

Cardinals run away with titles at M-S

By LOU ENGEL

News-Gazette Sportswriter

MAHOMET — There are coaches who would be successful regardless of the sport.

Chrisman's Roger Beals certainly fits that mold.

The veteran coach has been just as successful in cross-country in recent years as he has been in basketball for better than 20 seasons.

Beals cross-country teams have been ranked at or near the top in Class A all season. They upheld those ratings Saturday, sweeping the boys' and girls' titles in the 13th annual Bulldog Invitational.

Five runners finished in the top 17 to give the Cardinals the title in the boys' competition for the second straight year with 52 points.

The girls had only 42 points as five runners were in the top 15. Chrisman also won the junior high boys' competition and were second in the girls' division.

St. Joseph-Ogden's Ashley Wright ran away with the individual championship in the girls' high school competition while Shelbyville's Jeremy Skinner outran Mahomet-Seymour sophomore Dan Nielsen for the boys' crown.

"Our boys are ranked No. 1 in one poll and No. 2 behind Kaneland (of Maple Park) in another," Beals said. "Our girls are ranked No. 1 and Unity No. 2 in both polls.

"I didn't think our kids ran all that well today. We'd run in a meet Tuesday, though, and we're in the Amboy meet again Monday. That may be a little too much. We came here to just to win and not set any records."

BEALS ISN'T THINKING in terms of winning two state championships next month. The Cardinal boys were second last year in Class A. The girls were 19th in the old

one-class system.

"We have a shot at winning in both," Beals said, "but we still have a long way to go. Winning both is virtually impossible. The rankings are nice, but they don't mean a thing. You can't be at your best every time out.

"Cross-country is a lot purer sport than basketball. You don't have the human factor. You don't have a referee like you do in basketball. It's (cross-country) a pretty simple sport. You do the job and finish high or everyone knows it. You can't blame anyone else."

JUNIOR BRENT JENNESS finished fourth and senior Andy Mills seventh to lead the Chrisman boys. Junior Brian Spicer was 11th, freshman Chad Beals 13th and junior Bill Harvey 17th.

Kankakee Bishop McNamara was second in the boys' division with 81 points. Mahomet-Seymour was third in the 17-team meet with 125 and St. Joseph-Ogden fourth with 170.

Juniors Karen and Kathy Morris were fourth and fifth, respectively, to lead the Chrisman girls. Michelle Kindred was ninth, Courtney Porter 14th and Amy Malaise 15th. Unity had three runners in the top 10 to finish second with 62 points. Sonja O'Neill was sixth, Karen Wamsley seventh and Teresa Calvin 10th.

"I just wanted to get out fast and stay there," said Wright, who covered the two-mile course in 11 minutes, 26 seconds.

"I ran the first mile in 5:26. That was the key. I've been trying to get out faster on the first mile and then come in under six minutes on the second. I'm just trying to stride out and do my best.

"My goal is to finish in the top five and run a personal best in the state meet."



News-Gazette photo by Delfina Colby

St. Joseph-Ogden sophomore Ashley Wright heads for the chute with a comfortable lead in the 13th annual Bulldog Cross-Country Invitational. Wright won the two-mile race.