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Nielsen stars at M-S Invitational

by E. W. Hesse

Shelbyville prep cross country star Jeremy Skinner, record-setting winner of Mahomet-Seymour's Invitational run last year, skipped the meet last Saturday to attend a wedding.

It is not known whether Skinner was best man at the wedding, and it is doubtful whether he would have been best man at Mahomet, for that role was claimed by Bulldog junior Danny Nielsen. Somewhat disappointed because he was not running vs. Skinner, who had shaded him in the Chrisman, Tuscola and St. Joseph-Ogden Classics, Nielsen nevertheless posted a record time of 16 minutes and 14 seconds on Mahomet-Seymour's three-mile course, bettering Skinner's mark of 16:21 set last year.

Kankakee Bishop McNamara's Tim Kennedy chased Nielsen across the finish line with a time of 16:30.

"I really wanted to improve on my time but didn't know if I could without Skinner running against me," said Nielsen. "So I just tried to run the race as if he was here."

Mahomet-Seymour coach John King, thrilled by Nielsen's performance, didn't call out his runner's first-mile time (4:37) for fear it would affect his effort. King simply yelled: "Great race! Keep on going!"

King felt his team, outside of Nielsen, hadn't run as well as it might have . . . "But we didn't run bad," he added quickly.

As expected, the Bulldogs finished back of Chrisman, the defending meet and state Class A champion, but placed third instead of second because Chrisman wound up second behind surprise winner Bishop McNamara. The latter totaled 50 points to Chrisman's 68. Mahomet-Seymour finished third in the 17-school field with 142 points, while St. Joe-Ogden was fourth with 145. Shelbyville, minus Skinner, placed fifth with 155.

Individually, Mahomet-Seymour's Brian Easter ran ninth in 17:19, and Burt Huddleston was 24th in 17:57.

Chrisman's girls repeated as champions, notching a point total of 44. Unity was runnerup with 96, while Mahomet-Seymour managed 14th with 306.

None of the M-S girls finished in the first 20.

Chrisman also dominated the junior high division of competition. The young Cardinals shaded Georgetown-Ridge Farm in the boys race, 44 to 47, while Mahomet-Seymour emerged sixth with 163. The Cardinal girls won with a count of 31; Mahomet-Seymour was second with 67.