

Annual Mud Mountain 5K, One-Mile Fun Run is Set for July 27, is Biggest Fund Raiser for Edwardsville Cross-Country and Track Programs

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – The 24th annual Mud Mountain Run, a competitive 5K race, along with a one-mile fun run, is set for Saturday, July 27 at the fabled Mud Mountain cross-country course at SIU-Edwardsville.

The event is the biggest fundraiser for the Edwardsville High School cross-country and track teams, and attracts a good mix of both competitive and casual runners from around the St. Louis area, running on the SIUE cross-country course, which is one of the best of its kind in the nation.

“We look forward to it for a variety of reasons,” said Edwardsville High cross-country and distance running coach George Patrylak. “For our alumni members, we have a pasta dinner the night before the race, and we always go out to lunch to Chavez’s after the race. And it’s also our biggest fundraiser for both the Edwardsville High School cross-country and track booster club.”

The race also gives the casual runner the chance to get off the hard surfaces that he or she might be used to, and to have the chance to run on a true cross-country course such as Mud Mountain. There are only about three races in the St. Louis area that is run on a true cross-country course each year, and also, in the case of the Tigers’ cross-country team, a chance to gauge their progress.

“I think many of the athletes look forward to the race,” Patrylak said, “because it’s the end of our optional summer workouts, and they see Mud Mountain as a chance to see what kind of shape they’re in, and to set their expectations and goals for the upcoming season.”

And in the case of the Edwardsville alumni, it’s also a team challenge, as four-person teams are formed as a part of the competition.

“Coach (Dustin) Davis is in charge of our Elite Eights alumni group,” Patrylak said, “and he’ll put together various teams, but the goal of their top team is to beat the high school team and win the overall team championship in both the men’s and women’s events.”

And in addition, the race attracts a very competitive field for the 5K run and is one of the best of its kind during the summer running season in St. Louis. And there are other intangibles as well.

“It’s always good to see the old faces,” Patrylak said, “and to see the alumni support for the current team. We tend to get some of the better runners in the area, and the race is one of the most competitive ones of its kind during the summer.”

The balance between competitive and casual runners is a very good one, indeed, with the casual runners taking advantage of the opportunity to run on the course, and the race also attracts the family members of both the current and former Tiger runners. And the community involvement is very important as well.

“We’re on a record pace for sponsorships, and we’re very appreciative of the community involvement,” Patrylak said, “particularly our local businesses.”

And because of some new SIUE parking rules that will be in effect for the race, runners are being advised to arrive earlier than usual for the 8 a.m. start time for the 5K race. Shuttle buses will be used to transport runners and other participants to and from the Mud Mountain course. The fun run is set to start at 9 a.m., following the conclusion of the 5K race.

Entry fees for the race are \$25 for runners under 18, and \$30 for those over 18, up until race day, when the fee will be \$35. In addition, four or more runners entering as a team can do so, with a \$25 per runner fee. All proceeds will benefit the Edwardsville High School cross-country and track programs, which also includes the teams at both Lincoln and Liberty Middle Schools.

More information can be found on the www.active.com website, or by contacting Edwardsville High School.