

SPORTS

## Bulldog Race to raise money for uniforms

by [Dani Tietz](#) • September 17, 2013 • [0 Comments](#)



The MSJHS cross country and track teams have worn the same uniforms for 20 years. Through 5K Bulldog Race on Oct. 26, Kelly and Joe Bails hope to raise enough money to purchase 200 new jerseys for the teams.

When volunteer assistant coach Kelly Bails saw the Mahomet-Seymour Junior High cross country and track teams [uniforms](#) last year, she was shocked.

“I thought, you’ve got to be kidding me,” she said. “This is what the kids wear? They’re horrible material, like thick polyester. And the kids run in two hot seasons.”

The jerseys, which are worn by runners in both the cross country and track seasons are approximately 20 years old.

A few years ago, the Mahomet-Seymour School District purchased enough new shorts for the individuals who make it onto the Sectional team. Other runners wear their navy blue gym shorts throughout the season.

Bails, along with her husband and assistant track and cross country coach Joe Bails decided to host a 5K [Bulldog Race](#) on Oct. 26 to raise funds to purchase the 200 needed jerseys at the junior high level.

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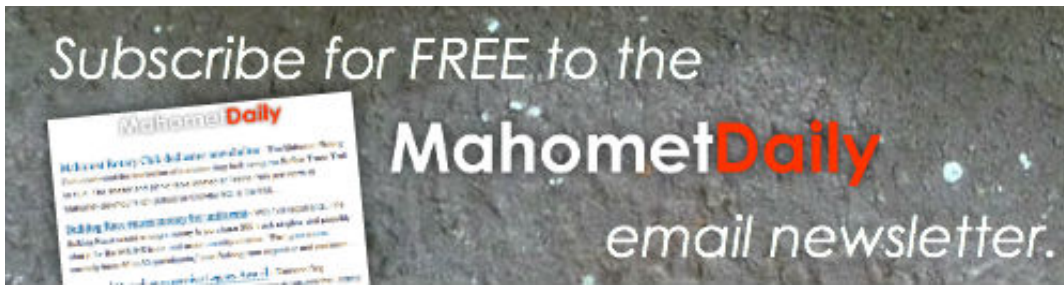
“We’re both runners,” she said. “Joe is a race director for the Mahomet Half-Marathon and 5K race. We both coach running sports, so (a race) seemed like a logical fit.”

Instead of asking runners to go door-to-door selling cookie dough to raise money, they hope the runners will participate in and encourage the Mahomet community to run in the 5K.

With consistently growing numbers in both programs, there are about 200 track and 70 cross country participants per year at the junior high level. This year, Bails hopes they can raise enough money to purchase 200 jerseys for the teams.

Bails did not approach the school district about purchasing new uniforms.

While putting on a race does have expenses, 10 area businesses have stepped up to help [sponsor](#) the event.



“The community is already stepping up and really supporting this race,” she said. “Based on what we have right now, they’ve covered our expenses.”

Bails said MSJHS has also supported the race by letting them use the gymnasium for morning race registration, and the cafeteria for the award ceremony .

Eight age groups with male and female categories will compete for [3-D Bulldog medals](#).

“What I really like about this race is that we are focusing on getting kids out to run,” she said.

With a kid-focused approach, there are 10-and-under, 11 to 14 and 15 to 19 age groups. The Bulldog Race will also be a family fun event with free kids’ run for children ages 3 to 10 on the MSJHS track.

In order to attract a large number of runners, both from the Mahomet community

An advertisement for Fisher National Bank. It features a photograph of four people (three women and one man) in business attire. Below the photo, the text reads "GO LOCAL with FISHER NATIONAL BANK" and "SMALL ENOUGH TO KNOW YOU. LARGE ENOUGH TO SERVE YOU." The bank's logo is on the left, and contact information is on the right: "Phone: (217) 586-1136 Telephone Banking: (217) 897-1999 1501 E Oak | Mahomet, IL 61853". The FDIC logo and website "www.fishernational.com" are at the bottom.

An advertisement for Country Financial. It features a photograph of a woman, Jessie DeHaan. The text reads "Much more than just an insurance company" and "When you receive a policy from COUNTRY, you're not just getting a piece of paper, you're getting peace of mind. Plus you'll be working with one person you know and trust, backed by a team of experts." Contact information includes "Jessie DeHaan 1200 W Bloomington Rd Champaign, IL 61821 217-352-3466 jessie.dehaan@countryfinancial.com". The Country Financial logo is on the right.

An advertisement for IGA Floral. It features a photograph of a bouquet of flowers, including large orange roses and purple flowers. The text reads "WALK THE RED CARPET with IGA FLORAL" and "Call Spring for Prom Flowers". Contact information includes "202 EIRSTWOOD DR. 586-4988".

An advertisement for Community Evangelical Free Church. It features a logo of a tree with colorful leaves. The text reads "COMMUNITY EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH" and "Sundays at 10:45 a.m. www.communityfreechurch.com". The tagline "Loving God and Loving People." is at the bottom.

and surrounding areas, the Bulldog Race will have [chip timing](#) available.

“This is not a one year thing,” Bails said. “We plan on doing this long term, see it grow. To do that, the chip is necessary.”

Bails said the junior high track program needs much more than jerseys. The couple hopes to raise enough money for a long jump pit runway, a new high jump mat, starting blocks and hurdles. They junior high runners also practice on a cinder track with no lanes.

Last year, assistant coach Jeff Kyle made five hurdles for the runners to practice on out of PVC pipes. The athletes do not run a full 100-meter with 10 hurdles until they get to a meet.

“They are definitely at a disadvantage compared to other schools,” Bails said.

MSJHS hosts track meets at MSHS. They are also allowed to use the equipment for the meets.

Bails said the high school also lets the junior high athletes practice on the blocks before school. The high school team uses the blocks after school.

“This level is really all about learning the main skills,” she said. “This is such a developmental level. If they’re not getting in the blocks until the meet, they’re not getting proper instruction. There’s a whole process on how the blocks are set up. It may be different for every kid. And the way they get out at the start is so important.”

Bails has also been surprised by the amount of people who want to donate to the cause. She hopes to set up an online donation through the website.

With 26 intersections along the 5K course, she is also looking for people who will [volunteer](#) as course guards to make sure traffic stops as runners pass. The Mahomet Police will also help during the race.

The Bulldog Race starts in front of the junior high and follows nearly same course as the Mahomet 5K, ending behind MSJHS on Circle Drive.

As one of the cheapest chip-timed races around, Bails hope the community will support the cause through participation.