

Mies coming on strong for Bulldogs

Junior running at high level in first year

By ISAAC TROTTER
For The Mahomet Citizen

MAHOMET — Nick Mies had planned to join the Mahomet-Seymour boys cross-country team in 2017 and 2018. He started the summer running program in both years, but he just didn't feel up

to it.

"I just dropped because I couldn't maintain the intensity," Mies remembered.

M-S head coach Neal Garrison continued to hound him about the possibility of joining the squad. Mies finally gave in.

The junior competed in track and field last spring and had a good showing. That gave him the confidence to fully commit to cross-country. He's been a

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revelation this fall.

Mies placed 15th overall at the Normal University High Invite on Tuesday. It was the fourth-best time for the Bulldogs in the Invite, and Mies is turning into one of Garrison's go-to competitors.

"I thought I could at least contribute a little to

the team," Mies said. "But I didn't expect my role to be this big immediately. I'm honestly pretty surprised."

Garrison isn't complaining.

Mies has formed a heck of a quartet with Kyle Nofziger, Joseph Scheele and Jonah Singer. All four guys placed in the top-15 at the Normal U-High Invite, and they could do some dynamic things in the postseason.

"The group of guys is really awesome," Mies said. "Even when we aren't running, we're always talking and hanging out. We really are a group of brothers."

Garrison had recruited Mies to be on the cross-country team since he was in eighth grade. He's finally seeing the results from that long recruitment process. But Garrison has also been a huge part of Mies' rise to the top.

"He's always been there for me," Mies said. "He's been saying how glad he is that I'm doing it this year, and that's really nice. He's just a good person to look up to because he knows what he's talking about. He's had a ton of successful runners through this program, and I think that's really good thing to have all that experience and success."

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Garrison knows what it's like to go to the state meet and win. Last season, Mathias Powell won the Class 2A state title individually in cross-country. But Mies, Nofziger, Scheele and Singer aren't running with the pressure to win a state title this season. Sure, they definitely want to succeed at a high level, but Garrison has preached to his crew that it's all about the long game.

"I feel like we're going out and doing what we can," Mies said. "We don't have any set plans for this season. We're just going out and running and seeing what we can do, and that's really nice. It eases the pressure off of us."

Mies, Nofziger, Scheele and Singer will all be back next year. Mies is kind of the veteran of the group. The junior is one of the few upperclassmen on the roster.

"It's kind of an adjustment because I do feel like a freshman because it's my first year running, but I also have the body of a junior," Mies

said. "It's keeping the young guys into it, which we do because we all stay together. That's the most important thing for us."

Mies might feel like a freshman, but he's running like a savvy veteran. Garrison and the M-S boys' cross-country team might say that they're not eyeing another state championship push, but deep down, they're all big-time competitors. Mahomet-Seymour has a culture of being big-time players at the state meet. If Mies continues this meteoric rise, M-S could absolutely be in the mix yet again.