

State-ranked Bulldogs win meet on Kickapoo Rail Trail

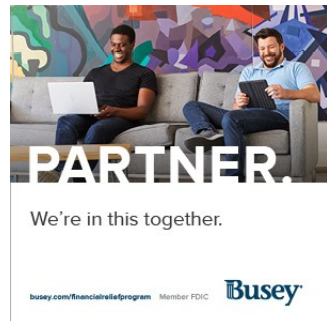


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Photo by Kristi Lietz



By Fred Kroner

Mahomet-Seymour's state-ranked boys' cross-country team outpaced the field on Saturday (Oct. 3) to win a three-school meet in Urbana at the

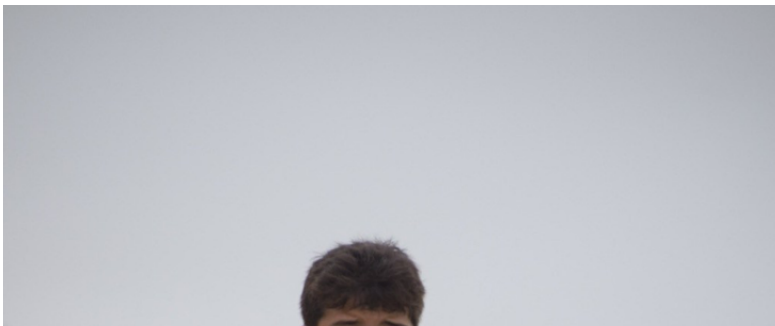
Kickapoo Rail Trail.

“Our boys did a great job at Urbana,” M-S coach Neal Garrison said. “It is so hard to get psyched up for a smaller meet, but they were able to.”

The Bulldogs’ Kyle Nofziger held off Clinton’s Ethan Black to win individual honors by less than 2 seconds. Nofziger’s 3-mile time was 15 minutes, 31.84 seconds.

The runner-up came in at 15:33.44.

M-S had five of its other competitors place among the overall top eight. That group of five ran within 12 seconds of one another for the ninth-ranked Class 2A team (according to the latest milesplit.com state poll).





Taylor Fan was the fourth-place finisher, crossing the finish line in 16:36.98.

He was closely followed by Hayden Grotelueschen (fifth in 16:40.56), Joe Taylor (sixth in 16:41.59), Jonah Singer (seventh in 16:44.48) and Joseph Scheele (eighth in 16:48.87).

The Bulldogs had a second pack of seven runners who closed within 40 seconds of one another, starting with 13th-place runner Karsten Waisath (17:09.9).

Teammates trailing Waisath were Gabe Difanis (14th in 17:22.98), Ben Wallace (15th in 17:26.19), Caleb Dowers (16th in 17:45.41), Justin Straub (17th in 17:55.02), Finn Randolph (18th in 17:57.91) and Matthew Sims (19th in 17:59.69).

The interesting part of the times is that the meet was run in nine different flights. The Bulldogs had every flight winner: Nofziger (first flight), Singer (second flight), Grotelueschen (third flight), Waisath (fourth flight), Difanis

(fifth flight), Dowers (sixth flight), Gabe Wisnasky (seventh flight), Randolph (eighth flight) and Preston Wilkins (ninth flight).

Other M-S participants in the 45-person field were Wisnasky (21st in 18:17.87), Grant Smysor (27th in 18:54.51), Wilkins (30th in 19:43.66), Gage Williams (33rd in 20:02.38) and Gavin Devore (38th in 21:09.02).

In five of the flight races, the Bulldogs not only had the winner but also the runner-up: Scheele (second flight), Taylor (third flight), Sims (fourth flight), Straub (sixth flight) and Smysor (seventh flight).

"Each of our runners represented our team well in their own flight," Garrison said. "They all gave a great effort and made our team look good by placing high in their individual race.

"It was really a team effort."

Eleven Bulldogs recorded the best times of their prep careers.

Nofziger improved by one second, Taylor by four seconds, Dowers by five seconds, Waisath by six seconds, Grotelueschen by seven seconds, Difanis by 23 seconds, Smysor by 24 seconds, Wisnasky by 31 seconds, Straub by 40 seconds, Randolph by one minute, 19 seconds and Wilkins by three minutes, four seconds.

"Preston Wilkins joined our Most Improved over a Career list by improving more than 3 minutes from his first race to his best race," Garrison said. "He has cut off 3 minutes and 4 seconds. He is No. 54 on the list."

M-S captured team honors with a score of 23 points. Runner-up Urbana had 53 points and was followed by Clinton, with 93 points.

After the race, M-S added to its cross-country Hall of Fame by inducting both John Butcher and Lucas Prather.

M-S will return to action on Tuesday (Oct. 13) at the Apollo Conference meet at Eastern Illinois University.