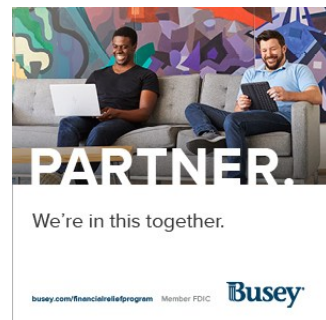


# Mahomet-Seymour boys' cross country wins Apollo Conference meet



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By FRED KRONER

Led by five all-conference performers, Mahomet-Seymour's state-ranked boys' cross-country team reigned supreme on Tuesday (Oct. 13) in the Apollo Conference meet at Eastern Illinois University, in Charleston.

M-S, ranked 11<sup>th</sup> in the most recent milesplit.com state poll (released on Wednesday, Oct. 14), had a five-runner composite score of 26 points to outrun second-place Mattoon, which totaled 60 points. Lincoln (85) finished third in the eight-team event.

Four juniors set the pace for the Bulldogs.

Kyle Nofziger was the individual runner-up, completing the 3-mile course in 15 minutes, 51.2 seconds.

Joseph Scheele was the third-place finisher, crossing the finish line in 15:57.2.

The Bulldogs' other all-Apollo runners were fifth-place Taylor Fan (16:22.9), seventh-place Jonah Singer (16:38.3) and 10<sup>th</sup>-place Hayden Grotelueschen, a sophomore, (16:54.8).

"The boys ran well," M-S head coach Neal Garrison said.

Every runner in the top 10 out of a field of 73 participants were accorded all-conference recognition.

"Joseph had the biggest breakthrough varsity race when he broke into the 15s. He challenged the eventual winner for most of the race. He ran with a lot of determination," Garrison said.

The next three M-S competitors wound up within 26 seconds of one another.

The teammates who packed together were sophomore Ben Wallace (13<sup>th</sup> in 17:24.5), senior Joe Taylor (19<sup>th</sup> in 17:49.1) and junior Karsten Waisath (20<sup>th</sup> in 17:50.8).

The other M-S participant in the varsity race was sophomore Gabe Difanis (31<sup>st</sup> in 18:20.3).

In the open race, the top seven runners were wearing M-S jerseys.

The open-meet winner was junior Justin Straub (17:24.2).

"Justin Straub had the biggest breakthrough of the open race," Garrison said. "He won it and had a big improvement in his time.

"His teammates get a kick out of how Justin always seems to be smiling when he is leading a race. He has been quite a great addition to our team this year."







Trailing Straub were Matthew Sims (second in 17:31.1), Nick Mies (third in 17:31.7), Caleb Dowers (fourth in 17:43.1), Gage Williams (fifth in 18:27.7), Gabe Wisnasky (sixth in 18:29.6) and Finn Randolph (seventh in 18:39.7).

"The open race was incredibly impressive," Garrison said. "I was extremely proud of how they have given their all to the team and their teammates this entire year.

"It is rare to see a team place first through fifth in a meet, but first through seventh is incredibly rare. It really reveals how much these guys care about each other and are willing to push each other. It was so nice to see one

Mahomet runner after another doing so well against other good teams."

Grant Smysor also secured a top-10 finish, ending 10<sup>th</sup> in 20:00.8.

Other Bulldogs in the open race were Preston Wilkins (15<sup>th</sup> in 20:46.5) and Alex Carpenter (23<sup>rd</sup> in 27:06.6).

M-S returns to action on Saturday in a seven-school meet in Monticello at Lodge Park. Others in the field besides the Bulldogs and the host school are Paxton-Buckley-Loda, Stanford Olympia, St. Joseph-Ogden, St. Thomas More and Urbana Uni High.

The Bulldogs will be joined by four state-ranked Class 1A schools on Saturday: No. 1 Olympia, No. 6 Monticello, No. 12 St. Joseph-Ogden and No. 23 Paxton-Buckley-Loda.