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STATE CROSS COUNTRY

Celebrating 2nd tough for Mahomet boys

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9 hours ago • [Randy Sharer rsharer@pantagraph.com](#)

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PEORIA — After being ranked No. 1 all season, the Mahomet-Seymour High School boys cross country team took it hard after losing to No. 2 Grayslake Central, 54-121, in the Class 2A state meet on Saturday.

Always upbeat Coach Neal Garrison, however, hopes his Bulldogs look at the big picture after tying last year's school record second-place finish.

"Nobody leaves happy except the state champ, but honestly I'm pretty pleased," Garrison said. "Second ... everybody in the state would kill for that except for one team. It's the highest we've ever gotten in 46 years."

Grayslake Central got their scoring off to the ultimate start thanks to individual champion Jack Aho, a junior, who covered the 3-mile Detweiller Park course in 14 minutes, 25 seconds.

The Pantagraph area leader was junior Jack Franklin of 10th-place University High, who sped a school record 14:42 in sixth.

Grayslake Central, sixth a year ago, packed five men in front of Mahomet-Seymour's third man. The Rams averaged 14:54 per man compared to 15:17 for the Bulldogs, whose five-man finishing split of 56 seconds was 10 seconds more than that of the champions.

"I know they will be temporarily disappointed and I think they'll look back and see we won two trophies two years in a row," Garrison said. "That's not so bad after all."

The Bulldogs' leader for the first time this season was junior Andrew Walmer, who placed 10th in a career best of 14:48. Senior teammate Alex Keeble, fourth a year ago in 14:49, hung on for 16th in 15:02.

Keeble was with the leaders the first mile before fading.

"We weren't totally surprised by that," Walmer said. "He's been having a rough time lately."



Junior Jack Franklin posted the best state cross country meet 3-mile time in University High School history while placing sixth in 14 minutes, 42 seconds in Class 2A at Peoria's Detweiller Park on Saturday.

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"Second was really, really nice last year since it was our first trophy ever, but we were really going for first today to finish the job."

Mahomet-Seymour's other scorers were Gabe Pommier (42nd, 15:27), Jack Hyde (47th, 15:31) and Brian Butcher (61st, 15:43).

U High, which came in ranked fifth, scored 296 points to match last year's 10th-place finish and notch their 21st top-10 effort in 24 state trips. Franklin did his part by shattering his school record of 14:54 for that course.

The third junior finisher, Franklin was in the lead pack most of the way.

"Eventually the top three just pulled away," he said. "It was a lot better than I thought I'd do so I guess I accomplished a lot. I can do better next year."

"He put himself in the best possible position to get the best possible place with the best possible time," said Coach Lester Hampton. "I never thought I would coach a kid that fast."

The fastest freshman was U High's Zach Wolford in 33rd (15:20). It took another 42 seconds before the Pioneers' third man finished. Hampton said a 4:50 opening mile was too fast for most of his runners.

"I just need to do a little bit better job of preparing them for a fast first mile when they get down here," said Hampton, who will return five of his top six next year.

Mahomet girls 19th: The No. 15-ranked Bulldogs scored 411 points to finish 19th. Yorkville won its fifth-straight title with 58 while Peoria Notre Dame's Maryjeanne Gilbert won her second crown in 16:24.

Mahomet-Seymour's four-time state entrant, Lauren Whitehouse, had hoped to better last year's 17:42 in eighth, but struggled home 55th in 18:24. She didn't react to the gun and had to weave through traffic.

"She was in the top 50 (on the first straightaway) when she should be in the top 10," said Coach Bonnie Moxley. "She didn't hear the start. I feel so bad for her. Maybe this will fuel her track season like never before."

U High's lone entrant, four-time qualifier Shannan Supan, didn't hear the gun either before finishing 139th in 19:31.

"For her to be able to finish her career at the state meet is spectacular," said Coach John Neisler.

Pendergast sets record: The girls course record of 16:02 set by Glenbard West's Madeline Perez in 2012 fell to 3A winner Judy Pendergast of Naperville North, who sped 15:54. Normal West Sectional champion Minooka also won (132).

The 3A boys winners were Sandburg (79) and Buffalo Grove's Kevin Salvano (14:20).

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