

**SECTIONAL ROUNDUP**

# Three of a kind: M-S, Unity and ALAH

By COLIN LIKAS

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**FORSYTH** — Neal Garrison's Mahomet-Seymour boys' cross-country team captured four consecutive Class 2A state trophies between 2014 and 2017 — two championships and two runner-up finishes, specifically.

Then the Bulldogs entered a bit of a lull. But a 2020 regional victory indicated bigger results likely were on the horizon.

Those bigger results are a reality now.

One week after winning another regional plaque, Garrison's crew bested 18 other teams at Saturday's Class 2A Decatur MacArthur Sectional to take home the championship, with the Bulldogs' 61 points on a muddy Hickory Point Golf Course layout only being challenged by Springfield (93).

"Just super proud of the boys," Garrison said. "These guys worked real hard to try to bring it back to what some of the trophy-winning teams have done."

Seniors Kyle Nofziger and Joseph Scheele bagged top-five finishes for M-S to lead the charge. Nofziger placed third on the 3-mile course in 16 minutes, 11.78 seconds, and Scheele crossed the finish line fifth in 16:18.79.

"It's a relief, but it's nice to see hard work pay off," Garrison said. "We don't have that many runners usually get in the top 10 or get all-sectional honors. It was great to see two of them do it."

Senior Jonah Singer (13th, 16:47.22) and junior Ben Wallace (24th, 17:06.01) also cracked the individual top 25 for the Bulldogs, who now will vie for hardware at this coming Saturday's 2A boys' state race, which occurs at noon at Peoria's Detweiller Park.

Also advancing locally from this sectional was Urbana (fourth as a team, 189 points) and Champaign Central (seventh, 221). The Tigers were led by senior Sam Lambert (ninth, 16:35.75) and senior Park Mitchell (16th, 16:50.51), while the Maroons were paced by junior Peter Smith (18th, 16:52.67). Centennial junior Aaron Hendron (sixth, 16:20.18) moved on individually as well.

**M-S girls move on.** The Mahomet-Seymour girls turned in a fifth-place team effort at Saturday's Class 2A Decatur MacArthur Sectional, with the Bulldogs' 171 points at Hickory Point Golf course in Forsyth allowing them to advance to state.

Sophomore Ava Boyd's 22nd-place time of 20 minutes, 13.65 seconds over 3 miles led M-S, which added top-30 outcomes from freshman Chloe Bundren (27th, 20:23.49) and junior Callie Jansen (28th, 20:23.75).

Also moving on locally from this sectional were Champaign Central senior Maaike Niekerk (eighth, 19:42.01), Centennial sophomore Brooklynn Sweikar (12th, 19:47.08), Danville junior Allison Thompson (16th, 20:01.32) and Urbana senior Celia Barbieri (20th, 20:12.07).

All advancing teams and runners will compete in this coming Saturday's 2A girls' state meet, which begins at 11 a.m. at Peoria's Detweiller Park.

**Knights, James prevail.** The Arthur-Lovington-Atwood-Hammond's boys' program won its second consecutive Class 1A sectional championship Saturday at Hickory Point Golf Course in Forsyth, with the Knights' 75 points better than the totals of 19 other teams, including runner-up St. Joseph-Ogden.

Much to the surprise of



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After winning a Class 1A sectional title on Saturday morning in wgwgw, the Unity girls' cross-country team was recognized during halftime of Unity's football playoff game against Newton at Hicks Field in Tolono on Saturday afternoon.

ALAH coach Lyle Dorjahn, his Knights topped the 87 points SJ-O compiled.

"We didn't expect to win it. Jason Retz and the program at St. Joe-Ogden, we have nothing but respect for those guys," Dorjahn said. "But our guys just ran their tails off."

The Knights were paced by junior Logan Beckmier, who placed second with a 3-mile time of 16 minutes, 16.58 seconds. ALAH added top-20 times from junior Jacob Adcock (seventh, 16:40.64), junior Lyle Adcock (11th, 16:50.75) and senior Jace Green (16th, 16:57.78).

"All the sudden, we've legitimately got a chance (at state)," Dorjahn said. "The guys are doing a great job, and I couldn't be more proud of them."

SJ-O moved on as a team behind a sixth-place finish from senior Luke Stegall (16:38.17) and an eighth-place time from senior Charlie Mabry (16:43.69). Monticello also advanced as a unit, placing third with 144 points and led by senior Ed Mitchell (fifth, 16:36.37).

Paxton-Buckley-Loda senior Ryder James was the individual sectional champion, blazing across the course in 15:24.17. The recent Missouri commit is joined in local individual state qualification by Bismarck-Henning/Rossville-Alvin senior and Illinois State commit Eli Mojonnier (fourth, 16:16.94), Tuscola sophomores Josiah Hortin (10th, 16:50.29) and Jackson Barrett (17th, 17:03.98), Cerro Gordo/Bement sophomore Dylan Howell (14th, 16:55.28) and Uni High senior Henry Laufenberg (15th, 16:55.85).

All of these advancing teams and athletes will compete at next Saturday's 1A boys' state meet, which starts at 10 a.m. at Peoria's Detweiller Park.

**Rockets, Ahmari run show.** The Unity girls won their first sectional championship since 2018 during Saturday's Class 1A St. Teresa Sectional at Hickory Point Golf Course in Forsyth, compiling 57 points to finish atop a 21-team field.

"We've really come on strong in the last couple weeks, which

## **RUNNING AWAY**

Mahomet-Seymour, Unity and Arthur-Lovington-Arthur-Hammond are no strangers to success on the cross-country course. All three local programs added to their school's history by winning sectional championships on Saturday. They'll be joined by a strong area contingent next Saturday at Detweiller Park in Peoria for the state meet. 'These guys worked real hard to try to bring it back to what some of the trophy-winning teams have done,' M-S boys' coach Neal Garrison said. 'Just super proud.'

**More, B-6**