



Photo by Daniel L. Chamness

M-S boys' cross-country standout Bryson Keeble inches closer to Sincere Williams-Davis at the IHSA Class 2A State Championships at Detweiller Park last season. The senior is committed to personal goals, including a bedtime routine, to better his 2018 season.

Keeble, Powell hoping early to bed makes them rise up the state leaderboard

By ISAAC TROTTER
For The Mahomet Citizen

MAHOMET — Bryson Keeble and Mathias Powell have made a pact. Throughout the rest of the cross-country season, both guys have to be in bed before 11 p.m.

The late-night shenanigans have been put on hold. A quest for a state championship is more important.

"There are studies that show that a sleep schedule is perfect, like going to bed at the same time, waking up at the same time, that's supposedly essential for runners," Keeble said. "Hope-

fully it does something. We did make a rule on it that if one goes to bed past 11 p.m., you have to text the person that you were up. If I went to bed past 11, I would text Mathias and say, 'I didn't go to bed before 11, and I won't do it again.'"

Every cross-country runner is gunning for first place. Except for Keeble. A second-place finish in the state would be perfect.

"My goal by the end of the year is that I want to get second in state," Keeble said. "I think the importance of second in state is because my friend Mathias

deserves it more than I do — at least right now. During my injury, he showed me my posture exercises, he gave me intel on training plans and ideas, and he's the most disciplined dude ever. Going first and second in state with him would be a great experience."

But there's a case that Keeble is just as deserving of a state championship. The senior has always been a strong runner, but last year he was unable to really show off his immense potential because he had an iron deficiency that hampered his impact.

"I just felt like I wasn't living up to

my potential," Keeble said. "About the fourth race, I was dropping so far back, almost off varsity. I was about to get a sports psychologist because I thought I had something wrong with my mental state. I got my iron tested and it was super low. In a way, it was kind of a relief because I knew that there was a reason that I was running so far below my potential. It's hard being one of the top guys, but having your body force yourself to be so far behind than what you're supposed to be."

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CROSS-COUNTRY: 'State champion' is possible'

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With the iron deficiency finally back under control, Keeble was able to regain a little bit of his form.

He finished 45th in Class 2A with a time of 15 minutes, 39 seconds as he helped Mahomet-Seymour win the state championship. Keeble was the fourth Bulldog to finish, and without his impressive time, M-S might not have brought home first place.

"It's the most humbling experience for me because you get the most beautiful experiences in the darkest times," Keeble said. "Running meant so much to me at the time. It was my religion. When you're so far below where you want to be, it's so much harder on you. Being able to count on the team's points meant so much."

Keeble's older brother, Alex, was one of the best runners in M-S history. Alex graduated in 2016 and ran at the University of Illinois for a year.

"He is my greatest mentor," Keeble said. "Nobody else is a greater mentor. I only started running because of him. I tried out cross-country because of him. He's honestly the toughest guy I have ever met. Freshman year, I just remember that I hated running with him. He pushed me so far past my limit. He knew I had it in me."

Led by legendary coach Neal Garrison, the boys' cross-country program is gunning for another state

championship.

Powell has a chance to bring the individual state title home, and a strong performance from Keeble could help M-S repeat as Class 2A state champions.

"A state championship is possible," Keeble said. "Coach Garrison always pulls something off with his runners. The goal is always a trophy."

Garrison's impact has stretched far and wide throughout his years. Garrison's positive motivation pulled Keeble through the tough times last year when he was dealing with his injuries. He hopes to pay Garrison back with a strong senior season.

"Coach Garrison is one of the most positive

people I have ever met," Keeble said. "I don't think it's a coincidence that he is a counselor at the high school, as well as being a cross-country coach, because it really correlates. Since running is like 90 percent mental, having a coach like that is amazing to have by my side. I don't know how old he is, but he's still running 15 to 20 miles per day. He's absolutely nuts."

Powell has a chance to bring the individual state championship home, and a strong performance from Keeble could help M-S repeat as Class 2A state champs. So don't call them at midnight; they will have been asleep for at least an hour.

BULLDOG OF THE WEEK

This week's Mahomet Citizen and Walk Chiropractic Bulldog of the Week is Mahomet-Seymour senior Kyle Kinney.

Kinney is going to hold down the fort for the Bulldogs' offensive line. The right tackle is ready for a very good year. Kinney's veteran leadership has been huge during the first week of M-S training camp.

With four juniors aiming for playing time on the offensive line, Kinney has stepped up to show them the way.

"I'm expecting him to have a big year," M-S offensive coordinator Michael Burner said. "He played basketball freshman



Darrell Hoemann/
for The News-Gazette

FOOTBALL

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Jared Priest hasn't played a ton of varsity over the past few years, but he's time providing valuable depth is over. As of now, Priest is slotted in as starting offensive tackle.

"Jared Priest has had a really good offseason," Burner said. "He played a lot of positions as a backup for us last year, which was great because he was super versatile. There were a couple times where he looked like he was going to play because of an injury, but that starter came back, and Jared never had any issues. I really admired that about Jared. He's physically matured a little bit. He's leaned up, put on a little more muscle and I think he's going to have a good year for us."

Priest, Kinney and Mendenhall are all pretty consistent, but M-S has four juniors who are pushing for the final two spots.

J.T. Murphy, Costen Campion, Gavi O'Dell and Kurtis Gilonoske have all been battling hard throughout the first week of camp. Burner is looking for one guy



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