

Edwardsville coach/teacher Dustin Davis faces cancer battle head-on

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EDWARDSVILLE - Edwardsville cross country and track coach/teacher Dustin Davis is known for his fortitude and ability to inspire his athletes and students both during cross country and in the classroom.

He has been having a difficult time this Christmas season: he has been battling cancer. Monday, he successfully had five cancerous lymph nodes removed.

“The surgeon was successful in removing five cancerous lymph nodes,” today Davis wrote to the other EHS administration, faculty and coaches. “I am in a regular room resting and will stay overnight. I am still kind of groggy with the fading anesthesia but I feel pretty good other than that.

“Thanks for all the prayers and support,” he continued.

EHS head cross country and distance coach in track **George Patrylak** and Davis have a special relationship. Patrylak was once Davis’ coach as a runner and the two have also co-taught a class at EHS South.

“I had contact with him Monday night and he wanted everyone to know he was doing well,” Patrylak said. “They think they have removed all the cancerous lymph nodes and he will now be going home to rest. The surgery was successful.”

Patrylak said it has been a privilege watching Davis grow as a young man into adulthood and become the man he is today.

“He was a great high school and collegiate runner,” Patrylak said. “He had some injuries and had some setbacks as a runner and he learned how to overcome his injuries. I think getting through this will give him an appreciation of life and how important his family and his team is.”



Davis is married and has a young child, so those are the biggest motivating factors in his recovery.

Patrylak had cancer of his own previously, so he definitely understands what Davis is having to cope with today. He said his family and athletes were the biggest motivators to handle his illness when he had it. Today, Patrylak is cancer free.

Patrylak said he deeply respects Davis as a coach and a family man. Davis is close to **George's wife, Roxanne**, like many of the other cross country runners. Roxanne is always there encouraging the runners to success.

Something Patrylak admires as much as anything in Davis is the teacher he has become.

“My biggest thrill was to co-teach with Dustin at EHS South,” George said. “He has become an incredible teacher and is also an outstanding coach, husband, father and mentor. We all want him to recover and get well.”

Patrylak said he knew Davis would appreciate the encouragement and prayers from his athletes, students, fellow teachers and administrators, especially at Christmas time.

“It’s one of those things if you have faith and you believe that good things will happen and people praying and caring about you, it makes a big difference,” Patrylak said. “He is in a spot where he positively impacts the lives of a lot of students. These obstacles and humps will make him stronger and even more passionate as a coach.

“We know Dustin will win this battle and hopefully, in a few years, he will say he is still cancer free. We know nothing will stop him from accomplishing the things he wants to achieve as a husband, father, coach and teacher.”