

M-S BOYS' CROSS-COUNTRY

KINGS OF THE CONFERENCE

Bulldogs cruise to Apollo title

By ISAAC TROTTER
For The Mahomet Citizen

MAHOMET — Get off the tracks because the freight train is coming. After losing state champion Mathias Powell to Villanova University, many believed the M-S boys' cross-country team could take a step back this season.

Their roster was filled with underclassmen, and the Apollo Conference has some great talent.

Think again.

The Bulldogs ran away from the rest of the conference on Tuesday and won the Apollo Conference title. M-S finished with 32 points. Mattoon (59 points) was a distant second.

Kyle Nofziger finished second overall with a time of 16:19. Joseph Scheele was right behind him to finish third.

Nick Mies cruised to a seventh-place finish, and Joe Taylor came in at ninth place.

Nofziger, Scheele, Mies and Taylor had become the Big Four, but they had plenty of help.

Gage Williams placed 12th. Hayden Grotelueschen ran a terrific race to finish 13th. Jonah Singer, Taylor Fan and David Wilcoski all placed inside the top-20.

Frankly, Tuesday's effort was a total domination by Neal Garrison's squad. To have nine of the top-20 runners in the conference is remarkable.

Seventy-five runners competed, and Josh Wilcoski, Caleb Dowers and Ben Wallace all finished in the top half.

Metamora's Runnin' Red Invitational

The Mahomet-Seymour boys' cross-country team is rounding into form. The Bulldogs placed third at Metamora's Runnin' Red Invitational last Saturday.

25 full teams and four partial teams competed in the Invite, and Oswego ran away with the victory. They had five finishers in the top-11. Oswego finished with 25 points. Olympia (107 points) edged out M-S for second place.

Nofziger was the top M-S finisher. The sophomore blazed the three-mile course in 15 minutes, 16.9 seconds to finish ninth in the 306-man race. Nofziger shaved off 36 seconds off his previous season-best time. It was the third-best time from a sophomore in M-S' illustrious history.

Scheele finished in 15:35 to place 15th. Jonah Singer and Nick Mies ran together and placed 30th and 31st, respectively.

Taylor and Grotelueschen broke into the 16-minute range for the first time in their lives. Taylor's 16:41 was good enough for 72nd place which helped M-S solidify a third-place finish. Taylor topped his previous season-best time by 49 seconds.

Grotelueschen was the sixth-place finisher for M-S with a 16:46. Williams rounded out the top-7 for the Bulldogs with a lifetime best finish of 17:22. Josh Wilcoski's time of 17:28 was impressive as well.

It's easy to focus on just the guys who earned points for the Bulldogs, but head coach Neal Garrison was really impressed with the guys behind his top run-

ners.

"Taylor Fan and Karsten Waisath worked together to break into the 17s for the first time with a 17:49 each," Garrison said. "Ben Wallace ran a lifetime best of 18:02. Peter Slezak also ran an 18:02 which was a 48-second improvement on the season. We're showing the depth of the team."

John Tender and Chase Misenheimer both dipped into the 19-minute range for the first time in their careers. Avery Seaman ran a 20:31.

"Alex Carpenter had the largest improvement of the day," Garrison said. "He went from running in the 24s to a 21:12. He has shown such tremendous growth and determination this season."

The excitement around the M-S cross country team is palpable. They might not see the results this year at the state meet, but Garrison has three sophomores in Nofziger, Scheele and Singer who are putting together big-time numbers. Mies is still a junior and will also return next year.

"It is worthy to note that three of our sophomores ran in the 10 fastest sophomore times our team has ever had," Garrison said. "This shows their strong potential for the future as well as the here and now."

Looking ahead

Now, the fun really begins. The Bulldogs will compete in the Class 2A regional meet at Black Partridge Park in Metamora. The race will start at 11 a.m. Oct. 26. If the Bulldogs can advance, they would run in the Class 2A sectional meet on Nov. 2 at Maxwell Park in Normal.



Mahomet-Seymour's boys' and girls' cross-country runners celebrate their Apollo Conference titles on Tuesday. Provided

v
g
L
C
H
C
v
a
t
s
H
s
C
t
E
v