

Athlete of the Week: Connor Dunker

Nov 7 2025

Racquetball kicks off season, shows grit in tough loss to Kirkwood

Nov 7 2025

Hockey glides past Duchesne, captures gritty win vs. CBC to open season

Nov 7 2025

SPORTS

Cross Country cruises past District Meet, looks to MSHSAA Class 5 State

Owen Williams and Tristan Kujawa, Staff Nov 7 2025

Dominance. The St. Louis U. High Cross Country team put up a historic district race this past Saturday at the Class 5 District 1 meet in Cape Girardeau. Led by district champion junior Jackson Miller, the Jr. Bills won by a landslide, beating second place Parkway West by over 80 points.



The team in the lead through the first half of the race. | Preston Eash



English

The team was ready to go last Saturday on a dreary, wet morning after spending the night in Cape Girardeau. The course itself was not in the best condition by any means, with multiple colossal puddles and mud patches throughout the course alongside a technical back loop filled with rocky and steep hills. With Class 4 racing directly before Class 5, the course was even more muddy and torn up by the time the Jr. Bills got to the line.

Heading into the race, SLUH was the clear favorite on the team side. Individually, it was anyone's race with several strong athletes competing for the title of district champion.

"Knowing that we had the strong athletes there kind of set the tone," said head coach Joe Porter. "It allowed us to feel very relaxed and confident knowing that we would be able to display that fitness from our training block."

SLUH dominated the race from the gun. Six of SLUH's seven runners went out with the lead pack in the first 400 meters, setting themselves up for a successful race. The first mile was smooth for the experienced varsity athletes, with SLUH's baby blue battalion of six and Wade Patten of Parkway West leading the race through the first mile around 4:58. Junior Michael Luna had taken a more conservative approach, leading the chase pack only a few meters behind the rest of the SLUH athletes.

However, all good things must come to an end as the pack could not hold as the race went on. Throughout the second mile, moves were made by both SLUH racers and racers from opposing teams. Miller and Patten broke away from the rest of the field, battling for the lead. At the same time, countless members from other teams had woven their way into the SLUH herd, now led by senior Hendrix Fyvie. Thankfully, Luna made up most of his ground and was now on the tail of sophomore Warnicke Beatty Jr. who had been taking up the rear of the chase pack throughout the beginning of the race.

The last mile of the race is often what makes or breaks teams. Going into the technical back loop, Miller was positioned perfectly on Patten and made his move, coming out of the back loop and down the homestretch in first. From there, Miller cruised it in running 15:36 and becoming the program's first district champion since 2017.

"I was feeling really good making that move," said Miller. "I saw that he didn't have a response and it felt good getting the win with the good competition in the race."

The rest of the pack was a short 20 seconds behind Miller. With an impressive last mile and a stellar kick, utilizing his 1:56 800m speed, Beatty was the second man in for the Jr. Bills running 15:56 for 6th.

"I thought of just coming down the final hill like really fast," said Beatty. "Then using that to go and get the job done and I just did."

Next into the finishing chute was Fyvie, who edged out junior Ben Yoffie (8th) to finish 7th, both running 15:57. This also marks the first time Yoffie has gone sub-16, showcasing subtle improvement as he gears up for state.

"I'm happy with my improvement throughout the season," said Yoffie. "I can tell my work is finally starting to pay off with this race, even in bad conditions."

Rounding out the scoring five for the Jr. Bills was Luna running 16:07 for 11th. His strategic racing allowed him to move up within the final mile, something that is crucial in championship racing. Finishing the battalion of baby blue jerseys were seniors Jake Fitzpatrick (16:11, 15th) and Nick



Ahlheim (16:17, 17th). Fitzpatrick's race was bold, taking it out with the top pack, and his ability to race with such confidence will pay off later at the state and regional meets.

"It was really cool to show off the depth that we had," said Fitzpatrick. "I looked around at the mile, felt comfortable, and was like 'this is awesome.' It goes to show that I and all of us from 1 to 7 can really compete against the best individuals in the state."

Overall SLUH finished with 33 points, easily winning the district meet for the third year in a row and qualifying the team to the state race.

"Qualifying for state for 33 years in a row is really a testament," said Porter. "It's a testament to some great coaches and kids and people buying into the work that we do."

Today, the program turns to the highly anticipated MSHSAA Class 5 State Championships at Gans Creek Cross Country Course in Columbia where SLUH will face off against top rivals Rock Bridge, Liberty North, and Kickapoo in the quest for a state championship. The gun goes off at 1 p.m. as SLUH looks to go all out in the quest to continue to add to the historic season.

"We don't let other people dictate the style of racing that we're going to have," said Porter. "So we're going to focus on ourselves in the race with the things we can control, knowing that we can kind of control our own destiny."

No post to display.

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.