

# Running's a challenge, joy

By JESSICA ZIMANSKE  
STAFF WRITER

Junior cross country runner Scott Smith has not only been setting goals since his sophomore year at Cooper High School, but breaking them too.

As a St. Thomas freshman, Smith placed 155th in the MIAC conference while running with a stress fracture. Last year he improved to 58th.

"I think it is very important to set goals for yourself," he said. "Otherwise you're going out there and you're training for nothing."

This season, Smith is one of the most improved runners on the team and he is setting even higher goals for himself and the team.

"We're working toward earning a berth to the national championship," he said.

While he participated in fun runs at a young age, Smith did not become serious about running until he entered high school. He enjoyed the team aspect of cross country running and decided to fully commit to the sport. His commitment led to all-conference honors.

"I enjoyed working hard and being able to see the results," he said.

When Smith began looking at colleges, he made sure to factor his desire to run cross country and track into his decision. Smith ended up deciding to come to St. Thomas for the deep history of the running program as well as for academic reasons.

"I wanted to see how good I could be and what I could accomplish in four years," he said.

Toward the end of Smith's freshman season, he developed a stress fracture because of the increase in mileage from his high school cross country workout routines.

The injury gave Smith more motivation to train hard for his sophomore season and set high goals for himself.

"The little success that I achieved before I got injured made me want more success," he said.

That mentality has brought him into his third season of cross country at St. Thomas with more experience and the ability to run more intelligently.

"As a freshman you are clueless," Smith said. "The only way you learn is by racing more."

Coach Peter Wareham has watched his formerly young team mature into a developed group of quality runners. He said Smith has been an important part of that growth.

"Scott is a guy that works hard," he said. "He has a good head on his shoulders."

Wareham also noted Smith's personality as something that keeps team spirit up.

"He keeps the atmosphere pretty lively," Wareham said.

Despite Smith's lightheartedness, Wareham believes he also brings a diligent work ethic to the team.

"He is a good role model for hard work and discipline," Wareham said.

Smith works out with the cross country team daily through morning runs, structured workout routines and longer group runs. In the end, he estimates that the team runs nine to 10 miles during each workout.

While he enjoys the practices, Smith said he always has the competition in his mind.

"I enjoy going out and running every day, but the reason I am there is to work for the Saturday mornings," he said.

The team usually competes in a meet every two weeks, and the anticipation always builds for Smith in the days prior to the meet.

"Some nights you don't get sleep," he explained.

Although Smith admits that he is always slightly nervous before each meet, he still feels excited to compete.

"You've worked hard all week, and it's your one chance to show off what you've done and to see where you're at," he said.

Smith said he believes that some people see cross country as only a competition between times, but he said the sport encompasses so much more.

"Time is not everything," he said. "It's more important how you race and the guys that you beat."

During each race, Smith tries to keep his mind focused on strategies and what he needs to do next.



JOSH KLEVEN/THE AQUIN

Junior cross country standout Scott Smith is working to improve on his 155th and 58th place finishes in the MIAC the past two seasons.

"You try to evaluate where you're at, where you want to finish, and what it's going to take to accomplish that," he said.

After a race, Smith admits that his feelings depend on the outcome of the race though a sense of exhaustion always sets in. He said that running for St. Thomas continually challenges him as an athlete.

"Expectations are high from myself, my coaches, and my peers," Smith said. "But at the same time, it's a lot of fun especially when we start to see success."

Smith doesn't dread the daily workouts but instead looks forward to them.

"I get to roll around with 20 of my best friends everyday just hanging out," he said.

Smith considers the two weeks off after the season to be the hardest of the year.

"You get so jittery because you have so much energy," he explained. "You can't concentrate in class."

Smith said it is a lot easier to stay motivated when running with others, and depending on the pace the team will talk through the whole run. Many of the runners also run track in the spring with Smith so they practice year round as a group.

Junior Rorak Hooten has been running with Smith since the beginning of their freshman season. He said Smith brings many different characteristics to the team.

"Scott likes to have fun," Hooten said. "He also has a serious element to him but only when it has to be there."

Hooten said Smith is not afraid to be vocal to keep the team together.

"If there's something that's out of place, he's usually one to say something about it," he said.

Hooten also recognized the progress that Smith made over the last few years.

