

Cross Country sees mixed results at state meet, placing 9th; rallies for regionals and ALD 5k

By Lucas Rammacher and Brendan Jones, reporters

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The St. Louis U. High varsity cross country team competed in the state meet in Columbia, Mo. last Saturday, producing mixed results en route to a 9th place finish. Coming off a successful regular season and a 2nd place in districts, the Jr. Bills looked to place high in a highly competitive state meet.

Hoping for another team trophy, SLUH sent the senior runners that didn't compete to be the hype squad, waving the giant purple SLUH flag against the raging wind and covering themselves with paint.

Starting the race with a strong head wind, the runners still got out fast and in a pack. At one kilometer, one-fifth of the the way through the race, SLUH had a three second gap in their scorers. By the 2K mark, they were more strung out with a 13-second gap that was increasing, but the top four were still in position to place, starting with senior captain Tim Greiner, who moved up nine spots to 28th to fight for All-State. Individually, Griener was SLUH's first finisher, leading with a time of 16:18.2 for 28th place. Griener was the fifth-fastest runner from St. Louis in the race, and he improved nearly 30 places from his State performance the year prior when he was SLUH's 6-man.

The next scorer was junior Anthony Zangara who had his best race yet, running a 2-second PR of 16:33 good for 47th place. Rounding out the team's scores were senior Carter Lowe (16:44.2; 58th), junior Charlie Murray (16:53.7; 66th), and freshman Jaden Elgin (17:04.4; 84th). Elgin became the highest-placing freshman finisher at State in SLUH's program history, surpassing Caleb Ford's 2006 finish. Then to finish

out were seniors Nolan Meara (17:10.0; 89th) and Will Riggan (17:59.6; 125th).

In the disappointing finish, SLUH finished ninth overall out of 16 teams in the large school classification of the MSHSAA Cross Country Championships, but they were the highest placing St. Louis-area team in Class 5. The team had a score of 221 and a 1 through 5 finishing spread of 46 seconds. This was the first year since 2003 that the SLUH State team has neither received a team trophy or individual All-State medalist.

“There are still plenty of bright spots,” said head coach Joe Porter. “First off, just getting to that meet is very difficult, and we’ve qualified for 30 consecutive years, and on top of that we were still the top St. Louis school. Tim Greiner ran great, right outside the top 25 and Anthony Zangara has really come on strong for the second half of the season and showcased that being our two guy. All in all, there are plenty of things that we did well on Friday even if things didn’t go exactly our way.”

This Sunday, the top runners take on one last trip to Terre Haute, Ind. for the Nike-sponsored Regional meet. Then on the following Saturday, senior Nicholas Purschke, who was born with the genetic condition ALD, and his family will host a nonprofit 5K race to donate all funds to places like the ALD Research Fund at the University of Minnesota, a world leader in ALD treatment and research. (To sign up, donate, or just learn more about the disease, please visit www.knockoutald.com).

Even just a little SLUH student body presence will go a long way for the organization.

“The run for ALD is in its sixth year, and has been very successful in raising money for research to find a cure for this horrible disease,” said Purschke. “I’d love it if we could get a strong showing of SLUH guys to come support this cause on Nov. 19.”