

Jr. Bill is the Baum

SLUH's Ben Murphy-Baum runs away from the field at Hancock

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St. Louis University High senior Ben Murphy-Baum has had a lot of success during his cross country career, including a top 10 finish at the Missouri State High School Activities Association Meet last season.

Murphy-Baum has just not been able to cross the finish line in first place very often. His only previous individual win was in last year's district race.

That was a meaningful triumph, but probably does not compare to winning the prestigious Hancock Invitational Saturday at Jefferson Barracks Park.

The Webster Groves resident won the Class 4 race with a time of 16 minutes, 27 seconds.

"This is my best win," Murphy-Baum said. "The competition here is real good."

The biggest competition for much of the race Saturday came from Fort Zumwalt South's Nathan Young, who finished one place behind Murphy-Baum at state last fall.

Young had the lead for much of the run Saturday until Murphy-Baum passed him at the two-mile mark.

"I passed him at what we call surprise hill," Murphy-Baum said. "I got in front of him and tried to keep on going. He is a good runner and on any given day he can win or I can win."

This day was Murphy-Baum's and it was also a good day for the Junior Bills, who finished a solid second among the 14 Class 4 teams.



SCOTT FITZGERALD PHOTO

St. Louis University High senior Ben Murphy-Baum (1798) and Fort Zumwalt South's Nathan Young (1034) vie for the lead among the front pack of runners in the boys Class 4 race at the Hancock Invitational on Saturday at Jefferson Barracks Park. Murphy-Baum pulled away near the halfway point and won going away, while Young and his teammates took home the team title. SLUH settled for second place.

Jr. Bill

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"We were coming off a real good meet the previous weekend (the Rim Rock Farm Invitational in Lawrence,

Ks.)," said Murphy-Baum, who had a personal best time of 15:59 in finishing fourth in that meet. "That gave us confidence and we ran real well today. We really want a trophy at state as a team this year. It seems like we finish eighth every year and we are a better team than that. This

year, we are more cohesive. Today we really held the pack well."

The Junior Bills had five medalists (the top 30 earned medals). Senior Drew Kaiser was in the top 10 with a 10th place finish. Other SLUH medalists were: senior Mike Jonagan (18th); junior Matt

Lawder (19th); and first-year senior Shane Lawless (23rd).

SLUH finished a close second to Fort Zumwalt South in the team competition. The Junior Bills had 71 points. Zumwalt South won with 60 points. Jefferson City was a distant third with 115 points.