at the Nike Midwest Regional Meet (NXR) this past Friday. The Jr. Bills dominated, recording fast times on their way to first place as a team in the overall open race, with senior Tim Greiner securing third place individually and first place in his heat.

Although 31 SLUH racers went to NXR, by MSHSAA rule, the team went by Saint Louis XC

Club to not be associated with the SLUH cross country team. After getting to Indiana late at night on Friday, the team woke up the next morning to several inches of snow that covered the course. SLUH was the first to survey the course and its fresh coat of snow, taking note of how to take the course for the best times in preparation for the next day.

On race day, the team did its usual pre-race despite not technically being SLUH's team. The race started with barely any headwind, cool air, and a little sun. The perfect race conditions and the team's prep proved helpful as the runners took the race by storm led by senior Tim Griener, who put up his best performance of the year in his last high school race. Griener moved to the front pack about one kilometer into the race and after that, he kept taking places. With a surge at less than a mile left, he took the lead and brought home the win with a time of 16:06.7.

"I started off the race at about 28th, and I felt good. I felt in a good spot. And then throughout the first mile, I moved my way up, up until the top pack. And there's one guy way out front and I just spent the second mile with another guy eventually connecting up with them,"

said Greiner. “And then from 4K to the finish, I made a move, took the lead and didn't look back from that.”

Greiner's time was not only a personal record, but was also the sixth-fastest time ever achieved by a SLUH athlete on the prestigious course in Terre Haute, which regularly plays host to top college races.

After all the Open Race times were combined, Greiner's time resulted in third overall individually. Following Greiner were seniors Carter Lowe (16:39.4) and Nolan Meara (16:48.0), junior Anthony Zangara (16:51), and sophomore George Donahue (16:54) to round out the scoring five. These top five scores earned the SLUH runners of Saint Louis XC Club first place in the Overall Open Division of NXR.

“Our depth was highlighted very well. Of course, Tim had the big win, but we feel like it was a team victory,” said sophomore Alex Bendaña, who finished sixth on the team with a time of 17:02.

“We felt like it was a great day and remember previewing the course on Saturday, we were kind of worried that there wouldn't be that many fast times. But as we were walking the course before, we found out that the conditions are pretty prime for having a fast day and so we went out and did what we had to,” said sophomore Patrick Jones.

Just when the team thought the day couldn't get any better, the team received an email on their way back to St. Louis that left them ecstatic. After coaching SLUH for 18 successful seasons, head coach Joe Porter was inducted into the Missouri Track and Cross Country Coaches Association (MTCCCA) Hall of Fame. His induction will be covered in depth in the next edition of the Prep News.