

Athletes of the Week



Robin Scholz/The News-Gazette

From left, Ben Crow, Riley Fortune, Brian Butcher, Andrew Walmer, Mathias Powell, Gabe Pommier and Ryan Hodge with their Class 2A state trophy they helped the Mahomet-Seymour boys' cross-country team win on Saturday.

Mahomet-Seymour Boys' cross-country team

Why they were chosen: The Bulldogs claimed the Class 2A team state title on Saturday, with six runners placing in the top 25 to earn all-state honors. This is the first cross-country state title Mahomet-Seymour has won, and the Bulldogs are the fifth boys' cross-country program from Champaign County to win a state title, joining Unity (2015), St. Thomas More (2012), St. Joseph-Ogden (1991, 1992) and Urbana (1951).

In their own words (Gabe Pommier): "After falling short for the past two years by placing second at state both years, it is rewarding to finally win the first-place trophy. The key to accomplishing this win is that we have all developed a very tight friendship with one another."

I need concert tickets to (Mathias Powell) ... The band Fun because they're really fun.

One thing I've never done but want to try is (Powell) ... snorkeling, but I really want to because it seems really interesting to be around all the fish.

If I could travel to one place in the world, it would be (Ryan Hodge) ... to New Zealand because I am a big "Lord of the Rings" fan, and since it was filmed there, I would love to see it with my own eyes.

If I could have one superpower, I would choose (Riley Fortune) ... the power of teleportation so I could get places faster.

The first thing I would do if I was lucky enough to hit the lottery would be (Fortune) ... travel to a different country because I want to explore the world.

My biggest pet peeve is (Ben Crow) ... people saying that they are going to do something but then not following through.

My best cross-country memory was (Brian Butcher) ... when I first got to hold our state championship trophy. It was a moment I had dreamed of and worked years for, so finally getting to experience it was a dream come true.

My most embarrassing cross-country memory was (Crow) ... when I ran in junior high, I didn't tie my shoes well, and in a race, one of them came off, so I finished the race with one shoe.

The toughest thing about cross-country is (Andrew Walmer) ... restraining yourself. Sometimes you feel good during a race or workout and want to go fast, but it's better for you to hold back. That way, when you get to meets like state that actually matter, you can run your best.

Three people I'd like to have dinner with are (Pommier) ... Harambe because he was innocent, Steve Prefontaine because I would have loved to have met him and Will Ferrell because he makes me laugh.

Before a meet (Butcher) ... I like to say a quick prayer to myself, thanking God for giving me the opportunity to race that day.

After a meet (Hodge) ... I love to take a nice, long nap. I'm normally dead tired once I get home, so it's hard for me not to snooze for a little bit. Then, we usually do something as a team on Saturday nights, which is always fun.

Five years from now, what I'll remember most about this season is (Walmer) ... turning around not long after crossing the finish line at the state meet and seeing all of my teammates right there with me. That moment was when I knew we had finally accomplished the goal we had been working toward for years.

BEST OF THE BUNCH



For the Mahomet-Seymour boys' cross-country team (above) and the St. Joseph-Ogden girls' cross-country team (right), last Saturday at Detweiller Park in Peoria represented a day they'll never forget. Both programs won state titles. Easily. Hence, it was a no-brainer to name all of the runners who contributed to each title — and who were good sports with our photographer **Robin Scholz** — as The News-Gazette's Athletes of the Week. To check out their insightful answers and to learn more about them, read today's High School Extra, **C-2**.

