



The Champion: Former EHS, Now St. Louis U. Cross Country Standout Jack Pifer Captures Mud Mountain Title

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EDWARDSVILLE - Former Edwardsville High cross country standout Jack Pifer was the men's winner of the 25th running of the Mud Mountain 5K Classic on Saturday morning at the famed course at SIU-Edwardsville, coming in with a time of 16:32.77.

It was a very good time, and in a post-race interview, Pifer said that the run was a part of his summer training for his upcoming season at Saint Louis University.

"Honestly, I really didn't know what was going to go on in this race," Pifer said. "I didn't really know exactly where I was finish-wise. I'm just sort of in the middle of my summer training, and I was just trying to test the waters, see how good I felt coming out here today. Didn't really have a specific time in mind or anything, just go out there, compete and hurt a little bit."

The first place result is a good indication of how well Pifer's summer training has been going along.

"Yeah, yeah, it's been going pretty well," Pifer said. "Better than last year. I got an injury at the end of summer last year, but this year, I've been pretty much only healthy. So yeah, I'm happy with how my training's going, especially with how the race went."

Pifer is about to start his sophomore year at SLU after having missed the 2020 season due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, along with the entire Billiken team.

"We really didn't have an official cross country season the past year," Pifer said, "so I'm excited to run some races this fall, and hopefully, we get some new (personal records)."

Of course, Pifer and his fellow runners are very happy to be back, given everything that's happened with the pandemic and the circumstances around it. The event gave Pifer and his old teammates a chance to reunite, catch up with how everyone is doing and a chance to honor former Tiger coach Jim Price, who was the creator of the Mud Mountain race and honorary starter.

"Yeah, exactly," Pifer said. "It was great to be out here in person again, great to see they mention coach Price; he seems like a stand-up guy. And I'm just very happy to be out here with my friends and former teammates and doing what we love - racing."

Pifer was also very happy to be back at Mud Mountain, a very famous and notorious course in the Midwest.

"Oh, yeah, for sure," Pifer said. "It's a brutal course, but if you're a runner, there's something about you that likes pain anyway," he said with a smile and laugh.