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"If nothing else, value the truth"

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CROSS COUNTRY TAKES STATE TITLE

Championship is team's first since 1999

**Stephen Kuehner
Reporter**

Cross country 2007 state champions. No quote or phrase could possibly introduce the St. Louis U. High cross country team any better than that. At 11:30 a.m. last Saturday, seven SLUH athletes stepped up to the line at Oak Hills Golf Center in Jefferson City and ran faster than any other team in Missouri.

How did they do it? First they put in miles upon miles of training year-round. Then they developed a special brotherhood that helped sustain them during the race. Finally, they raced with an attitude very similar to high school 5000-meter record holder Gerry Lindgren.

633 visitors make Open House a success

**Kevin Casey
Core Staff**

Where else can one find never-ending cookie mountains, a mini circus troupe, and overzealous, toga-wearing Latin scholars all in one spot but at St. Louis U. High's Open House? Last Sunday SLUH once again opened its doors to prospective middle school students from around the St. Louis area for this annual event.

This year 633 middle school students passed through the SLUH halls with their families. This number exceeded last year's low attendance by 42 students, bringing it back up to recent years' standards.

"I was very well pleased with the crowd that we had ... how welcoming everyone was, the tour guides—I got a lot of good compliments about them," said Director of Admissions Craig Hannick.

"Run with your heart instead of your mind," said Lindgren. "When you think with your mind, you think of the things you can and can't do. But when you run with your heart, you forget what you can't do, and you just do it."

With the state championship approaching quickly, there had been a lot of speculation about what the St. Louis U. High cross country team

could and could not do. While they had been favored to win for most of the season, other runners were now searching for the team's faults. Many did not believe that SLUH could place one man in the top 25 places of the state race. Others doubted whether junior John Clonis and the U.

COURTESY OF MR. BRIAN GILMORE



The varsity cross country team and coaches pose with their state trophy after the championship race.

High pack could defeat Eric Fernandez and see STATE, 9

Highway 40 construction did not seem to affect the number of attendees, with the number of students from St. Charles reaching 30, only three fewer than last year, and 126 coming from West County, an increase of five.

In an informal survey of visitors from the Highway 40 corridor, parents showed concern, saying that although construction was not necessarily a deterrent, it would definitely play a part in their decision-making process.

SLUH addressed these concerns by including an information flyer in the packet that each family received after registering. The flyer

touched on several "creative solutions" that the school is looking at with regard to the construction, including extending school hours, allowing for ready flexibility in the academic schedule, and SLUH's "exclusive partnership" with Metro regarding bus passes. For instance, through the month of January SLUH will experiment with putting Activity Period at the start of the school day, giving students more time to get to school.



Sophomore Sean Dailey (left) and senior James Burke display their juggling talents at Open House.

Parents seemed not only encouraged but also impressed by the steps SLUH is taking, and many said that if SLUH is see OPEN, 10

STATE

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Parkway West's powerful second and third runners.

But even with all the talk being thrown around, the SLUH team knew not to think about what they could and could not do. They had run fartleks in the August heat, kicked out 10 miles or more in the bone-chilling cold of January, and refined pack running to a science. They were ready, and they were not going to psyche themselves out of a victory.

"We really tried to stop talking about it as much as possible," said junior Austin Cookson. "Two days before was the last time we talked about the race pretty much." The seven racers and the alternates instead turned their attention to other matters, like breakfast.

Upon arriving at the course, the SLU High team prepared themselves for the race. Their preparation included not only jogging and stretching, but also finding the right mindset for the race.

"We definitely thought we had the talent and training to win," said team captain Mike McCafferty. But the team also knew that the race was not going to be handed to them.

"There were some tough teams out there, like Hickman and Kickapoo," acknowledged McCafferty, "But we knew that the only way we would get beat was if all seven of our guys had a bad day." That philosophy was the same that the team took to every meet they ran in this season: we will win if we run well, but there are teams that will beat us if we do not give all we have.

With STUCO Vice President of Spirit Eric Lampe leading the Blue Crew in three resounding cries of "Who's high, Who's high? U. High U. High, what, what!" SLUH's pack began the race that would crown them state as champions.

