

Tigers capture invitational meet team title, Roxana, MELHS post solid performances

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Granite City freshman Andrew O'Keefe had a great day at the Tiger Fall Classic cross-country meet Wednesday at the SIU-Edwardsville cross-country course.

O'Keefe (who covered the five-kilometer course in 16:55.03) defeated O'Fallon's Joey Black (16:57.53) by two-and-a-half seconds to take individual honors on the day. **The host Tigers, however, took five of the top 16 places to win the team tile, scoring 54 points** to defeat Mount Vernon, who had 64 points. O'Fallon finished third with 84 points, Breese Mater Dei was fourth with 115 points and Triad was fifth at 161 points.



Belleville East was sixth with 162 points, followed by Centralia (183), Collinsville (192), Granite City (209), Metro East Lutheran-Madison (222), Roxana (254) and Greenville (291). East Alton-Wood River and Carrollton were not scored but had runners taking part as individuals.

“I thought we ran much better than we did (last Saturday) at Granite City,” said **Tiger coach George Patrylak**. “We're still young and we're working on our consistency; our first meet, we ran well, but in the second meet, we didn't run as well as we could have.

“We talked about it before the meet today and emphasized why we need to be consistent. We had a good run from Frankie (Romano) and Jacob Schoenthal had to drop out because of an ankle injury; we think he'll be back soon; he gives us some real good leadership.”

“It was kind of a tale of two races today,” said Granite City coach Rich Skirball.

“Andrew winning the race was a very pleasant surprise. He worked hard all summer and he's a great kid; we thought he'd be up there in the top runners, but for him to win this and beat Joey Black was fantastic.

“We got a solid run from Josh Royce as well and we have some good young freshmen and sophomores who are competing well for us.”

MEL-Madison coach **Ruth Thompson** was also pleased with her team's performance.

“We all ran well today; our times have been dropping and I'm pleased with our improvement,” Thompson said. “Our confidence is really building up.

“We've got some really good runners and they're harder on themselves than I am on them; it makes a big difference. They really want to improve and they've been working hard.”

The rest of the top 10 individuals included Centralia's Garrett Blanchard (third in 17:32.88), Mater Dei's Luke Goebel (fourth in 17:40.04), Edwardsville's Roland Prenzler (fifth in 17:47.32), EA-WR's Brendon Springman (sixth in 17:55.61), Mount Vernon's Tyler Williams (seventh in 17:59.65), Romano (eighth in 17:59.83), Mount Vernon's Hagen Schneider (ninth in 18:05.91) and O'Fallon's Joshua Kolb (10th in 18:14.31).

Other scoring runners for the Tigers were Sam McCormick (12th in 18:23.31), Max Hartman (15th in 18:29.66) and Jonah Durbin (16th in 18:40.09). Tyler Farrar finished 19th in 18:52.13.

Other scoring runners for the Warriors were Leo Nikonowicz (40th in 20:05.22), Royce (53rd in 21:08.13), Tyler Tindall (57th in 21:18.13) and Aiden Sampson (58th in 21:26.30). Runners for the Knights who scored included Javon Watkins (10th in 18:23.02), Darion Brooks (36th in 19:57.95), Jonah Wilson (49th in 20:52.01), Josh Jacobson (61st in 21:39.82) and Christian Englebecht (66th in 22:45.41).

Runners for Roxana who scored were James Henseler (34th in 19:54.42), Brandon Isom (38th in 19:59.48), Nathan Lowe (56th in 21:17.01), Dakota Stumpf (62nd in 21:46.32) and Cree Stumpf (64th in 22:31.18). Brendon Springman ran for EA-WR (17:55.61) and Mitchell Frederickson ran for Carrollton (22:57.39).

The Tigers had seven of the top eight places in the junior varsity race to finish first with 19 points, followed by Mount Vernon (74), O'Fallon (76), EA-WR (100), Triad (121),

Belleville East (182) and Collinsville (185). Breese Mater Dei, MEL-Madison, Granite City, Greenville and Roxana had individuals competing.

Luke Raffaele won the race for the Tigers over Triad's Adam Lawson, with Tigers Dan Powell, Matt Swanson, Nick Trueb, Logan Pursell, Dustin Heman and Corey Wilkinson following. The Oilers' Matthew Shea was 10th, followed by Tigers Nick Aramowicz and Holden Potter.



Chase Wallendorff, Jacob Mustain, Andrew Noack and Ryne White scored for EA-WR, while Nathanel Perry, Elijah Culbert and Will Barney ran for MEL-Madison, Donald James and Trent Jones ran for Granite and William Cotter, Zach Frey, Devin Thomeczek and Geramy Millender ran for the Shells.