

Tigers' Pifer Wins Individual Title, Area Teams Have Banner Day at Edwardsville Cross Country Invitational

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EDWARDSVILLE – It was a banner day for the area boys cross country runners at the Edwardsville Invitational meet Saturday morning at SIU-Edwardsville’s Mud Mountain course, as Edwardsville’s Jack Pifer, Alton’s Cassius Havis, and Father McGivney Catholic’s Tyler Guthrie all finished in the top three spots as the Tigers won the team championship.

Edwardsville won the meet with a total of 40 points, with Ft. Zumwalt West coming in second with 93 points, followed by third place Francis Howell, who had 121, Highland at fourth, with 123, and CBC fifth at 144 points. Sixth place went to Columbia with 237 points, Collinsville was seventh with 240, Farmington, Mo., was eighth with 243, Jacksonville came in ninth with 249, and both Carbondale and Jersey tied for 10th with 254 points each.

Among local teams, Metro-East Lutheran was 16th with 514 points, Marquette Catholic 17th with a score of 533, and East St. Louis was 18th with 610 points. Father McGivney, Alton and Civic Memorial didn’t have a team score.

Pifer won the individual championship with a time of 16:15.14, with Havis coming in second at 16:22.99, Guthrie was third at 16:27.19, Carbondale’s Tucker Poshad was fourth at 16:31.68, Zach Walters of the Tigers was fifth at 16:36.18, Ft. Zumwalt West’s

Bennett Boatman was sixth with a time of 16:38.09, Nick Hanratty of Highland was seventh at 16:57.55, Theo Paxton of the Kahoks was eighth with a time of 16:58.16, and two Edwardsville runners – Ryan Watts and Geo Patrylak – were ninth and 10th respectively, with Watts having a time of 17:00.01, and Patrylak coming in at 17:02.76.

The Tigers tried a bit of an unusual strategy at the start of the race, and it paid off handsomely.

“We implemented a little bit of a different strategy today,” said Edwardsville head coach George Patrylak. “We tried to replicate some of the things we want to do at Peoria, including at state, and we had unlimited runners in the varsity race, and we put our top eight runners in the back of the start box, and the goal was to learn to race through traffic, and pace ourselves more evenly. At the three-quarter mile mark, none of our guys were in the top 30, but they did a good job of progressing in the second and third miles. Jack took the lead with 1,000 meters left, and won by seven seconds, and we received top ten finishes from Zach Walters, Ryan Watts and Geo. They all did a good job of moving up, and did exactly what we wanted to accomplish today.”

Besides the Tiger runners who finished in the top ten, Xander Valdez came in 15th, with a time of 17:18.63, Drew Stover had a time of 17:24.68, and Henry Gruben came in with a time of 17:31.95. In addition, Kurt Brase had a time of 17:39.42, Ryan Liutjohan came in at 17:40.22, and Jaylin Ruckman was at 17:48.81.

Among the Kahok runners, Paxton led the way for Collinsville, followed by Axel Muniz, who had a time of 18:27.58, Matt Wilde came in at 18:37.55, Kevin Varela was at 18:59.58, Paul Falbe had a time of 19:03.21, Garrett Lee was timed in 20:19.10, and Logan Merchant had a time of 22:12.16.

The Panthers had only two runners entered in the race, with Joao Null coming in at 20:23.76, and Richard Hall had a time of 23:38.18. The Knights top runner was Logan Wyatt, with a time of 20:14.10, Ethan Ashauer was at 21:10.96, Jack Blair had a time of 22:15.07, Jakob Schroeder was timed in 24:28.09, and Grayson Wyatt had a time of 24:52.65.

The Explorers’ top runner was Asher Linkous, who had a time of 19:34.62, followed by Jacob Rummerfield, who came in at 19:38.58, Cole DeClue at 19:48.47, Spencer Cox came in at 20:18.86, Nick Hamm had a time of 22:58.59, and Ronan Stork was at 27:01.01.

For the Flyers, their top runner was Jahkeese King, who had a time of 19:56.28, followed by Jahmone Creer, who came in at 20:35.24, and Demontre Dowd at 21:22.94. John Redmond was next at 21:38.65, followed by Garland Howard at 21:43.98, Tyreese

Meeks at 22:51.37, and Nathaniel Robinson, who had a time of 23:11.96. Also, Damion Jones was timed in 24:51.53, Mario Edwards came in at 25:35.71, Dennis Dublin was at 26:59.44, and George Coleman was at 27:16.09.

Havis was the top runner for the Redbirds, and he was followed by Gerard Bruce at 19:04.18, Trae Crosby, who had a time of 20:16.16, Alexander Beers, who came in at 21:03.10, Grant Lockhart, who was at 23:12.39, and Sam Yungling, who's time was 24:47.55.

The Eagles had only one runner, Mark Eldridge, and his time was 17:29.27. For the Griffins, Guthrie led the way, followed by Zach Brasel, who had a time of 17:20.77, Brandon Ahring, with a time of 17:22.96, Tanner Fox, who came in at 19:02.57, Andrew Dupy, with a time of 20:18.08, and Noah Beltramea, who was at 21:06.49.

Overall for the Tigers in both the boys and girls races, it was a very successful day.

“Overall, I was pleased with today's results,” Patrylak said. “We had two individual champions, the girls gained experience, and an impressive showing by the boys team in winning the title. The kids are starting to buy in more and more, and we're heading in the right direction.”







[Colin Feeney also contributed to this story.](#)