"We came through the 1K mark just over three minutes flat, so we were on pace for under a five minute mile," said sophomore Caleb Ford, referring to the quick pace of the early part of the race. "But then the front bunched up and the race got really slow," he continued. "Right after the mile mark, it began to spread out."

Head coach Jim Linhares also noticed the unusual pace of the first mile, saying, "Seeing 80 people crammed together at

the mile was kind of strange, but I saw our guys were in good position. What I didn't realize was how hard they had to work to be there."

As the race continued, it became obvious that the score would be very close between SLUH and Parkway West. With Eric Fernandez leading the race, followed by two more Parkway West runners before any U. High boys, no one could be sure of the outcome.

When Linhares saw the team again, at the base of Firehouse Hill, he realized just how close the race was going to be. "I knew we were in some trouble," he said, "because there was a big old gap between Austin and Chris. What I didn't realize was that the race had bolted, and John, Dan, and Austin had been able to stick with it."

The pace had really picked up between the one-mile mark and Firehouse Hill. The whole team was forced to push a little harder than they had planned if they wanted to stay in the race with Parkway West and Kickapoo.

"I was standing with about a quarter-mile to go," recalled McCafferty. "Our top three guys were where they should be, but when I saw our fourth and fifth guys, I thought, 'We're not going to win,' and started shouting, 'We're not winning! We need more places!'" McCafferty's shouting must have been just what the team needed because, according to him, almost everybody picked up "probably 4 or 5 places before they finished."

The rest of the team did their part to cheer the racers on, too. Covered in paint and screaming their encouragement, the rest of the team ran from point to point to support their teammates. With alumni, parents, and faculty joining them, the other SLU High runners were determined to do their part during this race.

"I cheered so much that I couldn't sing in Chorus for three days," said team captain Steve Schumacher rather proudly. "I knew I had to sing for four hours at Open House the next day, but I didn't care."

But no matter how loudly the fans cheer, it all comes down to who runs 5000 meters fastest. Parkway West was able to finish three runners before Clohisy (18th, 16:31) crossed the line, but Cookson (26th, 16:38) and team captain Dan Warner (27th, 16:39)

were right behind him. The race was going to come down to whether SLUH's fourth and fifth men could beat Parkway's last two scorers by enough to make up for Fernandez's first place finish. When Ford (43rd, 17:06), team captain Chris Murphy (49th, 17:14), and sophomore Bill Gabler (55th, 17:17) all crossed the line before anyone else from Parkway, it looked like SLUH might have pulled it off. But even with SLU High's seventh man, junior David Kuciejczyk-Kernan (68th, 17:24), finishing before Parkway's fifth, nobody could be positive who had come out on top.

"I didn't know where Parkway West's or Kickapoo's number fives were," said Linhares. "I couldn't see them, and I was worried whether they had the guys to kick us out."

"It was pretty nerve-racking right after the race because we didn't know the results," said team captain Dave Linhares. "Then I saw Matt Lawder (SLUH '07) running towards us with his one finger in the air, yelling, 'We won!'" With the official news that SLUH had beaten Parkway West, 113-118, the celebration began.

"There was a lot of talk about if SLUH could win without any superstars," said Jim Linhares. It was a fair question since there had been runners much closer to the front of the race in the last couple of years. Ben Murphy-Baum ('06) had finished second in 2005, helping SLUH to a fourth-place finish, and Lawder had anchored last year's second place team title by placing fifth last year. But Jim Linhares had a different point of view on the issue.

"Everyone of our seven, in a sense, was a star," he explained. "In 1999, when we won by only one point, it came down to where our fifth man finished. This one, it was about every single one that came in."

The team celebrated, passing around the trophy, taking pictures, and soaking in the experience. They had done it. They are the state champions for the next twelve months. But a state championship is not quite enough for these Jr. Bills. They want to compete in even tougher competitions. So, after celebrating with a trip to Shakespeare's Pizza, they began to analyze how they had raced and

see PRE LIVES, 10

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where their son wanted to go, they would find ways around the inconveniences.

"We'll sweat it out," is how one mother put it.

But even with the looming problem of Highway 40, the U. High could not keep the crowds away.

