

Tigers claim regional boys, girls cross country crowns

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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QUINCY - The road to the Nov. 5 **IHSA Cross Country Championship** at its traditional home of Detweiler Park in Peoria began for area teams in Classes 1A, 2A and 3A Saturday with regional meets throughout the state.

The top seven teams in Class 1A regionals and top six teams in Class 2A and 3A regionals advanced to next week's Sectional meets; in addition, the top five runners on non-qualifying teams also advanced to the sectional meets.

Here's a look at how area teams fared in boys and girls meets on the day:

CLASS 3A QUINCY REGIONAL

BOYS: Edwardsville swept five of the top seven places and had no runner finish lower than 20th as the Tigers easily won the team title at Bob Mays Park in Quincy.

The Tigers scored 19 points to easily outdistance O'Fallon, who was second with 70 points. Alton finished third at 99 points, followed by Granite City (114), Belleville West (135) and Belleville East (142) as team sectional qualifiers. The host Blue Devils (162) and Collinsville (186) did not advance, though Quincy advanced three as individuals and two Kahoks also advanced as individuals to next Saturday afternoon's Edwardsville Sectional at the SIUE cross-country course.

The Tigers' Franky Romano took the individual title, covering the course in 15:52; **Roland Prenzler** was second in 16:33, Jack Pifer was fourth in 16:14, Dan Powell took fifth in 16:16 and Max Hartmann was seventh in 16:21 to round out EHS' scoring; Zach Walters was 14th in 16:54 and Todd Baxter 20th in 17:16.

Arie Macias led the Redbirds with a 11th-place finish in 16:45, while Evan Rathgeb took 13th in 16:48, Kelvin Cummings 18th in 17:14, Cassius Hays 27th in 17:39 and Sam Gentelin 30th in 17:59 to round out the scoring. Ben Lewis was 45th in 18:43 and Zak Wilson 49th in 18:59.

For the **Warriors**, **Andrew O'Keefe** took third in 16:06, followed by Will O'Keefe (ninth in 16:35), Leo Nikonowicz (25th in 17:32), Karem Ali (36th in 18:16) and Tyler Tindall (41st in 18:32) to account for GCHS' score. Donald James was 43rd in 18:47 and Aiden Sampson 45th in 18:58.

Among top 10 runners, Belleville West's Brian Gichuru was sixth in 16:21 and O'Fallon's Hayden Ybarra was eighth in 16:35 and Garrett Blenkush was 10th in 16:42.

GIRLS: Like the Tiger boys, Edwardsville's girls swept five of the top 11 spots to win the team title, the Tigers scoring 27 points to O'Fallon's 36. Quincy was third with 92, Belleville East fourth with 143, Alton fifth with 150 and Collinsville sixth at 152 to complete the advancing teams; Belleville West (163) and Granite City (205) did not advance as teams, though three Maroons and two Warriors advanced as individuals to the Edwardsville Sectional, set for next Saturday afternoon at the SIUE cross-country course.

Melissa Spencer led the way for EHS with a second-place finish in 18:45, with **Jaycie Hudson** third in 18:54, Abby Schrobilgen fifth in 19:00, Maddie Miller sixth in 19:02 and Victoria Vegher 11th in 19:25; Julianna Determan took 12th in 19:26 and Payton Flowers 14th in 19:52.

For the Redbirds, Emma Vournard was 22nd in 21:25, Jessie Markel 25th in 21:47, Kellie Mans 29th in 22:04, Morgan Rauscher 33rd in 22:41 and Tayton Kuebit 41st in 23:50 to round out the AHS scoring; Abbi Day took 49th in 25:46 and Christina Thompson 51st in 26:08.

O'Fallon's Brooke Witzel took the individual title in 18:32, with the Panthers' Kaitlyn Walker fourth in 18:54, Belleville East's Selyeia Wilson seventh in 19:11, O'Fallon's Sophie Wichiac eighth in 19:22, Quincy's Lydia Kurfman ninth in 19:23 and O'Fallon's Madeline McKittrick 10th in 19:25. Granite City's Chessy Nikonowicz finished 31st in 22:08 and Alyssa Comer 32nd in 22:27 to move into the sectional as individuals.