



Janis Mason photos/for the Mahomet Citizen

M-S runners prepare to start their season-opening cross-country race Sept. 2 at Charleston. The Bulldogs, ranked No. 1 in Class 2A, won team honors in the 12-school meet. Starting in the front were, from left, Ryan Hodge (2080), Riley Fortune (2077) and Mathias Powell (2090).

## BOYS' CROSS-COUNTRY

# STRONG START

## Defending Class 2A state champions finish first at Charleston Invitational

By JASON BROWN  
For The Mahomet Citizen

Last season, the Mahomet-Seymour boys' cross-country team officially established itself as a perennial powerhouse in the area by winning the Class 2A state championship.

To stay at the highest level of performance and keep the No. 1 ranking in Class 2A, the returning Bulldogs have had to continue to improve, and new runners have to step up and continue the standards the program has already established.

From the results of the Bulldogs' first meet at the Charleston Invitational last Saturday, the team is heading in the right direction.

M-S took first place in the 12-team invite and several Bulldogs ran personal bests in their first meet of the year.

"The first race is a good race to get the nerves out of the way," head coach Neal Garrison said.

To win, M-S scored the lowest point total of 43, followed by Danville's 57.

"They (the Bulldogs) had to run fairly well as No. 3 state-ranked Danville ran a nice race," Garrison said. "Danville is a strong team. Many of our stronger Apollo conference teams were in the



Senior Kyle Sheehy was one of nine medal winners for the Bulldogs at last weekend's Charleston Invitational. He finished 40th overall.

meet, so it was good to see them early."

Apollo Conference foes included Mount Zion, Charleston, Mattoon and Effingham.

The Bulldogs finished with nine medal winners (top 40 placers): senior Ryan Hodge, junior Mathias Powell, junior Bryson Keeble, senior Riley Fortune, senior Evan Burge, junior Kaelan Davis, senior Joe Churm, sophomore David Wilcoski and senior Kyle Sheehy.

Hodge, Powell and Keeble

all finished among the top 10.

Hodge led the Bulldogs with a seventh-place finish with a 3-mile time of 16 minutes, 1 second, Powell placed eighth at 16:01 and Keeble ninth in 16:01.

Fortune finished in 11th place, crossing the line at 16:05, and Burge followed in 13th at 16:17.

Davis took 14th with a time of 16:26, and Churm placed 30th at 17:20.

Wilcoski (32nd) and Sheehy (40th) rounded out the Bulldogs medal winners with

times of 17:29 and 17:53, respectively.

"David really worked hard this summer and it paid off," Garrison said. "He is a strong varsity runner."

Wilcoski improved on last year's time by 1 minute and 22 seconds.

"Kyle Sheehy was another runner we were very impressed with as he earned a medal by placing high in the invitational," Garrison said. "Kyle also put a great amount of work in this summer, so it was nice to see his hard work rewarded with a medal to start his senior year. He has really stepped it up as a physical leader this year."

The rest of the Bulldogs finished in the top 100.

Nate Douglas (18:18) took 46th, Kiel Ledin (18:36) finished 51st, Joe Taylor (19:07) placed 61st and Caleb Dowers (19:10) placed 63rd.

"Our new runners — Caleb Dowers, Joe Taylor and Caleb Mason — did an excellent job," said Garrison. "Caleb Dowers and Joe Taylor really stepped it up as freshman ... (and) junior Kiel Ledin ran a lifetime best which is hard to do in the first meet."

M-S is scheduled to compete in the Lee Halberg Invitational at 10:30 a.m. Saturday at Lincoln Park in Springfield.