

State Finals

Saturday, November 6th, 2010



"WHAT WAS THE SECRET?" THEY WANTED TO KNOW; IN A THOUSAND DIFFERENT WAYS THEY WANTED TO KNOW "THE SECRET." AND NOT ONE OF THEM WAS PREPARED, TRULY PREPARED TO BELIEVE THAT IT HAD NOT SO MUCH TO DO WITH CHEMICALS AND ZIPPY MENTAL TRICKS AS WITH THAT MOST UNPROFOUND AND SOMETIMES HEART-RENDING PROCESS OF REMOVING, MOLECULE BY MOLECULE, THE VERY TOUGH RUBBER THAT COMPRISED THE BOTTOMS OF HIS TRAINING SHOES. ~ JOHN L PARKER

It may be unexpected to hear your head coach say that the program's goals for Saturday were not the result of his direction or guidance, but that is the truth and has been the case for most of this season. Throughout the entire fall, Saline's cross country team was comprised of ambitious, confident, aggressive, and often "greedy" athletes, and each race, our goals and expectations have been the natural outcome of those characteristics, which absolutely permeate our squad. We took those same traits to MIS, which explains why many are having a hard time reconciling Saturday's outstanding race with our own expectations.

You might expect Nick Renberg, who finishes his 2nd year of cross country as the 4th fastest runner in the history of our program, to be satisfied by his All-State and Top-Ten finish, but he wasn't. You might think Spencer Bishop's 10 second PR, the largest among our runners, would allow him to hold his head the highest, but he didn't. You might think Grant Praschan, who didn't even earn a varsity letter as a freshman, would be pleased to finish as the 4th fastest Sophomore in the history of our program, but he clearly wasn't. That was the case up and down our line-up and among many of our spectators. It was a GREAT day for our runners, but not the day the team had wanted.

Following the race, the top seven met and discussed the race and compared the outcomes to the goals set during Tuesday's meeting. We needed Renberg to finish in the top ten, and he did. The hope was for Barnett to run in the low 15:50's and Bishop to get close to 16:00. They both made or bettered those goals. Praschan and Parker needed to be 16:30 or better, and they easily beat that time. Our top five ran great races, with each doing exactly what the coaches asked for (and sometimes more), while tying or beating their PR's set on the fast Regional course. While our 6-7 runners didn't race as well, Phelps and Elms walked away with things invaluable to their young careers; experience and perspective.

After the race, the coaches met to discuss what we could have done differently. The answer was, "Nothing." Our training and mental preparation throughout the season led to our athletes having their best performances at the State Championships, and that, all along, has been the coaches' goal.

We have a saying that, at different times, means very different things. "You can only control what is in your shoes," is a bit of wisdom we inherited from Dustin Voss that, following Saturday's incredible performance, means something different than it has in the past. Today, it means the incredible performances of other teams should not be reason for us to be disappointed in our own outstanding performance. The 2010 State Meet is the best race in Saline's history and we should hold our heads high.

A sincere "Thanks" to our Alternates, who provided support right up to the very end and had a larger role in Saturday's success than they might ever realize. The same "Thanks" is due to our friends, family, and alumni that made it to the race (the largest Saline crowd I've ever seen), as they too have a massive hand in our program's success.

Top Seven @ State

Renberg	15:34
Barnett	15:48
Bishop	16:05
Parker	16:19
Praschan	16:19
Phelps	17:06
Elms	17:12

"Teams of the 2010's"

A new tally begins with this year's championship race. In the 2000's, Saline finished as the 7th best program in Michigan. We begin the new decade as the 5th.

2010 Post Season Record

Conference	5-0
Regionals	10-0
State	22-4
Total	37-4
	.902

Top Ten All-Time Finishers at States

Voss	14:54
Atzinger	15:25
Moore	15:30
Renberg	15:34
Davis	15:38
Johnson	15:38
Barnett	15:48
Conn	15:57
BishopS	16:05
BishopC	16:08
Bumped from the List...	
Hunt	16:09
Harper	16:18
Pinter	16:24

Saline's Top-Ten Finishes in D1 State Finals

2007	2 nd
1999	3 rd
2003	3 rd
2000	4 th
2010	5th
2006	6 th
2002	7 th
2009	9 th
1998	9 th
2008	9 th

Varsity Points

165	19%	Seniors
423	48%	Juniors
185	21%	Sophomores
89	10%	Freshmen

SALINE CC BY THE NUMBERS...

-2:23

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RENBERG'S TIME AT THE STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS IN 2010 AND 2009

4

NUMBER OF TEAMS IN THE TOP TEN THAT RETURN 6 OR MORE RUNNERS.

5

THE NUMBER WE WILL ADD TO THE BACK OF NEXT YEAR'S "TRADITION SHIRT"

22

NUMBER OF TIMES SALINE RUNNERS HAVE PICKED UP ALL-STATE HONORS.

Coming Up... Tuesday we'll have an optional mile time trial for the state runners & alternates. The GUN WILL GO OFF at 3:15. Warm-up will be each runner's responsibility.

See you all at the banquet on Sunday, November 14!