

# A MILE IN HIS SHOES

## cross country builds their team up in preparation for losing seniors

As the bitter air rushed past his face, senior Curtis Cline pushed himself to take the last steps to cross the finish line. Running a 5K in 16 minutes and 6 seconds, Cline received first place in the boys cross country race Saturday, Oct. 20 at Shawnee Mission Park.

"It feels really good getting first place and that I am doing all I can to qualify the team to state," Cline said.

Little did he know, SMS boys cross country would go on to win eighth at state Saturday, Oct. 27 at Rim Rock Farm. Cline placed first overall again, shaving eight seconds off of his previous time.

"At state, everyone is buzzing, there are dozens of teams and so many fans and all the runners are trying to have the best race of their career," Cline said.

For Coach JJ Wannamaker, Cline's win was bittersweet.

"Well, [next season] we will lose our number one runner, and we just hope to find some of the younger boys that can step it up and fill those places," Wannamaker said.

While Cline was training for cross country, sophomore Brandon Maxey was training for both cross country and soccer in the same season.

"I don't get to go to the cross country practices after school very much, but when I play soccer I run just as much as I would if I was at cross country," Maxey said.

Cross country meets could be crowded, tense and exciting, but there was still a lot of pressure.

"There are a lot of people; everybody gets so crazy, and it's a lot of pressure watching other teams warming up for their next race," Maxey said.

Even the coaches were on their toes at the meets.

"We can get just as nervous and the kids do, just hoping that they will run the best to their ability," Wannamaker said.

While Maxey made time after school to manage two sports, sophomore Sandis Simchuk made time in the morning to run extra miles to prepare for meets.

"I will sometimes get up at 6:45 in the morning and run one or two miles to get extra practice in before I start the day," Simchuk said.

Running about 6-8 miles almost every day, Simchuk would run approximately 40 miles a week.

"It may not be fun at the time, but it really pays off when you do well at the meets," Simchuk said.

With only one returning senior, the cross country team had to train extra hard to compete at state level.

"[The team] is steadily coming along. We knew it would be a step back from last year with all the graduations," Wannamaker said. "We just try to keep them mentally prepared, calm, relaxed and ready to run."

by Tyler Bates



## WHERE IS YOUR FAVORITE PLACE TO RUN?



"I love the trails because they are really peaceful. You meet new people, and that's where I go when I want to go on a long run."

**junior Jersey Boydstun**



"I like Rim Rock because it is more challenging, and when you do well, you feel good about yourself."

**junior Joel Almlhoff**



"The bike trails are the best because there are more obstacles and you feel like you are going faster."

**junior Ernesto Lopez**



"I like the roundabouts on Lamar because it is the shortest run."

**senior Curtis Cline**





Maintaining a steady pace with the team, junior Ernesto Lopez and sophomore Freddy Giesler keep up with the team. Lopez finished with a time of 0:22'07.49.

Finishing up the race, freshmen Jacob Early gives it his all. Early finished with 0:25'29.00.

Reflecting on his performance with his friends, sophomore Bruce Hollis cools down after his race. The team enjoyed a nice round of bagels after the race.

Keeping up with the pack, junior Isaac Brethour maintains a steady pace. Brethour was a third-year runner for the cross country team.

Beginning the race, sophomore Sandis Simchuk, junior Jersey Boydston and seniors Daniel Huhn and Curtis Cline take off at the sound of the horn. Cline placed third in the race at Theatre in the Park.

**photos by Mike Abell**



Cooling off after his race, sophomore Dominic Madrid listens to the coach. After every race the coach said what the team did right and what they could have improved on.

Running ahead of the competition, senior Curtis Cline maintains his position in the race. Cline had been on varsity since freshman year.

Making small talk before the race, sophomore Sandis Simchuk and senior Daniel Huhn chat with each other about the weather. The race at Theatre in the Park was one of the coldest of the season.