

## The Team:

Aaron Chandler ('15)

Samuel Desré ('16)

Lucas Matison ('15)

Spencer Morganfeld ('17)

Kai Oda ('17)

Naveen Pai ('17)

Kent Slaney ('17)

Honorable Mention:

Boys' Soccer



**TAKING FIRST** Lucas Matison ('15) passes a Bellarmine runner in the CCS championship meet. Paly took second behind Bellarmine, and both moved onto CIF.

photo by Katie Forge

One fast runner is impressive on a cross country team, but there is more to be said about a team where every member has such speed that they all can make a statement. This year, the boys' cross country team made that statement by making it to the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) state championship meet in November.

The team made it a goal to reach the CIF state championships, but the season began with a shaky start as lead runners were recovering from injuries and illnesses. Kai Oda ('17) spent the first couple of weeks healing from an ankle injury and Kent Slaney ('17) broke his toe while playing soccer the day before cross country started. Sam Desré ('16) was out with a shin injury.

"Early on in the season we did not do well in a lot of our meets and Naveen [Pai ('17)] was the only person who was consistently improving," Oda said.

Key team member Lucas Matison ('15) was also absent at the start of the season.

"For me, the season started off kind of weird since I competed in the World Mountain Running Championships in mid-September, and

then got sick afterwards," Matison said.

However, once all runners were healed, the team was able to become a top competitor at meets.

"Towards the end of the season everyone's injuries healed and we put all of our energy into getting faster," Oda said.

The team's goal of reaching the CIF meet came closer to being real. With more training, the team became faster and won more meets. At the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League (SCVAL) championship meet, the team finished first in the El Camino league. Matison won the race, a 2.95 mile course at Crystal Springs.

From there, the team's success didn't falter: the next week they placed second behind Bellarmine in the Central Coast Section (CCS) championship meet at Toro Park in Salinas, Calif. Again, Matison placed first in the three-mile course out of 130 runners. Slaney, Pai and Aaron Chandler ('15) contributed to the second place spot by placing ninth, 24 and 32, respectively.

"Our peak of the season was at CCS [championships]," Matison said. "All of us raced incredibly that day, and many of our rival teams who were said to do better than us, we ended

up beating them."

The first three teams in CCS get to run in the CIF meet, so the team was ecstatic when they found out they placed second.

"Even though we were trying for so long to get to [CIF], when we actually did we were all kind of surprised," Oda said. "There were a couple of minutes when we were all screaming and hugging each other."

The CIF meet was not the best race for any of the Vikings. The course was unlike any they had run before, and proved to be a larger challenge than they anticipated.

"Unfortunately the [CIF] meet did not go that well," Oda said. "Slaney got food poisoning and the race itself was a lot bigger than we were used to. We were choking on dust and trying to get around people the entire time."

Despite the Vikings' last place finish in Division 1 at the CIF meet, the season overall was something the team could be proud of.

"I feel like we surprised a lot of people with our success this season," Pai said. "Our season went by pretty normally at first with everyone just running their races and gradually improving. But when it came time for the playoff races, we all came together."

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# BOYS' TEAM OF THE YEAR

## CROSS COUNTRY

After a slow start to its season, the boys' cross country team trained hard and made it all the way to the California Interscholastic (CIF) championship meet, led by runners Lucas Matison ('15) and Kent Slaney ('17).

by PRISCILLA BELL



photo by Makobi Slaney

**ALL SMILES** The boys' cross country team shows off its second place trophy at the Central Coast Section Championship meet. Lucas Matison ('15) holds the trophy and placed first in the race.

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