

Strotheide's Sixth-Place Finish The Difference As Tigers Edge Panthers For Girls SWC Cross Country Championship, Maroons Come In Third

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BELLEVILLE - Madison Strotheide overtook O'Fallon's Brittany Brown in the last 50 meters of the race to finish sixth individually, and it was her finish as the number three Edwardsville runner that made the difference as the Tigers won the girls Southwestern Conference cross country meet Thursday afternoon at Belleville West High.

The Tigers pulled out the title with 31 points, with the Panthers coming in second with 33 points, and the host Maroons were third in the three-team field with 70 points. Alton, Collinsville, East St. Louis and Belleville East did have individual runners in the field, but not enough to record a team score.

Tigers' coach George Patrylak remembered how the Panthers won the Granite City Invitational on a tiebreak in another close meet on Sept. 4, and reminded his team that it could be that close again in the conference meet.



"Going into the girls' race, I made it clear that the difference between first and second would come down to less than five points," Patrylak said. "The last time we raced O'Fallon was in the Granite City invite, where we tied for first, and they beat us on a sixth-runner tiebreak."

Patrylak was thinking that the meet could wind up being a dual meet against O'Fallon, but West did have enough to record a team score, and it helped make a difference in the meet itself.

"As we were going into the meet, it most likely would be a dual meet between us and O'Fallon," Patrylak said. "It turned out to be a tri-meet, where one runner from West impacting the scoring."

Emily Nuttall was the top runner on the day for the Tigers with a second-place finish, while Olivia Coll came in fourth, Strotheide sixth, and Maya Lueking ninth as runners who finished in the top ten.



"Emily continues to improve, and was outstanding today with her second-place finish," Patrylak said. "Olivia Coll ran a lifetime personal record in less than perfect conditions, so those two coming in before O'Fallon's number two was huge. Madison Strotheide, who was an alternate for the state team last year, had the race of the day, finishing as our third runner. In the final 50 meters, she overtook the O'Fallon runner, and those were the two points that made the difference."

Peyton Scheippe of O'Fallon won the race with a time of 17:33.6.



The Tigers' Nuttall second at 18:23.0, West's Alyssa Elliott was third at 18:30.9, with Coll running a personal best of 18:31.4 to take fourth place.

Julia Monson of the Panthers was fifth at 18:47.3, Strotheide came in sixth at 19:11.4, with Brown coming in seventh at 19:12.9, eighth place went to O'Fallon's Mackenzie James at 19:19.8, Lueking was ninth with a time of 19:21.7 and Belleville East's Devynisha Deere completed the top ten with a time of 19:24.3.

Outside of the top four, the Tigers' Whitney Dyckman came in at 19:26.6, while Emma Patrick had a time of 19:33.4 and Bella Horsfall was in at 20:34.6. Sophia Paschal was the only Alton runner, coming in at 20:53.7, while Selah Hart led Collinsville with a time of 22:24.5, Kassidy Rea was in at 23:29.2 and Morgan Laing's time was 25:47.3. East Side had three runners in the field as well, and the Flyers were led by Lenikei Burns, who had a time of 23:18.6, while Courtasja Williams was in at 32:29.4 and Bailli Graham had a time of 34:31.8.



The Tigers and the rest of the conference now go into the IHSA state series, starting with the regional meets on Oct. 23, the sectionals on Oct. 30 and the state meets on Nov. 6 at Detweiler Park in Peoria.

Patrylak knows what the formula is for success in this year's series for Edwardsville.

"We just need to make sure the top runners stay together," Patrylak said. "

"When our girls work together and find one another in the race, good things happen. I think we're trending in the right direction, and we should be ready."