

SPORTS

PREPS

CROSS-COUNTRY

M-S sprinting to the finish

Bulldogs capture first sectional since '79; St. Thomas More rolls, too

By The News-Gazette

DECATUR — Mahomet-Seymour's boys' cross-country team on Saturday won its first sectional title since 1979.

Next on the to-do list: match the school's best finish at state.

"Fourth is the highest (in 1995 and '96) and if we have a great day I think we can finish that high," M-S coach Neal Garrison said.

M-S secured its second consecutive trip to Class 2A state by edging rival Springfield. Jonathan Schaap finished second, Forrest Smoes third and Ethan Russell 11th to pace the Bulldogs, who also won a regional championship.

Their reward: a postrace cookout featuring pork chop sandwiches provided by parents.

"This group knows how to win," Garrison said. "They've set the tone for future years, where our program can be one of the best."

M-S was the only area team to advance. Danville's Johnny Leverenz moved on by finishing fourth overall.

In the girls' race, M-S finished fifth to qualify for state. Lauren Whitehouse was



Courtesy

Mahomet-Seymour's boys' team shows off its sectional plaque Saturday at Decatur MacArthur.

eighth and Abigail Nielsen was 16th to spark the Bulldogs.

Danville's Mercedes Elliott was the individual winner (18 minutes, 24 seconds). Champaign Central's Hannah Wright (10th) also advanced.

Class 1A

St. Thomas More won its first sectional title, another sign the Sabers could contend in Peoria.

"If we run the best that we can, we certainly could be in the hunt," St. Thomas More coach Dave Behm said.

The Sabers were sharp at Effingham,

easily outdistancing Mount Zion for team honors. That's what happens when five runners place in the top 25: Nick Hess (third), Jacob Helfrich (ninth), Sean Kelley (11th), Sam Powers (12th) and Brendan Remington (24th).

"Our pack was the difference," Behm said, noting that Remington competed despite battling illness this week. "He ran a gutty race," he said.

Fourth-place Monticello and fifth-place Unity also advanced. Andrew Hanselman was 15th to lead the Sages. Austin Woodward and Nick Godsell placed 20th and 21st, respectively, for the Rockets.

Qualifying individually: Schlarman's Jesse Hahne (second place), Oakwood's Jon Davis, Tuscola's Eric Ponder and Uni High's Arch Robison.

In the girls' race, Hannah Houska, Emily Foley, Madison Tutich and Maggie Utgaard finished in the top 12 as Monticello placed second.

Alyssa Pridemore was seventh and Abby Gawthorp 13th to pace third-place St. Joseph-Ogden.

Theresa Welle was ninth as St. Thomas More advanced with a fourth-place showing. Also moving on: fifth-place Unity, which was led by freshman Taylor Renfro (21st).

At the boys' race at Lisle, Prairie Central's Brandon Allsup advanced to state with a 12th-place finish.