

# **Patrylak, Watts Go One-Two, Tigers Place Five In Top Ten In Going On To SWC Cross Country Title, Redbirds Finish Fourth, Kahoks Sixth**

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BELLEVILLE - Edwardsville seniors Geo Patrylak and Ryan Watts finished in the top two spots as the Tigers placed five runners in the top ten in going on to win the boys championship in the Southwestern Conference cross country meet Thursday afternoon at Belleville West High School.

The Tigers won the meet with 23 points, with O'Fallon coming in second with 52 points, Belleville East was third with 77 points, Alton placed fourth with 99 points, the host Maroons were fifth with 126 points, Collinsville was sixth with 157 points and East St. Louis was seventh with 205 points.

Edwardsville ran a particularly solid race from start to finish, with the team executing its race plan successfully.

"The boys ran a really solid race," said Tigers head coach George Patrylak. "The goal was to hold (Ryan) Watts back, so that Ryan Luitjohan and Geo might take the race. We also wanted to keep the pack of seven together during the first mile."

The strategy worked very well, as Watts helped push Patrylak along the way to the win, and the pack staying close together. Although none of the runners in the field wanted to press the issue The Tigers took advantage to start moving up in the field. Patrylak and Watts separated themselves from the rest of the field at the two-mile mark, and the two faced a challenge from East's Byron Jones, who made a big move in the final few meters, overtaking O'Fallon's Dylan Ybarra but couldn't catch Patrylak or Watts, while Luitjohan maintained his pace to finish fifth.

"Geo came to the knowledge that Watts let him win the race," Patrylak said, "and appreciated the help along the way."



Another highlight for Edwardsville was the finish of freshman Hugh Davis, who came in seventh, with Grandone right behind in eighth in very solid performances for both runners, especially for Davis.

"This was Hugh's third varsity race of the season," Patrylak said, "and we were impressed by his poise and ability to step up in a big race. Ben Perulfi and Jack Draper also had excellent races today. A good effort and I know that things didn't go the way O'Fallon was hoping for today."

Patrylak won the race with a time of 15:28.4, with Watts second at 15:28.5, Jones came in third at 15:29.7, Ybarra was fourth at 15:34.0, Luitjohan placed fifth with a time of 15:38.1, O'Fallon's Eli Greenstreet was sixth, coming in at 15:44.8, Davis' seventh-place time was 16:24.9, Grandone came in eighth at 16:25.6, Noah O'Renic of the Maroons was ninth at 16:29.2 and the Panthers' Zach Thoman rounded out the top ten with a time of 16:33.1.

Perulfi had a time of 16:41.3, while Draper came in at 16:50.5. Alton was led by Dylan Forsythe, who came in at 16:45.1, with Christian Kotzamanis having a time of 17:10.3, Simon McClaine was in at 17:22.6, Alex Macias' time was 17:26.2, Victor Humphrey was right behind at 17:26.8, River Wrishnik came in at 17:53.1 and Noah Gallivan was in at 17:55.1.





Collinsville was led by Brock Cunningham, who had a time of 17:23.6, with Andrew Gonski having a time of 17:41.7, Alejandro Mendoza was in at 18:32.1, Evan Heintz was right behind at 18:57.7, David Garcia's time was 19:47.3, Dylan Meek was clocked in 19:51.5 and Laurentino Martinez had a time of 20:00.8. East St. Louis' top runner was Ladruis Estes, who came in at 19:44.2, with Quinten Stepney in at 19:50.8, Cortez Sanders had a time of 20:28.1, Wayne Brown was in at 22:02.6 and Desmond Ryan had a time of 23.48.0.

The Tigers and the other SWC teams now start preparing for the IHSA state tournament series, which starts Oct. 23 with the regional meets, the sectional meets taking place Oct. 30 and the state meets in all four classes going at Detweiler Park in Peoria Nov. 6. Patrylak is looking ahead to the postseason for his team.

"The next couple of weekends are going to be the big ones," Patrylak said, "and hopefully, the first weekend in November as well. We have a lot of individual and team goals we want to achieve, and we're looking forward to the challenges and opportunities."