

Letter to the Editors: Walking to School

May 16 2025

Athlete of the Week: Ivan Kennedy

May 16 2025

Man at the Masthead: Missey's humble service at Prep News spans quarter century

May 16 2025



Search

SPORTS

Back on the podium: SLUH XC captures 3rd place finish at State

Charlie Gray, Tristan Kujawa, Staff, reporter Nov 10 2023

The top 14 runners from the SLUH XC program traveled to Columbia, Missouri last Friday for the Class 5 High School Cross Country State Championship. The team arrived at the course at 3:00 p.m. to preview and prepare for the race on Saturday at 1:30 p.m., not a typical time for a race. On Saturday at 11:00 a.m., the team headed to the course, to get warmed up and ready to race. The weather conditions on Saturday were perfect for running fast times.



English



The pack advances. Photo | Courtesy of SLUH XC

“We knew that the conditions were good and that the race was gonna run really fast,” said head coach Joe Porter. “Watching the Class Four times, we knew that the first kilometer might be pretty quick. We just needed to be confident in our own race and execute our own game plan, and I felt like we did a good job of that.”

Going into the race, the team had hopes of walking away with the overall first place team trophy. However, the competition this year was top notch, creating one of the deepest fields the state has seen. Once again, SLUH faced off against perennial powerhouses Rock Bridge and Rockhurst, creating strong competition.

As soon as the gun was shot, the pace was hot. The pack was led by sophomore Luke Sievers and senior Andrew Hauser out of Rock Bridge High School, with freshman phenomenon Jackson Miller close behind. The rest of the field was seconds behind Miller’s fast pace.

Miller came through the 3K split at 9:03, putting him on pace for a huge PR. However the 1-5 gap spread out to 24 seconds. Coming around the last turn to the finish line, Miller started to kick it into high gear. With a finishing time of 15:17.6, Miller had just set a new school record, and ran the fastest time by a

freshman in state history. Miller also finished sixth overall, becoming the second highest finishing freshman ever.

"The time of 15:17 is, according to our research, the fastest for a high school freshman to ever run in the state of Missouri for a 5K," said Porter. "And I know some people have complained about some of the courses not being fully 5K. But this course at Mizzou is definitely accurate and will be hosting NCAAs in two years, so for Jackson to run on a legit 5K course at such a very fast time and to finish. It's the highest freshman finish for a boy in the largest class since 1989. So a very impressive day for Jackson."

Following Miller, senior Charlie Murray made a great push in the last kilometer to put him at a finishing time of 15:39.8, good for 18th overall and All-State honors. Murray has had an impeccable season, and this was a perfect way to cap off his career.

"We were all excited to prove what we were capable of, we knew the work we had put in and that gave us confidence," said Murray. "We went out there and just fought it out. We found each other and competed. At the end of the day that's all you can ask for."

After Murray was junior Alex Bendana, who ran a time of 15:57.6 and finished in 36th place. Bendana's time was the fastest run by any junior at state in SLUH history.

Following Bendana was senior Noah Evers, who ran a scorching time of 15:59.2 and finished 38th overall. Evers had a 37 second PR, which led him to running one of the fastest times in program history.

After Evers was junior Gus Talleur, who had put everything he had into the race, stumbling across the finish line trying to earn the team the first place spot. Talleur finished with a time of 6:11.9 and an overall finish of 50th. Talleur saved the team from losing a large number of points, keeping them in the hunt for the victory.

SLUH's top five had an average 5K time of 15:49, crushing the previous record of 16:00 run in 2021.

After Talleur were junior George Donahue, who finished in 16:38.0, and senior Mason Scargall, who finished in 16:46.1.



Having all seven runners across the finish line, the scoreboard showed the final scores. Rock Bridge came away with the team victory with 91 points, Rockhurst earned second place with 99 points, and SLUH was in third place with 120 total points. This third place finish was an improvement over last year's ninth place, but the program has its eyes set on something greater.

"After crossing the finish line, I was feeling so many different emotions. I knew I had run fast and felt like I had given all my effort, but I remember walking down the hill back to the team tent ultimately feeling a sense of defeat," said Bendana. "When we got back to the team tent, coach Porter reminded us that it wasn't about how we ran on that day, but it was about the process leading up to it. That made me reflect on the community that I felt we had built over the course of the season, which is truly something amazing."

Overall, it was an incredible season for SLUH. The ability to bounce back after a not so good year and being able to trust one another is a great sign for the years to come. Having all top three teams return most of their runners, next year should be even faster, and even closer.

This weekend, the team will embark on a journey to Terre Haute, Indiana to compete in the Nike Cross Regionals. Last year the team won the open race division, after missing out on an opportunity to race in the championship division. With a great finish at the state meet this year, the top seven should be placed into the championship race, giving them a shot at qualifying for Nike Cross Nationals in December. This race also allows the team to have another chance at beating some of the programs they have lost to earlier.

"Yeah, it's exciting to take another crack at it. Rockbridge, Rockhurst, and O'Fallon who I know are coming," said Porter. "So it'll be exciting to race them again, as well as Plainfield North and Plainfield South out of Illinois. I'm just kind of seeing where we stack up in the region and I definitely feel like we can be a top five or six team in this region and historically one of the top regions in the country so it should be a good race for the guys."

With this marking the final cross country race for the Jr. Bills, they look to do what they have done all season: run boldly, run with confidence, and run together.



FEATURES

[Letter to the Editors: Walking to School](#)

May 16 2025

SPORTS

[Athlete of the Week: Ivan Kennedy](#)

May 16 2025

FEATURES

[Man at the Masthead: Missey's humble service at Prep News spans quarter century](#)

May 16 2025

FEATURES

[Palazzolo earns third Pulitzer Prize as Wall Street Journal reporter](#)

May 16 2025

[Load More](#)

Prep News – the weekly student-run newspaper of St. Louis U. High

Copyright ©2020 of St. Louis U. High's Prep News

No material may be reprinted without the permission of the editors and the moderator.



English