

BOYS CROSS COUNTRY SEASON PREVIEW

Boys XC setting sights even higher this year

By JASON BROWN
Citizen sportswriter

The boys' cross country team looks to repeat this year as the Corn Belt Conference champions and with another record-setting state finish.

Last season's top performer, team captain Alex Keeble, looks to improve his state finishing time.

The three-year letter winner took fourth (14:49 for 3 miles) in the Class 2A state cross country meet in Peoria last year and is considered one of the top runners in the state.

Other state qualifiers included Jack Hyde, Gabe Pommier, Ben Craw, Riley

Fortune, Brian Butcher and Andrew Walmer.

The Bulldogs finished a school-record second place, and Garrison believes his runners can improve on their personal best and state finishes.

Mahomet-Seymour enters the season as the No. 1 team in 2A in by MilesSplit and Dyestat.com.

"They are hard workers," said coach Neal Garrison, "and hopefully will be able to draw on their experience to be able to be stronger this year at state."

To accomplish these goals, the team returns 14 letter winners and six seniors to a team of runners whom Garrison states "have strong

character and work ethic."

In his 14th year as head coach, Garrison understands that this sport takes its toll on his athletes, which is exactly why he wants his athletes to know that "running is fun" as well.

"I would be missing out," he said, "if I didn't mention that all of our team members are significantly important to our team's over-

all success not just the top returnees. Their work ethic is contagious—one way or another. Their team spirit determines our team success—one way or another. I have been very fortunate to be able to coach such a great group."

Boys' cross country opens the season when they travel to Charleston Saturday Sept. 6 for the Charleston

Invitational.

The team also will compete in the Springfield,

Peoria Notre Dame and East Peoria Invitational this season.