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## DHS Cross Country Team Ready for 2017 Season

AUGUST 17TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Dexter, Missouri - It's been many years since Dexter has sent anyone to state in Cross Country. Could this be the year? Coach Morse and his runners seem to think so and they believe they will have a very good season.

"Our goal every year is always so send as many runners to state as possible," commented head Cross Country Coach Leonard Morse. "It's been many years since we have sent anyone. I believe that drought will end this year. We will have a very competitive team this year both on the boys' and the girls' sides. I believe we have the runners to get to state this year. I also believe we will see the school records for boys and girls broken this year and most likely several times each."

Cross Country is an individual team sport; however Coach Morse believes his runners this year have meshed into a team, a competitive team and a good group of individuals who are working together to build up a great Bearcat Cross Country program.

"I believe that this team will continue to improve over the positive steps it took last year," continued Morse. "We have hungry runners who are working hard and I think that hard work will pay off in a very positive way. We also have some very talented freshmen runners joining us this year who will push the varsity runners."

There are 13 seniors this year. Leading the Bearcat pack are Emily Ladd on the girls Cross Country side.

"She has been my number one girl all through high school," stated Morse.

Also returning are seniors Jonni Hill and Shelby Smith who are also showing signs of great improvement.

"Sophomore Margo Nea is my returning number two girl. They will be joined by freshman Madelyn Haynes. While we only have one junior, Hannah Smith, we have a new crop of sophomore girls that are new to the team. I believe that we will have several solid female runners emerge from this group which is good for this year and great for the next couple of years as well."

On the boys side there are six varsity runners returning. Dawson Kasting, Lucas Goodrich, Sean Rybolt, Nate Drivas, Matthew Chessser, and Dylan Long are extremely competitive.

"These six have been working hard this year. Senior Blake Bolin returns from last year's team. Jacob Chamness and Chris Seabaugh rejoin the team this year after taking their junior years off. We also have a transfer runner in Dakota Morlan. They will be joined by sophomore Dylan Homan and Wyatt Parker. Then, we have three up and coming freshmen in Gavin Cartwright, Carter Dorton, and Andrew Ellinghouse. I expect great things from these three throughout their high school careers."

Dexter will host an Invitational on Saturday, October 21st as well as the Class 3, District 1 meet on Saturday, October 28th.

"Hopefully we will perform well at districts on our home course. While I am hopeful we will advance to the state meet, the District meet will give some of our seniors one last chance to run in front of family and friends at home."

Class 3, District 1 competition is tough in this part of southeast Missouri. The Dexter Bearcats are up against several impressive schools such as Festus, DeSoto, Herculaneum, North County, Notre Dame, Potosi, Ste. Genevieve and Windsor. Newcomers to the group are Kennett and Perryville and they continue to improve.

"I do believe that we will make a strong showing at Districts this year on both the boys' side and girls' side," Morse said.

Seniors are Blake Bolin, Jacob Chamness, Matthew Chessser, Nate Drivas, Lucas Goodrich, Dawson Kasting, Dylan Long, Dakota Morlan, Sean Rybolt, Chris Seabaugh, Jonni Hill, Emily Ladd, and Shelby Smith.

The only junior cross country member is Hannah Smith.

Sophomores are Dylan Homan, Wyatt Parker, Keaira Craft, Samantha Glore, Shelby Haynes, Hailee Mayfield, Grace Milam, Margo Nea, AnnMarie Slaton, and Alexis Williamson.

Freshman are Gavin Cartwright, Carter Dorton, Andrew Ellinghouse, and Madelyn Haynes.

Managers for Cross Country are Jacob Smith, Andreus Garrett, Demi Cecil, and Sophie Freeman.

Dexter will compete in Class 3, District 1 with DeSoto, Doniphan, Kennett, Festus, Herculanum, North County, Notre Dame, Perryville, Potosi, Ste. Genevieve and Windsor

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