
5 questions with Mark Skaggs, East Peoria cross country

By Stan Morris

Journal Star sports reporter

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Mark Skaggs is a senior and No. 1 runner for the East Peoria boys cross country team.

As a junior, Skaggs finished sixth in the Mid-Illini Conference meet to earn all-league honors. He followed that up by qualifying for the state meet, where he finished 49th in 15 minutes, 30 seconds.

This year, he has consistently been among the top area runners — placing an area best fourth at the Galesburg Invitational. He was also 15th at the mega First to the Finish Invitational at Detweiller Park on Sept. 9 in a field of 590 runners. Only Metamora sophomore Adam Gilbreath-Glaub finished better (12th) in the area at the 2A First to the Finish event.

Journal Star reporter Stan Morris asked Skaggs five questions:

1. What was last year like for you, after placing sixth at the Mid-Illini Conference meet and finishing 49th at state? And how has that motivated you this season?

“It was exciting knowing that I put in the work to make it to the state meet and placing sixth in our conference. It’s motivating me by knowing that I can do better than last year. My goals for this year are to qualify for the state meet, not just as an individual but as a team. We have a good looking team and I see us in the state meet this November. Last year motivated me a lot because I made it to state as an individual, but I want to make it back this year and place in the top 25 all-state.

2. What has been the highlight of this season so far?

“The First to the Finish Invitational (15th in 15:39.9), because I ran well and I competed well against people in our conference and in our sectionals.”

3. What was your summer training regimen like? And how does it change in-season?

“Slowly building mileage with no speed work and getting up to the appropriate mileage safely. We build the mileage slowly so we don’t get injured. I started at 30-35 miles a week and built to 45-50 miles a week. In the summer, we are trying to build our base. In the season, we start working on tempos and speed work.”

4. What have you improved on the most in your running since freshman year?

“Handling the mileage and being consistent in workouts and in races.”

5. What are your college plans?

“My college plans are to be able to continue my running and be able to run in NCAA Division II or III.”

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