

MIDD-WEST CROSS COUNTRY

Mustangs' distance coach looks for personal effort

By **JEFF FISHBEIN**

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AT A GLANCE
MIDD-WEST MUSTANGS
 District 4, Class AA
 Coach: Stan Share

MIDDLEBURG — Last year did not produce the season the Mid-West cross country coach Stan Share wanted to see for his team.

“I think we underachieved — I think it was one of those years we had a lot of potential and never put it together,” he said.

This year, it could well be more of the same, but for different reasons. The Mustang boys team is small in numbers, and pretty much minus its best runner for medical reasons. The girls have a roster, but less experience — and all of them have to compete against the historically strong teams of the Heartland Conference’s top division.

“The prospect is that I’ve got 11 girls now and I’ve only got five or six guys. Even if they all stay healthy we don’t have enough experience. I think the kids understand that,” Share said.

The biggest disappointment may be the effective loss of top harrier Alex Lieberman, whose running has been hampered by an injury that harkens back to the spring.

“Alex at the end of wrestling season tore something and it’s been a dispute all summer on the medical side of things,” Share explained. “From February to

now he’s still dealing with it.”

It’s a huge loss for Share, who calls Lieberman his most experienced runner and hardest worker.

“I’m probably not going to have my No. 1 runner even though he’s here,” he said. “It falls to the rest of the guys to pick up the slack, which puts us behind the eight ball even a little more.”

Last year, Share compensated by stressing the invitationals over the league’s Tuesday quad meets.

“That’s what it will be this year,” he said. “We’re going with probably moderate training on Mondays even though we have quad meets on Tuesdays because we’re training right through them.

“I know they get down and that’s why I try to de-emphasize the quad meets,” Share continues. “Usually what I tell them is I’m looking for them to compete. If it’s the middle or the back of the pack and they’re racing with somebody, it comes down to what you have. Those are the little things I look forward to.”

With numbers, the girls have more of a chance to show, and Share said he’s looking forward to seeing



Sentinel photos by JEFF FISHBEIN

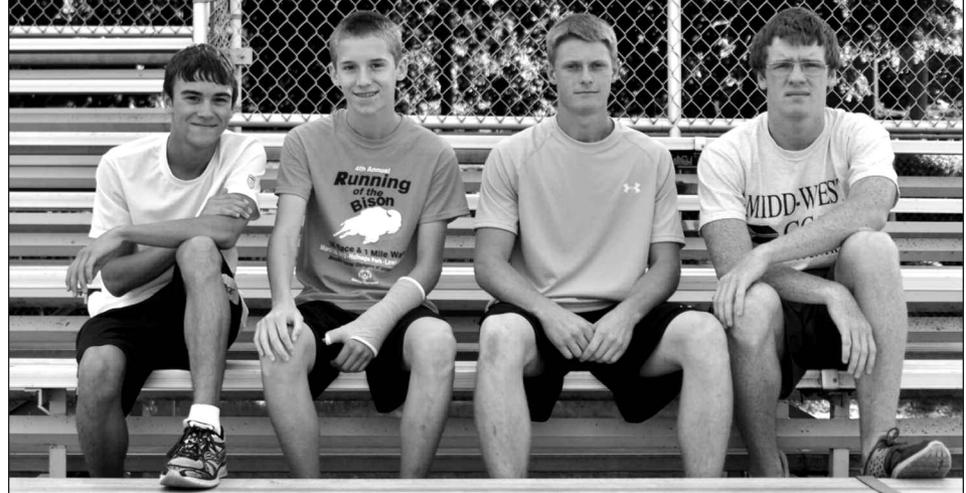
Members of the Mid-West girls cross country team are, from left, front, Victoria Manbeck, Amber Fawver, Claudia Kuhns, Laura Steininger and Kacie Bogar; back, Hannah Boonie, Jenna Aumiller, Kylee Webb, Janelle Peachey and Larisa Drick.

them at the Northeast Invitational at the end of September.

“It will be a real competitive field. I’m just going to say to them, ‘I don’t want you to panic today. You have a lot of people to run with,’” he said. “Hopefully that sets us up for the league meet in mid-October and districts.”

In the meantime, the veteran coach has implemented team-building exercises such as surveying the runners to see what they like and dislike each week, and let them reward the runners they think worked the hardest.

“We’re not going to have a physical advantage,” he said. “Hopefully we can have a little mental advantage.”



Members of the Mid-West boys cross country team are, from left, Garrett Walter, Jace Kreamer, Dyllan Folk and Alex Lieberman. Ben Kline and Dalton Yoder also are members.

Co-op

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Naming Greenwood and Line Mountain as the tougher opponents the Tigers will face in TVL play, Haines still said confidently that her team was in the mix.

“We beat every team in the league last year with the

exception of Greenwood and we held them to 1-0 on our field,” she said. “Our girls know we are capable of winning and we will work together to achieve that.

“I believe our team will again enter postseason play but like any coach, I expect that we will do better this year and advance to the second round.”

Notes: Haines said unlike the wrestling team, which had matches at both high schools as a co-op, her team will play at East Juniata. “The boosters did discuss the pros and cons of having games at both fields and we felt it was best to practice where we play,” she said. ... By choosing District 4 (East Juniata) over District 6 (Juniata) for the team, the

playoffs will be more difficult, with several perennial state contenders among the likely opponents. “Again, this is something that we discussed as a booster club ... We would rather play the tough teams and not advance as opposed to beat up on weaker teams and not have the competition. The girls are all ready for the task,” Haines said.

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Good luck to all Greenwood Fall Sports Teams!

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