

Popelar, Coll, Finish Second And Third: Tigers Win 57th Edwardsville Invite, Redbirds Fifth

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EDWARDSVILLE - Madison Popelar and Olivia Coll led the way for Edwardsville by finishing second and third, with all six runners placing in the top ten to give the Tigers the team championship in the 57th running of the Edwardsville Invitational cross country meet Saturday morning at SIU-Edwardsville's famed Mud Mountain course.

The Tigers won with 23 points, while Francis Howell was second at 52 points, Parkway West came in third with 73 points, Mascoutah was fourth at 127 points, Alton placed fifth at 147 points, John Burroughs School was sixth at 158 points, Belleville East came in seventh at 183 points, Staunton came in eighth with 240, Springfield Southeast was ninth at 251 points and East St. Louis placed 10th with 265 points. Maryville Christian, Duchesne Catholic of St. Charles, Mo., Metro-East Lutheran and Collinsville also had runners who competed in the race, but not enough to record a team score.

The girls team employed the same strategy as in the boys meet, which the Tigers also won, of having the top five runners pace the second pack of five runners for the first part

of the race. Again, the strategy proved successful as the Tigers were able to dominate the proceedings.





"The girls had a similar strategy to the boys," said Tigers' head coach George Patrylak, "where we had our top group pace our sixth through 10th runners through the first mile. The overall field was not as deep, allowing the girls to pace the second group for the first two miles."

The strategy worked to perfection, as the Tigers were able to dominate the top ten as the team continues working toward its main goals for the postseason, starting next month.

"This group of girls had high expectations for this season," Patrylak said, "and trust their coaches. Our plan is to get ready for the postseason/ The next several weeks are the most exciting of the season."

Evyn Humphrey of Francis Howell was the individual winner, coming in at 18:42.6, with Popelar second at 19:31.9 and Coll coming in exactly six seconds later in third at 19:37.9. Brynn Behrmann of Mascoutah was fourth at 19:48.5, with the Tigers dominating fifth through eighth places. Maya Lueking was fifth at 19:58.9, Ella Thompson came in sixth at 20:01.9, seventh place went to Antonella DeAvila at 20:03.0 and Emma Patrick was eighth at 20:15.1. Francis Howell's Ella Coulter was ninth at 20:23.6 and teammate Natalie Sollors rounded out the top ten at 20:26.7.

Along with the top six runners, the only other Edwardsville runner to score was Sarah Haislar, who was in at 20:28.1. Chloe Miller led the Redbirds with a time of 21:46.7, with Sophia Helfrich coming in at 21:56.0, Aliyah Rehling had a time of 22:42.1, Monica Klockemper was home at 22:49.0 and Jessica Gabriel's time was 29:28.4

The Lions were led by Mia Donald at 23:22.5, while Isabel Jacob was in at 24:54.6 and Isabella Hill's time was 27:09.4. The Knights were led by Izzy McLeod, who was in at 23:00.1, with Aubrey Goeckner having a time of 29:06.3 and Thea Ball was home at 30:56.9. The Kahoks were led by Catalina Jiminez-Magata, who was home at 24:43.0, with Morgan Laing having a time of 25:18.0 and Skylar Thomeczek was in at 30:13.2.

East Side was led by Branae Brown, who had a time of 26:21.6, with Peaton Walker coming in at 30:27.2, Je'Tira Taylor was home at 31:57.5, Markayla Barnes' time was 35:40.2 and Beautiful McNeese had a time of 37:32.1. Mallory Lucykow led the Bulldogs with a clocking of 26:42.6, while Elsay Clark was in at 28:53.4, Olivia Matesa came in at 29:23.2, Cheyenne Butcher had a time of 29:25.1, Brooke Rucker was home at 31:50.2, Lauren Sternickle's time was 35:54.3 and Julie Alosi had a time of 36:20.1.

Edwardsville will have a pair of important meets coming in the next two weeks, competing in the Palatine Invitational next Saturday in northwest suburban Chicago, then going to the Peoria Invitational at Detweiler Park on Sept. 30.



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