



## Despite Davidson's All-State finish, XC finishes 11th at State race

BY JOSEPH REZNIKOV  
CORE STAFF

An All-State performance by senior Dustan Davidson and personal record by junior Joe Laughlin weren't enough to lead the St. Louis U. High varsity cross country team to a top ten finish at the state meet last Saturday in Jefferson City.

The Jr. Bills placed eleventh out of 16 teams, scoring 250 points. Lafayette placed first in the state with a score of 38 points.

Davidson led the SLUH team all year, and the state meet was no different. Davidson placed 14th overall out of the 165 runners with a time of 16:26.02 going for All-State honors. Davidson's accomplishment makes him the 34th SLUH runner since 1989 to be named an All-State finisher.

"It was a great honor," said Davidson. "I've been All-State three times in track, but it was nice to be named All-State in cross country too."

Laughlin came in shortly after Davidson, finishing

in 31st place with a time of 16:42.86—a personal record.

"To PR on the state course with the last mile the way it is (hilly and uphill) is really impressive," said Porter. "He's running with the top guys in the state."

"Joe's a great runner," said senior Jake Lepak. "He's really improved a lot over the past few years and especially this year; it's exciting to watch how much he's matured."

Other members of the state team were seniors Joe Butler (17:28.51), Jake Lepak (17:45.26), and Billy Balosi (17:45.94); junior William Kelly (18:08.99); and freshman Patrick Hetlage (17:55.14).

SLUH's strategy at the starting line was to go out hard in the first kilometer rather than conserve energy for a move later on in the race.

"For us to have a shot at being in the top four and getting a trophy we knew we needed to be aggressive," said coach Joe Porter. "It was a big risk to go out like that, but we took it and it just didn't work out."

SLUH's plan seemed to be working when they came through the mile mark in fourth place, but the runners could not maintain the strong pace throughout the second and third miles.

Though some of the runners didn't have the race they were hoping for, they know that they can't be too frustrated with their performance. Some positive things can be pulled out of the race; the team extended its streak of making it to the state meet to 22 consecutive years. SLUH also managed to beat all the teams they had defeated in the sectional meet the week before, which was a goal coming into the race.

"No matter how well we do at the state meet, it's always a celebration of us as a team and who we are," said Laughlin.

The atmosphere and style of racing of the state meet is different compared to a normal meet, which could have been one of the things that caused SLUH to struggle.

"Since everyone is fast, all the runners go out hard and it



The cross country team at the starting line of the State meet.

PHOTO [MR. BILL LEPAK

becomes a war of attrition to see who can hang in there the longest," said Laughlin. "A lot of us weren't used to that kind of race."

The completion of the state meet brings an end to the SLUH cross country careers for the four seniors, who have dedicated so much time and effort to the program. But rather than reminisce in the

past, they are ready to move on and prepare for their final season on the track in the spring.

"It was really sad to end my final cross country race, but I had a great time over the past few years and I made a lot of great memories," said Lepak.

Many of the runners will continue their training dur-

ing the offseason with a winter running group starting on Monday, Nov. 30, the first day back from Thanksgiving break. The winter running club prepares the runners for both indoor and outdoor track seasons as well as future cross country seasons.

## Swim team takes 13th at State meet despite low seeding, senior-led 200 freestyle finishes fifth

BY PATRICK SCHULER  
REPORTER

Everything for the St. Louis U. High swim team has led up to this point. All of the hours of practice, the tedium of shaving excess body hair to cut down time, and the tireless toning of muscles led to a 13th place finish at the state meet held at St. Peters Rec Plex.

The Jr. Bills came into the meet against the current: SLUH was seeded to make the state finals in just one event, the 100 breaststroke. For the team to have any success at State, swimmers needed to be in top form.

"We knew going into the state meet we'd have to swim fast," head coach Lindsey Ehret said. "At practice I asked the state team to write down their individual goal times for their races. ... Focusing and hitting their taper really helped everyone achieve their goals and swim best times."

The goals seemed to work, as every swimmer at state swam his best time of the year. Sophomore Matthias Hostetler dropped over a second and a half in his 100 butterfly, finishing 20th after being seeded 68th. Sophomore Barclay Dale had his best swims of the year in the 100 backstroke and 50 backstroke in the relay, and senior Dan Walsh dropped five seconds in his 500 freestyle.

After the important prelims on Friday, SLUH dove into the state finals on

Saturday, returning for five swims—including two of the three relays—after being projected to only return in one.

