

Former Tigers Prenzler, Nuttall Win Mud Mountain Race Fundraiser For Edwardsville Cross Country, Track Teams

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - A pair of former Edwardsville High runners - Roland Prenzler for the men and Emily Nuttall for the women - were the winners of the 27th annual Mud Mountain race, the annual fundraiser for the Edwardsville High School cross country and track teams, as well as the teams at both Lincoln and Liberty Middle Schools, held Saturday morning at the Mud Mountain cross country course at SIU-Edwardsville.

The annual event was a complete success on all fronts, as a total of 254 runners competed in the race and nearly 300 runners registered to run, raising money for the teams at all three schools.

"I'm pretty happy with the overall turnout and conditions today," said George Patrylak, race director and head Edwardsville High cross country coach. "Last time I ran by the registration table, we were right near that 300 mark, so that's always our goal - and we lucked out today with the conditions here and it seemed like a lot of smiles now, but people are struggling a little bit, though, in that second or third mile. But a lot of happy faces, now that the race is over."

Conditions were indeed very favorable, with wall-to-wall sunshine and partly cloudy skies, with temperatures in the mid-to-upper 60s at race time and the proverbial good time was had by all.

"For the runners, if you're a high school, college, middle school kid, it's a good way to kick off your season and see how your summer miles have been going and how you're progressing," Patrylak said. "For the adults in the community, it's a great opportunity to get off of that hard surface. I know it's one time of year a lot of the athletes, a lot of our local adults actually try to do a race for time on the cross country course. I know they look forward to that. And then, it's also great to see the alums come back and donning their Elite Eight jerseys and having a good time."

The race also attracts many of the members of the local running community, who are regulars on the road racing circuit.

"Yeah, it's always fun," Patrylak said. "I think back to some of the road races I did in college and it's amazing that there's still some familiar faces, even that far back. But one other thing that is true is that we do have a lot of runners that are loyal to our race and they're just committed to helping us out and supporting Edwardsville athletics, so it's greatly appreciated."

The money raised will help fund the Edwardsville, Lincoln, and Liberty teams in their races and other events and endeavors during the 2023-24 school year.

"Right now, as far as sponsorships, we're still waiting for a couple of totals to be figured out," Patrylak said. "We're definitely going to be able to support all the events and programs that we were hoping to this year for the cross country programs at Liberty, Lincoln, and EHS."







The programs are the real winners of the race, as the funds raised will be able to help keep the programs on a very high level.

"There's a lot of behind the scenes things that the booster club does to help out," Patrylak said. "Across the nation, school districts are having to be more cautious with monies. Edwardsville does a great job of supporting all of their programs, it's a great district and it's awesome that when we're called upon for those little extras or the little things we feel the athletes deserve, more and more so than anything, the opportunities that the athletes deserve. We're grateful that the community and sponsors and athletes give us the opportunity to support our athletes and do those things."

Prenzler won the men's race with a time of 16:14.4, with another former Tiger runner, Geo Patrylak, placing second at 16:20.2, Zach Walters was third at 16:34.2, in fourth place was Ryan Luitjohan at 16:41.8, fifth place went to Drew Twyman of Triad, who

had a time of 16:58.3, David Dutton finished sixth at 17:00.4, Tiger senior-to-be runner Ben Perulfi was seventh at 17:01.7, Edwardsville alum Dane Shaw was eighth at 17:01.8, Civic Memorial runner Justice Eldridge was ninth at 17:07.9 and rounding out the top ten was John Bush of Ballwin, Mo., who had a time of 17:10.0.

In the team event, the Elite Eight A team won the meet with 10 points, the Eville Boys came in second with 50 points, third place went to Chiropractic Plus with 73 points, Integrity Spine and Joint came in fourth with 93 points, Run Well of Edwardsville was fifth at 152 points, the Fab Five were sixth with 181 points, the Elite Eight B team came in seventh with 229 points and Switchback were in eighth place with 354 points. Two other teams, Dental Professionals and an unattached team, also competed, but didn't have a team score.

In the age group categories, Ezekiel Askins won the 11-and-under race with a time of 23:14.3, the 12-and-13 winner was Cole Deering at 19:19.9, Colin Thomas took the 14-and-15 group at 17:42.7, Twyman won the 16-18 age group, while Luitjohan won the 19-24 group, Zachary Huelskamp of Breese was the 25-29 winner at 18:26.5, Jon Yoch won the 30-34 age group at 17:46.9, the winner in the 35-39 category was Shaw, with the 40-44 division won by Jason Hamilton at 20:07.4, Jeff Price took the 45-49 group at 18:39.0, Brad Twyman of Troy was the winner of the 50-54 group at 20:38.8, Ryan Yoch of O'Fallon won the 55-59 group with a time of 21:52.7 and the 60-and-over winner was John James of Troy, who came in at 23:29.4.

Nuttall won the women's race with a time of 19:40.0, with Edwardsville teammates Maya Lueking coming in second at 20:30.1 and Madison Popelar placing third at 20:34.1, in fourth place was another Tiger teammate, Emma Patrick, who had a time of 20:36.7, fifth place went to Lizzy Lynn at 21:03.2, Antonella De Avila was sixth at 21:36, former Roxana runner Riley Doyle came in seventh at 21:51.0, Margaret Paty of Edwardsville was eighth at 21:59.4, in ninth place was fellow Tiger runner Belle Horsfall at 22:12.2 and rounding out the top ten was Sarah Haislar, whose time was 22:23.0.

In the team competition, The "Gray" Test Space Runners defeated the Elite Eight women's team 291-370.

In the age group races, the 11-and-under winner was Elizabeth Hatley, who came in at 26:22.7, Willow Jackson was the 12-13 winner at 22:59.9, De Avila won the 14-15 age group, with Patrick also winning in the 16-18 division, Julianna Determan won the 19-24 age group with a time of 23:42.1, the 25-29 winner was Lynn, Stephanie Pruitt of Bunker Hill was the winner in the 30-34 age group at 22:32.9, Sarah Laux of Edwardsville won the 35-39 category at 30:42.4, Kit Donald of Troy was the winner in the 40-44 category at 28:53.3, Jodi Venhaus won the 45-49 race at 25:59.9,

Collinsville's Roxanne Patrylak won the 50-54 group at 22:42.7 and Edwardsville's Becky Bradley took the 60-and-over group at 23:53.6.

It was a very successful day on all fronts and Patrylak thanked everyone involved for making the day a very good one.

"Also, thank you to SIUE," Patrylak said, "Even with some of those big storms that have come through in the last few weeks, the course was in excellent shape, so I appreciate SIUE grounds for all their hard work, as well as our Edwardsville grounds in helping us out with the finishing touches yesterday. And just thank you to the runners and we look forward to seeing people at Mud Mountain 28."







[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)