

Chrisman owns Spartan Classic

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ST. JOSEPH — Chrisman may be wearing out its welcome in the Spartan Classic.

The Cardinals swept the titles in both the boys' and girls' competition Saturday for their second consecutive sweep of the cross-country race through the streets of St. Joseph.

Chrisman became only the second team in the 18-year history of the boys competition to win back-to-back titles by placing three runners in the top 12 to finish with 76 points. Pontiac did it in 1985 and 1986.

Three Chrisman runners finished in the top six as the Cardinal girls kept their record intact as the only team winners in the three-year history of the girls' competition with 48 points.

Shelbyville's Jeremy Skinner far outdistanced Mahomet-Seymour's Dan Nielsen to repeat as the individual champion in the boys' competition with a time of 15 minutes, 7.56 seconds over the 3-mile course.

Argenta-Oreana freshman Karen Bloch overtook Shelbyville's Brook Roberts in the final 100 yards to end St. Joseph-Ogden junior Ashley Wright's two-year reign as the girls' champion.

Bloch was clocked in 11:27.80 compared to Roberts' 11:28.61. Chrisman's Karen Morris was third in 11:34.35. Wright had to settle for fourth in 11:49.23.

"IT'S REAL NICE to win both titles here two years in a row," said veteran Chrisman coach Roger Beals. "There are a lot of good teams here.

"It's also a difficult race to run. You have to get out fast as it's hard to get around people. They also have you bunched up at the

start and a lot of people fall. They need a wider place to start.

"Seldom does a runner fall by himself either. He usually takes an entire row with him. Barrett Moore (of Normal University High) went down and still came in as the best freshman runner. Nielsen almost went down and so did (Chrisman's) Chad (Beals)."

Senior Brian Spicer placed fourth to lead the way as Chrisman outdistanced Mahomet-Seymour by 71 points for the boys' title. The Bulldogs finished with 147 points to edge Clinton by a point for second place in the 24-team competition.

BEALS WON the top sophomore award by finishing seventh. Sophomore Dusty Michaels was 12th, senior Brent Jenness 14th and senior Bill Harvey 39th to complete the Chrisman scoring.

Karen Morris' third-place finish set the pace for the Cardinal girls. Twin sister Kathy was sixth, one spot behind teammate Courtney Porter. Amy Malaise was 12th. Sophomore Traci Butler joined in the scoring by placing 23rd.

SJ-O was second among the 13 girls' teams with 59 points. Unity had 83 for third and University High 119 for fourth.

While the Cardinals were able to repeat as double champs in the Spartan Classic, Beals isn't predicting a second consecutive sweep of the Class A state titles.

"It would be a real long shot for us to do that again," Beals said.

"We had one girl get sick last year and another got knocked down, but we had other people pick them up. We don't have that kind of depth this year. We have six good boys. The seventh is a sophomore who isn't sure what it's all about yet, but he works hard."