"Scott made huge improvements last year because he was really dedicated," Hooten

said. "He was the one that was getting up consistently in the mornings to run, doing the workouts the way he needed to do them, and taking care of himself."

Sophomore Mike Connell has only ran with Smith for one year but has already seen Smith's leadership from last season when there were no seniors and only one junior on the team.

"Scott was incredibly helpful in leading the team," Connell said.

Connell said he admires how Smith has bounced back from injuries and how he is always looking out for his teammates.

Smith and the team are preparing for the MIAC conference meet on Oct. 27. Smith considers the conference meet held in Como Park in St. Paul to be his favorite.

"I enjoy the conference meet because everyone on the team gets to run it," Smith explained. "It's what we work for all year. It's really intense and it's a lot of fun."

Smith sees St. John's to be the greatest competition in the conference, and he hopes the team can not only do well in the conference, but do well in the regional meet to qualify for the national meet.

Smith plans on graduating with a criminal justice major next year in hopes of enrolling in law school and becoming a prosecutor. He knows that running will always be a part of his life, and he hopes the team can earn a conference championship before he ends his cross country career. Smith hopes that his presence on the team leaves a lasting example for future St. Thomas runners.

"I want to be known as a hard worker that was willing to do what it takes to improve and achieve the goals that were set," he said.

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## Two-Minute Drill

### Denning honored by Cretin-Derham Hall

UNIVERSITY NEWS SERVICE

Baseball coach Dennis Denning was inducted into the Cretin-Derham Hall Athletic Hall of Fame Thursday night for his accomplishments as a player, coach and athletic director.

Denning was a four-time Minnesota High School Coach of the Year and a finalist three times for National Prep Coach of the Year.

He was the starting second baseman his senior year on the 1962 state champion Cretin team before becoming a coach and athletic director at the school. In his 17 years as Cretin's coach, his teams had a 378-76 record, 15 conference titles and six state championships.

Denning will begin his 31st season as a baseball head coach this spring, and his 14th season at St. Thomas. The team is 447-135 overall with a .771 winning percentage.

His other honors include being inducted into the St. Thomas Athletic Hall of Fame and the Minnesota High School Baseball Coaches Hall of Fame.

### Men's hockey ranked 13th in national poll

St. Thomas is No. 13 in the Division III national poll by College Hockey Online. All-American forward Nick Pernula, defenseman Garret Gruenke, goaltender Cameron Voss and forward Nate Ryan are all strong returning players. The Tommies won 10 in a row late last season to finish 17-10 for the program's 25th consecutive winning season and 11th top-two MIAC finish in a row. The team begins its season Nov. 2-3 to face off against St. Scholastica and UW-Superior on the road.

### Women's cross country finishes first

St. Thomas had five runners in the top 16 as they took first out of 23 teams Saturday at the DeSales Invitational in Center Valley, Pa. Junior Katie Theisen won her third race of the season as she came in at 23:29 to take first out of 203 finishers. Sophomore Kelly Russ clocked in at 24 minutes flat for a second place finish, senior Julie Anderson placed sixth (24:25) and freshman Raynee DeGrio came in 15th place (24:58).

### Women's soccer rolls

St. Thomas sealed two home wins against St. Catherine and St. Olaf to improve its home record to 7-2. Sophomore Betsy Messner scored her first goal of the season to break a late 3-3 tie to lift the Tommies (9-5, 4-4 MIAC) over St. Olaf 4-3 Saturday. With the win, the team secured a .500 or better finish for the season. St. Thomas ended a three-game losing streak and rallied from a 1-0 deficit at halftime to push past St. Catherine 2-1 Oct. 9. Junior Abie Krause scored the second goal of her career late in the game to break a 1-1 tie.

## COMING UP

- Today: volleyball, Macalester, home, 7 p.m.
- Tomorrow: football, Concordia-Moorhead, home, 1 p.m.
- Tomorrow: volleyball, Hamline, 3 p.m.
- Sunday: women's soccer, UW-Eau Claire, 2 p.m.
- Tuesday: volleyball, St. Ben's, home, 7 p.m.
- Tuesday: men's soccer, St. Mary's, home, 3:30 p.m.
- Wednesday: women's soccer, St. Mary's, 3:30 p.m.