

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2016

CROSS COUNTRY



Daniel Chamness/For the Mahomet Citizen

Matthias Powell (center) races at Peoria's Richard Spring Invitational on Saturday. Powell placed 31st overall, and the Bulldogs placed second as a team.

MEETING EXPECTATIONS

Bulldog cross country is living up to its potential

By JASON BROWN
Citizen sportswriter

The Bulldog boys' cross country team placed second in the 72-team Richard Spring Invitational at Deweiler Park in Peoria on Saturday.

M-S lost to Neuqua Valley, which is ranked third in the nation, but defeated the #14 and #43 ranked teams in the nation, as well as 12 AAA State-ranked teams, six AA State-ranked teams, and five A State-ranked teams.

The No. 1 ranked M-S scored 118 points, which is the lowest team score the team has had since joining the invitational in 2000. The previous best was 178 points in 2015.

The team also had the lowest top total team time average that any of Mahomet teams have had since joining the invitational, with an average time of 16:42.0. The previous best was 16:44.8 from 2015.

Peoria Notre Dame High School awarded 60 medal winners in the varsity race and 10 medals in the open race.

The Bulldog runners won eight, the most ever awarded at this invitational.

The medal-winners included Andrew Walmer (12th at 15:05.50), Riley Fortune (24th at 15:17.30), Ryan Hodge (28th), Mathias Powell (31st at 15:22.20), Brian Butcher (33rd) and Gabe Pommier



Submitted photo

Above: Bulldog boys' cross country runners celebrate a second-place finish. They came in second to Neuqua Valley, a team ranked third in the nation. **Right:** Evan Burge beat out 1,000 runners in the open race at the Richard Spring Invitational on Saturday.

(50th).

Evan Burge won the open race, which hosted approximately 1,000 runners.

"Evan ran a tremendously gutsy race," said coach Neal Garrison. "He took the lead from the start which showed great confidence. His hard work paid off in a big way this weekend. We have never had a runner win any of the races at the Peoria Notre Dame Invitational before, as it is full of so many great teams."

Garret Williams followed with a sixth-place finish.

"Our open race runners

had a tremendous day," said Garrison. "We have been running in this race for 17 years. They had seven of the top eight highest finishes we have ever had in the open race. They really represented our program well."

The rest of the open runners placed as follows: Patrik Elkins (22nd), Nate Douglas (24th), Kyle Sheehy (44th), David Wilcoski (65th) and Nate Strigotti (123rd).

Three runners earned Elite Status at the Peoria Notre Dame Invitational by



Submitted photo

milesplit: Walmer, Fortune and Hodge.

The varsity team is scheduled to head to the East Peoria Invitational on Saturday.