

Mahomet-Seymour boys' cross country takes third at Cowchip Classic



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By Fred Kroner

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With an all eighth-grade lineup, the Bulldogs placed third at the Chrisman Cowchip Classic, which was held over a two-day period (Thursday, Sept. 3 and Friday, Sept. 4).

There was little separation between the top three schools.

Meet champion Champaign St. Matthew had a score of 79 points, followed by Champaign Holy Cross (82) and M-S (83). Fourth-place Effingham St. Anthony totaled 162 points.

Three Bulldogs finished within four seconds of each other.

Team-leader Kaden Jackson was 12th in 12 minutes, 51.6 seconds in the 2-mile race. Lukas Nykaza was 13th in 12:51.9 and Blake Dillman was 14th in 12:55.5.

The school's other participants were Ty Clark (23rd in 13:23.4), Ethan Ramirez (32nd in 13:53.6), Will Anderson (61st in 15:13.5) and Owen Mahannah (70th in 16:20.6).

There were 121 participants in the race.

On Saturday (Sept. 5), M-S took a different set of runners to St Joseph for a junior varsity dual meet with the host school.

"There was some extra energy as most of the runners were competing in their first cross-country race of the season, most of them ever," coach Lisa Martin said.

More than 70 young Bulldogs attended the meet.

"Working closely with Mr. York in transportation, meet hosts and parents, we ask our runners and spectators to follow all COVID safety rules," Martin said. "The coaches, assisted by Principal Mills, screened all athletes before we loaded the buses to head to St. Joseph without delay.

"The credit goes to the amazing athletes in that they did wonderfully

following team expectations in this area. We are thankful for families that set the expectations that allow for us to focus on coaching."

Among the 58 boys who participated for the two schools, the individual winner was M-S seventh-grader Chase Dockham. His 2-mile time was 13 minutes, 10 seconds.

There were four races, with each one being a co-ed event.

In the first heat, the M-S leaders were: Dockham (first in 13:10); Parker Wilkins (second also in 13:10); Landon Dowers (fourth in 13:49); Camden Wood (fifth in 13:57) and Landon Busch (sixth in 13:58).

In the second heat, M-S' leaders were: Zach Wilcoski (first in 14:37); Pearce Slocum (second in 14:43); Hawke O'Malley (third in 14:51); Camden Snodsmith (fourth in 15:11) and Braylen McDermid fifth in (15:32).

In the third heat, M-S' leaders were: Corbin Phillips (fourth at 16:52); Isaac Biegler (sixth at 17:02); Kolby Dietz (ninth at 17:29); Jesiah Hall-Harpst (12th at 17:45) and Nolan Maples (18th at 18:38).

In the fourth heat, M-S' leaders were: Andrew Kassem (second at 17:59); Izaiah Brotherton (fifth at 19:50); Elliot Smith (24th at 24:02); Arthur Hofbauer (28th at 27:36) and Jael Briones (29th at 27:43).

In the Tuesday (Sept. 8) home-opener at 13 Acres Park, M-S captured seven of the top 10 places in the 38-person boys' race – after a short rain delay – and sprinted past both Mount Zion and Monticello.

M-S' team score was 25. Mount Zion was second with 36 points. Monticello (115) finished third.

The Bulldogs' leader on the 2-mile course was Lukas Nykaza, who was

timed in 12 minutes, 24 seconds and finished third.

The first four M-S placers completed the course in two-second increments.

Fourth-place Auggie Gaudio was timed in 12:26, fifth-place Kaden Jackson ended in 12:28 and sixth-place Justus Vrona stopped the clock in 12:30.

Also in the top 10 for M-S were Henry McMurry (seventh in 12:31), Ty Clark (ninth in 12:39) and Ethan Ramirez (10th in 13:08).

One other teammate finished less than a minute behind team-leader Nykaza. Ethan Peterka was 12th in 13:18.

The other Bulldog participants were Chase Dockham (13th in 13:32), Landon Busch (15th in 13:35), Camden Wood (18th in 13:52), Landon Dowers (21st in 14:07), Liam Noonan (22nd also in 14:07) and Bryton Perkins (25th in 14:18).

"Tonight's victory was indicative of two things: The power of the pack and the leadership on the team," Martin said. "The coaches were excited to see so many Mahomet kids that finished together, shutting out the stellar competition that both Monticello and Mount Zion brought to our course.

"It is no surprise that our Bulldogs know how to race, many of our leaders have spent two to three years learning how to be a competitive team, training together and growing together.

"This, in turn, gives coaches the opportunity to turn the reins over to these leaders when it comes to working with the young runners."

The Bulldogs' roster this season features a significant number of newcomers.

"Our team is full of sixth-graders this year, all eager to grow in the sport," Martin said. "This was evident tonight as we had the opportunity to introduce some of those younger runners into the lineup.

"Just as in years past, coaches wait a bit to add the younger runners. This year is somewhat unique in that we started a week late, but still followed suit with previous years. You could see the determination in the eyes of the sixth-graders that went to the line with their teammates.

"The exciting thing is that we have a team full of young runners ready to do the same and we can't wait to watch them grow and work them into the many lineups that we have to put together this year. The puzzle keeps getting more complicated in a good way."

M-S is back in action on Thursday (Sept. 10) with a junior varsity meet at Mount Zion. Monticello is also entered.

Martin will continue to alter her lineup, she said, to "give runners opportunities to wear their race jerseys."