



With fast times, record numbers, an Olympian and of course great weather the 2009 Forest Park Cross Country Festival was definitely the best edition in the four year history of the event.

The meet kicked off with a new course record in the open race set by new St. Joe's Academy coach Walker Yane. MICDS coach Julie Lossos won the womens division. Next up were the boys junior varsity races where Mehlville won a squeaker overy Priory in the white division and SLUH held off a strong challenge from Rockhurst in the green. On the girls side it was Villa Dushesne over rival Ursuline in the white division and a very strong Rock Bridge squad holding off Kentucky's Notre Dame Academy by ten points to take the green division title.

Things kicked into high gear when St. Clair's Cody Moore took to the front for a convincing win in the boys varsity white division. For the second year in a row Lutheran South grabbed top team honors in that division with an impressive 91 points.

In the green division race we had arguably the best field ever assembled for the meet led by two-time defending champs SLUH, ranked in the top 20 in the country. The Junior Bills did not disappoint and garnered their third consecutive win with a mere 70 points. The individual battle saw Rock Bridge sophomore Caleb Wilfong surprise the older pre-race favorites by jumping out to the lead and towing the pack through the mile in 4:49. Eventually it would be College Heights Christian's Caleb Hoover who took over in the final mile for a superb 15:35, the third fastest time in event history. Wilfong would end up fourth behind Marquette U's Jake Erschen and Glendale's Ben Chapman.

The girls white division varsity race turned into a runaway win for Notre Dame (STL) junior Elizabeth Flowers who crossed the line in 20:22.5. The team battle was much closer with Pattonville just holding off Farmington for a three-point win.

The green division team race was a rematch of last year's battle that came down to a tiebreaker between Jeff City and Kickapoo. This time around it was Kickapoo that turned the tables on the Lady Jays with a commanding 30 point win. Jeff City's Briana Watson took the individual title, however, holding off a late charge from MICDS' Grace Bridwell.

The freshman boys race was next and it provided perhaps the most exciting individual finish of the day. Herculaneum's David Patterson opened up what seemed like an

insurmountable lead after a fast opening mile but lurking in the shadows was Farmington's Jake Burch who charged up the final hill and passed Patterson, eventually kicking home with a full head of steam to stop the clock just shy of the course record at 10:21.5. SLUH took the team battle for the fourth year in a row.

The girls freshman race featured another Herculaneum athlete pushing the pace in the form of Katlyn Fischer. This time it was a Eureka athlete who provided the challenge and eventually pulled away. Angie Sumner, sporting the familiar big E on her chest, smashed the course record with her 11:12.3 clocking. Her teammates were not far behind as Eureka won the team title in their first year at the event.

The middle school races always conclude things at the Festival and they are typically some of the best races of the day as the young athletes go toe-to-toe for the full 2k. This year we had course records on the boys and girls sides with the Potosi duo of Thomas Gross and Kassi Rawlings each earning victories and course records to boot. Team-wise it Jackson went home with both titles showing they are a going to be a force at the high school level in the years to come.

A big thanks to everyone for competing so well and making the 2009 Forest Park Cross Country Festival one of the best meets in the region and in the entire country!