

REPLACING THE IRREPLACEABLE

After four years with Zach Wills, the boys' cross country team must move on

Joseph Spencer | Staff Writer

For the past four years, Mason High School has been abuzz with the news of 2011 graduate Zach Wills. He won three individual state championships and a trip overseas to Italy to represent the United States at the Junior World Championships. Now the boys cross country team must find a way to replace him this season, according to head coach Tom Rapp.

Rapp knows that there will be some changes on the team, but he believes they will be fine.

"It's been different, not harder because we actually have more depth than we had last year. So, in some ways, depth is making up for what we lack up front," Rapp said. "We do have some good guys up front, but no one near Wills right now. We have to rely on our depth. We have to win by committee, not with superstars."

With the team competition still at hand, the team must run together this year instead of relying on one great performance every meet, according to senior Ryan Mumma.

"It's really difficult replacing Zach Wills, because he was someone we could always depend on to get the team a great score. This, along with his leadership is why he will be most missed," Mumma said.

While the teams "superstar" is gone, Coach Rapp knows that there are people who are who pushing to get up to Wills' status.

"Right now we have no one who can take over a race like Wills could," Rapp said. "But, I know our top two or three runners are really pushing to be that guy that everyone is able to depend on."

Even with the uncertainty of who will start the races or who will lead the pack, sophomore Tom Clark is confident that the Comets will have a great season.

"We are confident going into the season.

"[Zach] was our biggest leader and truly helped unify the program. Every day he was at practice with a smile, ready to lead the pack."

I think we are more of a team, and even though there will be some change we can still do great things," Clark said.

Mumma shares the optimism that Clark has about the season, but he knows replacing Wills will take more than the team running fast.

"Zach was the fastest guy, but he meant a lot more to the team than just a number one finish," Mumma said. "He was our biggest leader and truly helped unify the program. Every day he was at practice with a smile, ready to lead the pack."

According to Rapp, the team goals are no

different than last year, despite the fact that there's no front runner to win the race.

"[We want to] repeat as GMC and District [Champions], and place in the top ten in the State meet," Rapp said.

Mumma knows that a big part of the teams' success is how they can fill in the seniors.

"Our success will not be defined by us replacing Wills and the rest of the senior class," Mumma said. "But in order to be a top team in the State meet, we must find a way to do it."

Zach Wills in 2008 as a member of the track team.



photo contributed by zacharywills.com

C TRADING PUNCHES

Recently the St. X cheering section was scolded for some of their chants during the St. X vs. Colerain football game. In recent years the Black Hole has even been forced to reel in some of their comments. Do you think fans should be left alone to cheer or do their cheers sometimes go a little too far?

Fans should be left alone to cheer! Student sections are a part of the game and as long as the chants are relevant they should be allowed. As an athlete you must be able to handle all adversity, even if it comes from the stands. And a student section is what a lot of teams are known for, so let them cheer.

Joseph Spencer



James Nosek

There shouldn't be a "filter" for what a student section can say because they have the right to say what they want. Like going to any sporting event, they don't ban fans from saying certain words or comments, why should a student section be any different? If it gets out of control, which it can, then the person should be warned or escorted out.

Of course students should be allowed to cheer and support their team during games, but they shouldn't be allowed to say whatever or do whatever they feel because it could have negative effects on players, other fans and reflect poorly on our school. I'm not saying that we need to have a system that monitors everything the Black Hole says, but we should stick to cheering for our own team, instead of bashing the other one.

Katelyn Cain

