

Spartan harriers miss out on state

By **DAVID CAMPBELL**
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PAXTON — The groans of disappointment from the St. Joseph-Ogden boys' cross-country team said it all.

They came after Paxton coach Fred Guyot read off the result: "In sixth place with 210 points, St. Joseph-Ogden."

Unfortunately for the Spartans, the top five teams at Friday's boys' Class A sectional advance to next week's state meet at Detweiller Park outside Peoria.

SJ-O missed out on fifth place by seven points to Herscher.

"The kids ran as best they could," said SJ-O coach Jerry Hewerdine.

"We gave it our best shot. It just didn't fall right. We beat some teams we thought we had to beat. This is one of the toughest sectionals in the state. Somebody had to get bumped out."

SJ-O, tied with Sherrard for the No. 13 ranking in the state in Class A poll, was the only one of five ranked teams at the sectional not to advance.

No. 1 Chrisman finished second to No. 6 Normal University, 110-114.

No. 8 Mahomet-Seymour was third at 143, followed by Kankakee McNamara, tied for the No. 2 ranking, at 162, and Herscher.

Roger Beals, coach of the defending boys' and girls' state champion Cardinals, said he wasn't upset with his team, despite the second-place finish.

"It's about where we want to be," he said. "We're coming along."

ONE REASON Normal University won was that Chrisman's usual No. 1 runner, Brent Jenness, finished 26th overall. Jenness has been trying to work his way back from a bout with bronchitis.

"He's getting a lot stronger," Beals said. "We'll have to keep him out of the night air."

Chrisman was paced by Chad Beals in sixth and Dusty Michaels in 24th.

The individual champion was John Eggenberger of Herscher,

who ran the 3-mile course in 15 minutes, 32 seconds.

Mahomet-Seymour's Dan Nielsen was hoping to challenge Eggenberger, but lost touch with the leader during the second mile. Nielsen finished in 15:48.

"I really felt like I was going to go out and try to win it," Nielsen said. "Things didn't turn out that way.

"Sometimes in the last mile if you're in a good position you can get a second wind, but when he went out in the second mile, that was a good strategic move. It kind of put me out of contention."

Nielsen will get another chance next week, and his teammates will be joining him. Brian Easter was the No. 2 MS finisher, taking 29th, and Hans Waters continued his improvement by taking 32nd. Burt Huddleston was 37th for the Bulldogs and Derrick Short was 53rd.

"AS A TEAM we definitely had our best race of the year," said M-S coach John King.

"I got away from them today and let them run because I could tell they were really up-tight, and I wasn't going to put any extra pressure on them."

Seven runners who were not on the five qualifying teams also will run at state.

Four of them finished in the top 10 overall: Jeff Trask of Oakwood (third, 15:57.9), Joe Alexander of Clinton (seventh, 16:08.7), Joshua Folk of Urbana University High (eighth, 16:11.0) and Robert Morris of Maroa-Forsyth (10th, 16:18.4).

Also advancing were Frank Winter of Urbana Uni and Frank Roberts of SJ-O. Winter was 11th in 16:20.7.

Roberts took 13th in 16:26.5, but said he would have enjoyed the day a lot more if his teammates could have accompanied him.

"I'm disappointed: Seven points. If we could have just worked a little harder and gained some points, we might have beaten them. Next year we should be up there."