

Cross-country regional winner eases through season

By LOU ENGEL

News-Gazette Sportswriter

The 1990 cross-country season has been an "easy" one for Mahomet-Seymour senior Dan Nielsen.

Nielsen won his third consecutive Class A regional title Friday by negotiating the 3.0-mile course near Mahomet in 15 minutes, 11.1 seconds despite easing off the final mile.

"Danny's time could have been much better," Bulldog coach John King said, "but I backed him off the last mile because he had a substantial lead. I didn't want to take a chance of

Athlete of the week

him injuring his knee."

Nielsen is the News-Gazette Athlete of the Week for his efforts.

The regional race wasn't the first time King has asked his standout runner to take it easy this season.

"We've taken it pretty easy all year," King said. "Danny has a roughness on the inside of his knee and it sometimes gets inflamed and becomes ex-

tremely painful.

"We're hoping we don't have a repeat of last year. Danny peaked out in the Corn Belt Conference meet before injuring his knee. He did very little running after the sectional last year because of the inflamed knee."

Nielsen finished second in the sectional last year before falling to 54th in the state meet. He had finished 22nd as a sophomore the previous year.

"I'd like to think I'm in the best shape of my career," Nielsen said. "I missed some training last year with

what is called runner's knee. I've been fortunate not to have any knee problems so far this year.

"I'm really looking forward to the next two weeks. I really don't know what to expect. I'm just going to make an effort to run as fast as I can. I'd like to finish the season on a high note by qualifying for the state meet and finishing high there.

"Finishing in the top 10 is a possibility. I want to set my goal high. Still I don't want to put so much pressure on myself that I don't enjoy the experience.



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