



Garrett Halm/Mahomet Citizen

MEMBERS OF the boys cross country team are from left to right, row one: Dale Donoho, Kurt Buckner, Sean Buchanan and Brian Statler; row two: Coach Neal Garrison, Joe Nusbaum, Jacob Mahaffey, Steve Roberts, John Prillaman and Coach Nathan Seal; row three: Tray Kipp (white t-shirt under jersey) and Evan Monson (black t-shirt under jersey); row four: Alex Williams, Jared Kingry, Caleb Johnson, Thomas Thoren, Andrew Kumler, Alex Charter and Dustin Kinkelaar.

Squad returns experienced runners

By **TIM BROZENEC**
Citizen Sports Reporter

On the heels of its first-ever double-A first-place finish in the regional meet last season, the Mahomet Bulldog cross country team is making plans to make that the norm from here on out.

Led by sixth-year coach Neil Garrison, the Bulldogs will try to overcome the loss of recently graduated leaders Justin Sebens and Troy Pittman.

"We lost numerous good athletes and great runners, but we still have an experienced and quality group returning this year," Garrison said. "Seniors Steve Roberts, Andrew Kumler and Dustin Kinkelaar bring great experience to the team. They have been running in the

top seven varsity spots since their freshman years."

If the intensity with which the team spent training in the off season is any indication, Mahomet remains in good hands — or in this case, feet.

"In order to be a captain on our team, a runner has to lead the offseason training and run at least 400 miles over the summer," Garrison said. "Kurt Buckner and Thomas Thoren each ran over 400 miles, while Austin Beck and Jacob Mahaffey ran over 500 miles.

"Thoren also has run almost 300 days in a row, which is quite a testament to his commitment."

While Garrison can't predict exactly how all of the season preparation will translate to meet results, he thinks the odds

are in his team's favor.

"I really can't make any accurate predictions about what we hope to get in the conference or regionals this year," he said. "Our team has a lot of talent and potential and the end of the year results will be greatly determined by the intensity with which they train over the next two months.

"We have many great returning and new runners that have helped make this team the best in the area. I am privileged to get to coach a great group of young men that are both good runners and have excellent character."

Mahomet will open its season on Tuesday, Aug. 28 at home against Decatur Eisenhower, Urbana and Bloomington at Lake of the Woods.