



# **St. Mary's Girls Cross County Team, Braden Nash, Qualify For State SIJHSAA State Championships**

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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ALTON - St. Mary's Middle School Boys and Girls Cross Country Coach Abbie Hough and her squad have a lot to celebrate this weekend. The St. Mary's team advanced to Southern Illinois Junior High School Athletic Association (SIJHSAA) state championships with a breakaway performance in Thursday's regional in O'Fallon.

St. Mary's girls' cross country team won the regional out of 10 other schools, seven with full teams entered. The state championships are Saturday, October 16, 2021, at Foundation Park in Centralia. The girls' race is at 10 a.m., followed by the boys at 10:30 a.m.

**Coach Hough provided these details about the girls' team sectional results:**

Five scoring individuals: Alex Stephan (7th grade), 3rd place, Lilly Hannigan (7th grade), 7th place, Sophia Waters (4th grade), 10th place, Maddie Waters (8th grade), 11th place, Izzi Hough (7th grade), 14th place, Morgan Rister, (7th grade) and Katherine

Fitzgerald (5th grade). Hough said she was uncertain of sixth and seventh runner places. St. Mary's alternate female runners for state are Isabel Downey (8th grade) and Kaelyn Page (5th).

St. Mary's eighth-grader Braden Nash secured one of the seven individual spots to advance to state. The boys' team finished the season with a strong showing, Hough said.

The boys' varsity team is made up of: Braden Nash (8th) Owen Page (8th) Jackson Ehrman (8th) Parker Hough (5th) Tucker Hamilton (5th) Kainan Kelly (5th).

Hough said: "Although the following didn't participate on the varsity team at regionals they all played an important role in the success of the team": William Waters, Mason Widman, Lucas Joyce, Abbott Brunough, Joey Brakeville, Liv Certa, Emma Hough, Sarah Moehn, Loralie Pinkard, Genevieve Stendebach, and Isabella Greenberg.

"Our cross country program is three years old and this is our first year competing in regionals," Hough said. "I think we came in as a bit of a surprise taking first place for the girl's team. Having eight individuals participating next weekend at state is amazing! I am so incredibly proud of this whole team.

"Every member and parent played an important role in our success this year. This has been such an amazing opportunity for our whole team. I am excited to see what next weekend has in store. I am also excited to watch what our eighth graders continue to accomplish when they move on next year."









