

SPORTS

MSJHS boys' cross country team captures Sectional title; Louis and boys' team to compete in State

by [Dani Tietz](#) • October 16, 2014 • [0 Comments](#)



Mahomet-Seymour Junior High Cross Country runners returning to the 3A IESA State Championship have set high goals for Saturday's competition.

The MSJHS boys' cross country team finished in 7th place during the 2013 IESA State Championship. With runners such as Mathias Powell, Bryson Keeble and Kaelan Davis, who

have consistently place in the top five throughout the 2014 season, the Bulldogs hope to finish Saturday's race in the top 5.

"We have discussed what it takes to be All-State with several of the (kids)," Head Coach Lisa Martin said. "These boys are wonderful in that they soak up every tip that is given to them. They believe in the program that has prepared them, and know that they will do great things as a team this weekend. The coaching staff has simply asked them to run their best."

Eighth grade student Madison Louis will join the boys' team at State. Louis, a two-

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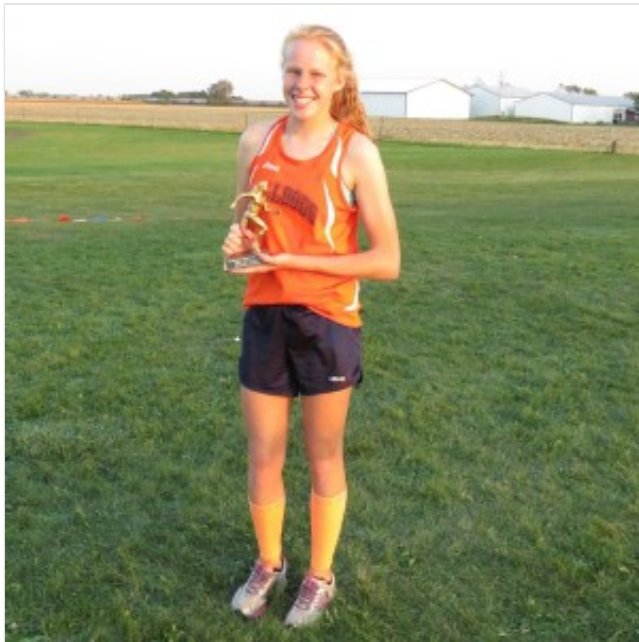
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time All-State competitor has battled an injury all season, but was still competitive with other strong 3A runners at Sectionals, finishing in 10th place. The girls' team, which qualified for State last season, missed the mark as a team this year by finishing 12th overall.

“(Madison) has proven several times that she can persevere when times get tough,” Martin said. “This weekend will be tough, but as she and I

discussed, we are looking for her to do as well as she can as she looks to earn All-State honors again this year.”

Martin added that the girls team has already begun to set goals for the 2015 season. Sixth grade student Olivia Bunting just missed qualifying for State by placing 13th overall. Many runners in both the boys' and girls' program spend their summer months training for the grueling fall season together.

One female athlete has not missed a day of running since Memorial Day. Her times have improved by several minutes from last season to this season.

“In order to be successful in this sport, work ethic and attitude have to be two of the most important aspects of the sport,” she said. “These kids are great kids. They don't complain and are excited for challenges.”

“The goal is for the kids to find something about running and/or being on this team that they enjoy,” Martin said. “I would say that if you take a poll of our 76 runners this season, you would find that they all could tell you something about this sport that they enjoy. As the runners grow in the program, the goals go a bit deeper and competition is of greater emphasis.”

Both Martin and Head Coach Joe Bails began coaching cross country at MSJHS when this year's eighth grade group was in sixth grade.

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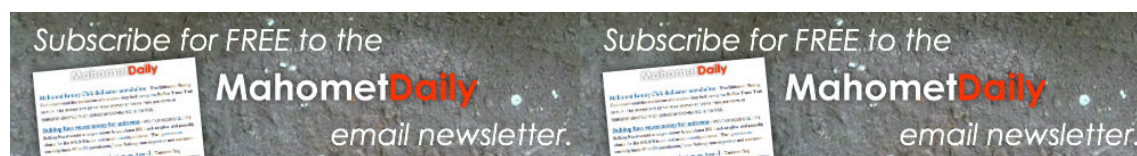
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“They were a clean slate,” Martin said. “They were eager, yet naive as to what the world of running could do for them and they for it.”

“We have all grown together,” she continued. “They have taught me way more than I could ever teach them. Each day is a new adventure, challenge and reward for the coaches. Watching these kids grow as runners has been a joy and a very rewarding experience. We know that they have the skills to advance in running or whatever they choose to do. They have figured out how to be successful and that carries over into all areas of life. “

The 3A IESA State meet will take place on Saturday at Maxwell Park in Normal. Louis will run at 12:30 Saturday. The boys will run at 1:15 p.m.

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