This year schools represented by visitors totaled an impressive 144, compared with past years' averages of about 120 to 125. Eighth graders composed 44 percent of the students who registered, which, according to Hannick, was an increase from recent years as well. There was also a fairly large increase in the number who came from Illinois, which reached 29 students.

"We had a crush of people at the beginning," said principal Mary Schenkenberg. "We were a little worried there for a while that we were going to run out of tour guides. We wanted to be sure we stuck with our promise

PRE LIVES

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what they could do better this Saturday at the regional meet in South Dakota.

"We didn't have our ideal day," admitted Murphy. "But I think, in the end, it was that pack mentality that won it for us. The last two were just as important as the first five. They finished in front of Parkway West's four and five. Without them, we wouldn't have won," he continued, having nothing but good things to say about the pack. "I think that really defines the SLUH program. It's been an honor to run with these guys, and

DISTRICT

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attempts for 143 yards and two touchdowns. Swanston had a lightened workload partially because of the talented rushing tandem of Wingo and Griffin Lowry.

Wingo ran for a 25-yard touchdown late in the fourth (4:00 remaining), which only added to his impressive performance for the night. He finished with 239 yards and a touchdown on the ground, while Lowry finished with 112 yards rushing.

The defense put on a show in the second half, limiting the Griffins to only one controversial second half touchdown that came within the final minute of the game. Matt Rice led the team with 10 tackles while

to families that we would give them each a tour guide because that's a really special part of SLUH's open house."

For the first several hours the line of visitors stretched from the upper entrance of the Danis Lobby all the way to the Oakland parking lot, sometimes even turning and running along the sidewalk perimeter of the lot.

With over 300 Jr. Bills working as tour guides and another 100 manning the club tables in the gym, crisis was averted, and each visiting family was able to have their own guide.

"(The Open House) went really well," said junior Dan Baxter, who gave four tours. "I gave a couple of tours, pretty much just showed (the visitors) around, told them some personal stories of my experiences here. It was fun, and they seemed to enjoy it."

Although there were a few backups at the beginning of the tour route, Hannick said

I'm looking forward to running with them at regionals."

"We had a lot of pressure on us because we were the favorites, but I think we handled it well," commented Clohisy. He also noted that, with Warner and Ford being unavailable to run this weekend, a lot of the pressure is off.

While missing their numbers 3 and 4, SLUH is not overly worried about their absence. With McCafferty and sophomore Tony Minnick stepping up to fill the vacancies, the team still feels competitive.

Morgan Cole and Andrew Bouquet added 5 each.

The Jr. Bills have been back to work this week, trying to avenge last year's playoff drubbing by Mehlville, the same opponent they will face tonight. Mehlville comes out of district play having outscored its opponents 132-21. Kornfeld does acknowledge the talent on Mehlville but is very confident in his team's ability.

"They are one of the most athletic teams I've seen in a long time...There are several young men on their team that can go all the way," he said.

The game is likely to sell out, so it is suggested that fans buy their tickets from the

that this is typical and attributed them to the process of gathering the visitors' information on the computers and introducing them to their guides.

"(The backup) was a good thing because it showed a lot of interest in SLUH," said Baxter. "I think we dealt with it as quickly and efficiently as possible with the number of people we had there."

"I didn't hear any complaints at all," said Schenkenberg. "People didn't seem to have to wait, even though the line was all the way out to the parking lot for a couple of hours."

"The longest I heard for a wait was 20 minutes," added Hannick, "and no one seemed to object, especially after the moms started handing out cookies in the line."

"I think we were blessed with a beautiful day," commented Schenkenberg on the overall day. "We had a great turnout of students and the school looked beautiful."

"I think we have a really good chance at qualifying (for nationals)," said Murphy.

With six of their seven runners having personal records of under 17:00 this year, they are not fooling themselves. They will be running with the best runners from Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota. Or maybe it would be more appropriate to say that those other teams will be running with SLUH. After all, they are the 2007 Missouri Cross Country Champions.

switchboard. The Jr. Bills will be playing at Mehlville at 7 p.m. hoping to advance to the state semifinals.

Lend me your ears!

Attention SLUH Latin and Greek scholars: the Latin Club will hold a meeting Wednesday next at activity period. Be there to take part in a true republican government and help design some nifty t-shirts.