

Alive and kicking
St. Mary's advances in
sectional soccer action
Page D2

Sports

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Finishing kick
Final team scores, times
from state cross country
Page D3

SLUH nips Liberty for state crown

Junior Bills also fend off
challenge from Cadets,
earn first title since '61

By Joey Cavato
Staff writer

It's been a long time since the St. Louis University High cross country team took home the first place trophy from the state meet, so head coach Jim Linhares and his squad didn't mind waiting an extra hour or two to get their hands on the trophy.

The Jr. Billikens edged Liberty 112-113 to win their first state cross country meet since 1961. SLUH also had to fend off CBC, which finished

third, just six points behind SLUH.

The Jr. Bills had to wait to raise that first place trophy until after the 4A girls race that began more than an hour late.

Only Ted Snodgrass earned an individual medal, finishing 19th. But all five of the Jr. Bills scorers finished in the top 50 overall.

"It was a true team effort," Linhares said. "Individually some of our guys were disappointed. Ted Snodgrass would like to have been closer to seventh or eighth and Nathan Tower wanted to be all-state. But not one of our guys in our scoring five had a bad day."

Tower placed 30th and fellow seniors Murphy O'Brien, Dan Westlund and Tim Huegrich finished 36th, 37th and 50th.

"They all ran a smart race, hung together and finished strong," Linhares said.

On a day that felt more like late August than early November, many runners needed IVs, but the Jr. Bills managed to stay strong through the finish.

"The last 300 meters were key," Linhares said.

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Jim Linhares

SLUH cross country coach

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The current squad that also included juniors Ryan Hatch and Dan Leinauer had plenty of fans to celebrate with. Some former cross country runners and students made up the "Blue Crew" that made the trip to cheer the squad on.

With painted faces and bodies, they made their presence felt as the Jr. Bills finally got that elusive

state championship.

"We had some kids that have been through the frustration," Linhares said. "Murphy and Ted were there for the frustration for finishing third (in 1997)."

"It's kind of hard to believe," Hatch said. "I don't think I really realize it. We knew we had the chance to do it."

The Junior Bills also edged out CBC for the top spot in the final *Journal* cross country poll. SLUH, which held the No. 1 ranking all season, ended up in first place with 100 points. CBC was second with 90.

The victory at state is especially sweet for Linhares who's been at SLUH for 15 years.

"I told him the monkey was off his back," assistant coach Tom Flanagan said.

Mehlville senior Scott Reeves finished 42nd with a time of 17:27. He finished 10th last year with a time of 16:40. Lindbergh junior Paul Koehler placed 48th with a time of 17:34.

Buono finishes with a flurry 'Cats double their pleasure

Lutheran South senior closes quickly, posts personal best in 9th place state finish

By Joey Cavato
Staff writer

Lutheran South senior Donna Buono had been waiting for this