

O'Fallon Stages Clean Sweep As Panthers Take Top 6 Positions, Perulfi Finishes Seventh As Panthers Win Boys Conference Cross Country Meet

by Randy Manning

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O'FALLON - The Southwestern Conference cross country meets, originally scheduled for Collinsville High School, were changed on Wednesday morning to the Milford campus of O'Fallon Township High School. The Panthers were able to use the last-minute change of venue to sweep the top six positions, with Edwardsville's Ben Perulfi placing seventh as O'Fallon won the team championship.

The Panthers scored a perfect 15 points to take the title, with the Tigers coming in second with 48 points, Alton was third at 95 points, Belleville East was fourth with 107 points, Belleville West came in fifth with 132 points, Collinsville was sixth at 153 points and East St. Louis was seventh with 192 points.

The threat of rain and stormy weather that was predicted for Wednesday throughout the St. Louis area, never really came to pass, but the coaches and officials agreed to move the meet to O'Fallon from Collinsville due to the predicted weather.



"The O'Fallon boys are obviously the premier tea in this part of the state this year," said Edwardsville head coach George Patrylak. "They're also one of the most underrated

teams in the entire state. Although we were in agreement with the decision of switching the conference meet from Collinsville to O'Fallon because of the threat of inclement weather, it definitely served as a home advantage to O'Fallon."

In which the Panthers were able to take advantage of to sweep the top positions in the race. The Tigers' goal was to stay within the middle of the O'Fallon pack.

"That was our goal," Patrylak said, "but O'Fallon definitely ran a great race and is certainly the superior team. I definitely do not feel that should have had a perfect score against us. I was happy with our one through six group, but that entire group needs to be 20-30 seconds faster if we are going to qualify for state at the end of the month."

Perulfi's seventh-place finish put him as the only Tiger on the all-conference team, but a very pleasant surprise was sophomore Danny Story, who was the surprise JV champion in the recent Madison County meet, earning his chance to run for Scott Baxter, who was held out to rest up for the postseason.

"Story finished two seconds faster than our number seven runner," Patrylak said.



The Panthers swept the top six spots in the top ten, with Dylan Ybarra winning with a time of 14:41.7, Eli Greenstreet was second at 15:06.8, Zach Thomas came in third with a time of 15:11.9, fourth place went to Harrison Schroeder at 15:32.3, in fifth place was Ethan Nieroda at 15:40.1 and rounding out the top six was Robert Wocking at 15:45.6.

Perulfi was seventh at 15:55.8, teammate Hugh Davis was eighth at 16:06.6, ninth place went to Kelton Schuerman of East at 16:07.8 and the Tigers' Jackson Amick rounded out the top ten at 16:11.0.

Outside of the top three runners for Edwardsville, Parker Weaver came in at 16:18.2, Collin Thomas was in at 16:30.9, Story was in at 16:31.7 and Sam Witter's time was 16:57.3.

Alex Macias led the Redbirds with a time of 16:32.8, with Noah Gallivan in at 16:41.1, Simon McClaine was in at 16:45.5. Christian Kotzamanis had a time of 16:52.4, Victor Humphreys was in at 17:48.6, John Krafka was home at 18:06.6 and Charlie McAfoos had a time of 18:14.2.

The Flyers' leading runner was Armonie Jones, who was in at 20:13.5, while Ladarius Estes had a time of 20:46.3, Demarcus Coleman was clocked in 20:46.9, Cortez Sanders was in at 20:59.0, Dwayne Hawkins had a time of 21:45.1, Tyreese Meeks' time was 24:23.2 and Demarlynn Taylor came home at 24:27.2.

