



# JM Rockets Cross Country

## St Olaf Showcase – Aug 29th

### Truly a Showcase

On the boys side, nearly 900 runners representing 39 schools lined up at the starting line at St Olaf College's course, which is the course for the Minnesota State Cross Country Championships in November. Among the participating schools were the preseason favorites for both class A (Perham, the defending state champions) and class AA (Mounds View, the 2018 runner-up). A total of seven schools who placed in the top ten in last year's class AA state meet had representatives in the race, as well as two top 10 teams from class A. Individually, ten of the 24 ranked runners from both classes raced over the state championship course.

A.J. Green, a senior from Eastview, was one of only two high school track and field athletes in the nation to break 1:50 at 800 meters last spring. He placed 8<sup>th</sup> at the class AA state cross country meet last year, and is 3<sup>rd</sup> in the pre-season individual rankings. With the strong field on Thursday, he placed only 6<sup>th</sup> despite clocking a solid early season time of 16:13. The individual race came down to a two man battle, with Emmet Anderson (Staples-Motley, ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in class A) edging Colden Longley (Bloomington Jefferson, ranked 8<sup>th</sup> in class AA). Anderson's time of 15:44 is the fastest time in the state so far this year.

In the team competition, Mounds View showed why they are the preseason favorites for the state title, as they scored 84 points to easily defeat 3<sup>rd</sup> ranked Eastview (146 pts). Perham, at 161 points, finished 3<sup>rd</sup>. Only Eastview had more than two runners across the line when Mound View's 5<sup>th</sup> runner (and last scorer) finished in 17:04.

### JM Varsity Performances

Meti Omod was the first JM athlete across the line, clocking 17:08 to place 31<sup>st</sup>. Although over a minute slower than his PR, it is comparable to his early season times last year, when Meti didn't run faster than 17 minutes until the Lake City Invitational on September 18<sup>th</sup>.

Dakota Dowd (88<sup>th</sup>, 18:14) and Peter Dahlen (91<sup>st</sup>, 18:18) were the next two Rockets to cross the line. After them, there was a one minute gap back to the next three teammates, who all ran around 19:15 – Jonathan Devlin, who was 191<sup>st</sup> with a time of 19:13; Stephen Akin, 197<sup>th</sup> in 19:15; and sophomore Garrett Eick, 198<sup>th</sup> in 19:15.6.

Garrett's time was his first sub-20 minute performance, and shattered his PR by nearly a minute (old PR of 20:07.3). Junior co-captain Nick Wiest was the 7<sup>th</sup> Rocket athlete to cross the finish line. Both Garrett's and Nick's efforts earned them a spot in the varsity line-up for the first time in their careers. And also like Garrett, Nick's performance was his first time under 20 minutes, as he was timed in 19:48.5 (256<sup>th</sup> place). His PR had been 20:01.5.

The varsity team totaled 566 points to place 21<sup>st</sup> out of the 39 teams participating. Of the seven Big 9 schools who competed in the meet, Winona finished with the best score of 396 points, good for 11<sup>th</sup> place overall.

### Change in the Air

For the past six years, John Marshall has opened the season at the Austin Invitational.

## JV Performances

The St Olaf Showcase uses a single race format where all athletes run together, and team points are awarded to only the first seven finishers on each team. But for purposes of our discussion, we have divided the JM runners into varsity/JV based on their finishing position within the team.

Senior Adam Peterson was the first JV finisher for JM, running 20:45.5 to place 366<sup>th</sup> overall. This mark was a PR by nearly 30 seconds. Behind him, the only other JV runner who set a PR was sophomore Kyle Pido, whose time of 22:51.2 edged his previous best mark by just 0.7 seconds. He was the 5<sup>th</sup> JV finisher for the team.

Freshman Matthew Duncan, who ran under 20 minutes last year as an 8<sup>th</sup> grader, was right behind Adam in 367<sup>th</sup> place (20:47). Typically, about a dozen middle school runners in the Big 9 conference achieve that standard (sub-20 minutes) each year.

Behind Matthew, Lucas Kuisle was 497<sup>th</sup> (21:58) and Daniel Evans was 517<sup>th</sup> (22:11) to finish as the #3 and #4 JV runners, respectively.

Louis Schoeberl, a 7<sup>th</sup> grader, was the first newcomer to the sport and the first middle school athlete to cross the line for John Marshall. His time was 23:40 (629<sup>th</sup>). Another middle school runner, 8<sup>th</sup> grader Phillip Dahlen, was ten seconds behind Louis. Phillip was the sole 7<sup>th</sup> grader on the team last year. Another 7<sup>th</sup> grader, Max Nguyen, was the 2<sup>nd</sup> newcomer to finish at 24:34.

## The Injury Bug Strikes

Two expected varsity contributors – Ogden Sikel and Andrew Novak – did not compete at St Olaf due to injuries. Ogden should be back in action for the next meet (Luther Invitational on 9/14). Andrew's return is uncertain at this time.

## Big 9 Individuals and Teams

|               |                  |         |
|---------------|------------------|---------|
| Winona        | 11 <sup>th</sup> | 396 pts |
| Owatonna      | 15 <sup>th</sup> | 469 pts |
| Faribault     | 18 <sup>th</sup> | 484 pts |
| Albert Lea    | 20 <sup>th</sup> | 549 pts |
| John Marshall | 21 <sup>st</sup> | 566 pts |
| Mankato West  | 28 <sup>th</sup> | 672 pts |
| Red Wing      | 32 <sup>nd</sup> | 810 pts |

### Individual Big 9 finishers in the top 50

|                                    |               |       |
|------------------------------------|---------------|-------|
| 7 <sup>th</sup> – Carter Briggs    | Winona        | 16:19 |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> – Preston Meier   | Owatonna      | 16:59 |
| 31 <sup>st</sup> – Meti Omod       | John Marshall | 17:08 |
| 38 <sup>th</sup> – Cody Peterson   | Winona        | 17:30 |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> – Mitchell Hanson | Faribault     | 17:44 |

### Top finishers for other Big 9 schools

|                                    |              |       |
|------------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| 68 <sup>th</sup> – Travis Jensen   | Albert Lea   | 18:01 |
| 72 <sup>nd</sup> – William Simmons | Mankato West | 18:05 |
| 89 <sup>th</sup> – Daniel Byers    | Red Wing     | 18:14 |

## Random Thoughts from John

Like any sport, cross country spawns its own unique culture. My two youngest children love to argue which sport is harder – cross country (my son is a 6<sup>th</sup> year senior) or football (my daughter is on the JM freshman team). I'll let them continue to argue over that one, but one little side enjoyment I get as a cross country fan is noticing some of the t-shirts worn by runners and parents. Like this one, of which I've seen a few different styles around:

