

PREPS

CROSS-COUNTRY

Victory sweep: M-S captures league title

All seven runners place in top 10

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NORMAL — They called it a Podium Sweep.

Mahomet-Seymour entered seven runners in Saturday's 44th annual Corn Belt Conference meet, and each one placed among the top 10 to earn all-conference recognition and help the school win its second consecutive league team title.

The split between the school's first and seventh runners at Fairview Park was 50 seconds. The individual winner was M-S junior Alex Keeble (15 minutes, 13 seconds), and the 10th-place runner was Bulldog senior Trevor Hanlon (16:02). M-S' seventh runner, Hanlon finished ahead of the No. 1 runner from five of the Corn

Belt schools.

Keeble was pleased, but for reasons other than winning his fourth race in six tries this season.

"I love to see my teammates succeed," Keeble said. "What I do is a credit to my teammates."

M-S was equally dominant in the open race, securing eight of the top 10 places.

The team's quality of depth doesn't make it easy for 13th-year head coach Neal Garrison.

"Unfortunately, I have to make tough decisions on who will represent us at regional, sectional and state," Garrison said. "A lot of them are very worthy."

In all, 22 Bulldogs competed on Saturday on a rolling, weaving course. Fifteen had career-best times for 3 miles. Varsity runners who achieved that feat were senior William Wolf (third in 15:22) and sophomore Ben Crow

(fifth in 15:38).

The school's other all-conference runners were junior Jack Hyde (fourth in 15:35), sophomore Brian Butcher (eighth in 15:56), sophomore Andrew Walmer (ninth in 16:01) and Hanlon.

"The whole group pushes each other every day," Garrison said. "Each year, we try to get slightly better and, over time, it adds up."

Keeble has been the individual champion in four of the six meets the Bulldogs have run.

"I've surprised myself," Keeble said. "I was second pretty much every meet last year."

In the 29 years M-S has been in the Corn Belt Conference, the program's highest number of all-conference runners was four.

"I'm pleased," Garrison said. "Very pleased."

Keeble ran the opening mile in 4:58. At that point, the top six were all M-S runners.

"He trains hard, but it's not just the mileage," Garrison said. "His intensity is second to none."

Open winner Riley Fortune, a freshman, ran a time (16:23) that would have placed him 14th in the varsity race and ahead of the No. 1 runner from four schools.

Whitehouse wins girls' race. Mahomet-Seymour's Lauren Whitehouse won the girls' 3-mile race by 25 seconds, registering a career-best time of 17 minutes, 54 seconds.

Two teammates (freshman Jenna Straub (eighth) and sophomore Jocelyn Thrasher (10th), joined her in the top 10 as the Bulldogs ran a strong second, placing one point behind Normal University High in the team chase.

"This was a great race for us," M-S coach Bonnie Moxley said. "They really did rise to the occasion."

Whitehouse covered the first mile

in 5:51. Moxley has had her run more conservatively at the start.

"We've had to reel her first mile back," Moxley said. "She tends to be overzealous, like she was shot out of a cannon. We've had to retrain her brain so it empowers her the second mile."

Whitehouse said she had "a rough start to the season," but is pleased how the season has progressed.

"I feel more well-prepared, but I still get nervous," she said. "It's pretty rewarding to see my teammates do well, too."

Among the other M-S contributors is sophomore Mariah McAnally, who had no summer training due to a broken collarbone.

"Instead of her starting the season in shape, we've had to work her in shape," Moxley said.

At the Corn Belt meet, McAnally was the sixth M-S runner, but she placed ahead of the fifth U-High runner.