

# M-S runners thriving on quality, not quantity

*News Gazette 28 Sept 1989*

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The Mahomet-Seymour boys' cross-country team is ranked fourth among the state's Class A teams.

But Bulldogs coach John King knows that if things don't go exactly right, his squad might as well be ranked as the fourth worst team in the state.

"We're very shaky," said King, whose team is behind defending state champion Chrisman, Tremont and Kankakee McNara in the rankings.

"If anybody has a bad day, or if anybody gets hurt, we're in trouble."  
Last weekend at the St. Joseph-Ogden Invitational, M-S was second to Chrisman, 5-147.

That race, run on the streets of St. Joseph, often aggravates minor injuries because it is run on asphalt.

"I know there are some coaches who avoid running on the roads two weeks in a row," says St-O coach Jerry Hewerdine, whose team was sixth at the meet. "You want to be sure you get on grass after that."

But the course, while it puts the feet

## Top area cross-country times

Dan Nielson	Mahomet-Seymour	15:30.11
Brian Spicer	Chrisman	15:48.13
Jeff Trask	Oakwood	15:51.00
Frank Winters	Urbana Uni High	15:56.77
Frank Roberts	St. Joseph-Ogden	15:58.16
Brian Easter	Mahomet-Seymour	15:58.54
Dusty Michaels	Chrisman	15:58.89
Joe Alexander	Clinton	15:59.53
Brent Jenness	Chrisman	16:00.75
Phillip Skinner	Westville	16:01.04
Joshua Folk	Urbana Uni High	16:01.04
Burt Huddleston	Mahomet-Seymour	16:06.19
Enos Ross	Rantoul	16:07.00
Brett Carter	Clinton	16:10.21
Jamie McDonald	Tuscola	16:16.72

All times run on 3-mile courses. All but Ross' and Trask's times recorded at St. Joseph. Ross ran at Bloomington; Trask at Sidney.

through a pounding, has produced nearly all of the area's fast times for a 3-mile race this season.

Three of those times, including the fastest, are by Mahomet-Seymour runners.

"That race, the kids are always so hyped up for it that they run some of the best times of the year," King said.

Dan Nielson, a junior, posted a time of 15 minutes, 30.11 seconds to place second to Shelbyville's Jeremy Skinner (15:07.56). Nielson may have made it a closer race had he not been slowed at the race's start.

"He got boxed in and almost fell down," King said. "By the time he recovered, Skinner was gone."

Senior Brian Easter and junior Burt Huddleston round out what King says is one of the best threesomes in the state for Class A.

Easter was 11th last weekend in 15:58.54 and Huddleston 18th in 16:06.19.

Finishing out the top five are senior Hans Walters and sophomore Derrick Short.

"He ran real well for us in track last year," King said of Short, "so we're hoping he'll come around for us."

But after Short, the Bulldogs are short of runners capable of scoring in a sectional meet. Depth, and the lack of it, are what may make the difference between a team like Chrisman and M-S.

"(Chrisman) has not really had somebody just come out and take charge," King said. "But they've got some young kids and it wouldn't surprise me if some of those

could score by the end of the season."  
"We're not real deep, but we've been real happy with the way we've been running," King added. "I would be real disappointed if we didn't make it to state."

This weekend is a key one for the four local Class AA teams, which will head to the 35th annual Peoria Invitational on Saturday.

The meet is run on the same Detweiler Park course used for the state meet.

"That meet kind of lets us know where we stand," said Centennial coach Greg Walters. "It's hard to tell who's running what times with all the different courses."

Forty-five teams will be in attendance, 11 of which will run only in the boys' race. Back to defend its boys' and girls' titles is Elmhurst York, which has won 13 boys' titles at the meet and eight of the last 10.

Also returning are the two defending individual champions, York senior Al Kabat, third at the 1988 state meet, won last year's invitational in 15:03.

McHenry junior Erin Boland, the defending Class AA state champ, won the 2.1-mile girls' race in 11:57.