

Runners qualify for sectionals

By **BRUCE YENTES** and
STEVE HOFFMAN

The Mahomet Citizen

CHARLESTON — It's on to the sectional meet for both the boys' and girls' Mahomet-Seymour High School cross country teams as the Bulldog squads placed third overall in last weekend's regional at Charleston.

Boys

"As far as we know, this is the highest place our school has had since moving to the AA system," said head coach Neal Garrison of the Bulldogs' performance at the regional meet.

Troy Pittman paced the way for M-S, finishing fourth overall after covering the course in 16:12. Justin Sebens also posted a top-ten result, crossing the finish line in eighth-place with a time of 16:24.

According to Garrison, it's the first time in four years that the Bulldogs had placed a runner in the top ten in the regionals.

Patrick Kirwan finished in the top-20 with his 18th place run.

The regional result continued a Bulldog trend of steady improvement in the cross country program. Ac-

ording to Garrison, in the past four years M-S has gone from a ninth-place finish in 2001, to seventh in 2002, to fifth-place last year before this season's third-place result.

"They did well and rose to the occasion," Garrison said. "They ran against some great teams and I'm happy with the progress we've been making."

Eleven schools competed in the Charleston regional with the Bulldogs being bested by only the Champaign schools in the final overall team tally.

Champaign Centennial won the meet by scoring 45 points. Central was next with 93. The Bulldogs posted a 104 as a team and were followed by Charleston with 109. Urbana and Mount Zion tied for fifth at 155. Rounding out the top-ten were Decatur Eisenhower (158), Decatur MacArthur (166), Danville (196) and Mattoon (244). Rantoul did not score.

This weekend's sectional meet will be held Saturday at Centralia. The Bulldogs will be facing a lengthy bus ride to the southern Illinois community on the day of the meet.

"The long bus ride is not the greatest thing on the legs," Garrison said. He added that there are positives to going the day of the meet, rather than

going the night before, however.

"Sometimes when you're in a hotel you can get anxious or distracted," he said. "We also like to keep the kids' digestive systems the same with whatever they're used to eating at home and they can get a good night's sleep in their own beds."

Girls

Two Lady Bulldog runners ran last Saturday's Regional course in Charleston in under 20 minutes to propel the cross country team to a third-place finish and on to the Sectional round of competition.

Julie Jarrett finished fifth in a time of 19:45, while Jennifer Fall cracked the 20-minute barrier for three miles for the first time this season by running an eighth-place time of 19:51. Fall has experienced knee problems this season, limiting her time in the lineup until recently.

As a team, the top four advance out of the IHSA Regional round. Decatur Eisenhower won the Charleston Regional with 42 points, followed by Charleston (46), Mahomet-Seymour (52) and Champaign Centennial (90).

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