The 200 medley relay placed eighth overall in finals while the 200 freestyle senior relay placed fifth overall, dropping nearly three seconds as a team. Seniors Thomas O'Brien, Michael Krause, and Chris Kreienkamp had career-best splits in the 200 freestyle relay in either the prelim or finals race, an unexpected strong point for the team.

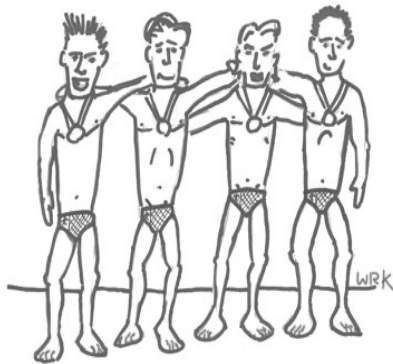
"It was awesome to end my career as a swimmer on the podium," O'Brien said. "It was a great way to go out swimming your fastest time."

In the individual events, freshman Joe Feder was the swimmer of the meet for SLUH. In the 200 freestyle,

where he was the only freshman out of 16 swimmers, Feder placed 15th after posting a time of 1:46.62, dropping nearly half of a second from his preliminary time. Feder placed 13th in the 100 backstroke, bettering his time from 55.11 in prelims to 54.68 in the state finals.

The other standout individual swimmer for SLUH was senior Mark Franz, who took seventh place in the 100 breaststroke with a time of 59.39 seconds. This was a huge step up after placing 16th last year. Franz also had the fastest 50 breast split of any swimmer in the state in the 200 medley relay; SLUH placed eighth in the event.

Franz didn't swim his relay without some trouble, however. Right before the



ARTWORK | WILL KRAMER

race, Franz's swim cap broke. Although it doesn't sound too troublesome, the hair on a swimmer's head can negatively affect the swimmer's time. Somehow, the broken cap helped Franz, who dropped his time by two and a half seconds in the event.

"That's all a coach can really ask for, is that her athletes swim their best and that's what happened at state this year," said Ehret. "All of this fast swimming resulted in our 13th place finish—which should be considered a great accomplishment. I'm looking forward to next year, there will be some sprint gaps to fill, but I'm confident our junior class and underclassmen will step up."

## Racquetball ready to serve up the competition

BY ANDREW MODDER  
REPORTER

The St. Louis U. High varsity racquetball team looks to dominate its challenging regular season opponents on its road to Portland in search of a sixth straight national title.

The team features junior Chris Schulze, its top seed, and seniors Tim Juergens, John Correa, Charlie Mueth, Jacob Longinette, and Rich Helfrey, seeds two through six. The energetic doubles pair of seniors Vince Freeman and Andrew Thomas rounds out the varsity team.

"I think we have a pretty good chance of going 10-0 this year, even though we don't have that much varsity experience," said Schulze.

Only three of the players, Schulze, Juergens, and Mueth, have prior varsity experience.

"We only have three returning varsity players and there are a lot of new guys," said Correa, "but we also have a lot of experience in our top seeds."

Despite lacking much experience at the varsity level, the team is filled with experience at lower levels and feels prepared for the season.

"I think with the depth of our team we are going to be really competitive and do really great this year," said Juergens. "I think we can produce the same results we had last year."

A challenging schedule has the team playing both Kirkwood and Lafayette—the

two teams ranked closest behind them—twice throughout the course of the season.

"I'm really looking forward to my match with Lafayette because they have one of the top players in the state," said Schulze about Lafayette's one seed Theuns Gerber.

The team as a whole looks to repeat last year's State and then National championships by employing head coach Joe Koestner's philosophy of hitting high-percentage shots and out-smarting opponents.

"I think we are still going to have a really great year this year," said Juergens. "Hopefully we have the same result as last year because obviously that turned out really well for us."

However, after star players Kevin Schneider and Brian Kissel graduated last year, the team had big shoes to fill.

"Schneider was just a monster," said Correa, "but junior Chris Schulze I think is a great replacement for him and I think we'll do fine despite losing those guys."

In addition to being the top seed, Schulze gained more fame through an interview he had with Rene Knott this past Wednesday on KSDK.

"(Knott's) a great guy and it was a lot of fun," said Schulze. "That was really cool for me to experience that."

The team faced off against Kirkwood yesterday, winning narrowly by a score of 3-2 to improve to 2-0.