

## ODSS senior boys win cross-country silver at OFSAA

By **Brian Lockhart**

The Orangeville District Secondary School (ODSS) senior boys cross-country team succeeded in bringing home the first OFSAA medal in cross country for ODSS in over 25 years when they competed at the provincial meet in Ottawa on Monday, November 4.

ODSS also sent their senior girls cross-country team to OFSAA. The senior girls qualified at CWOSSA to earn the right to compete at the provincial OFSAA competition.

One individual runner, junior Liam Willcott, qualified at CWOSSA and ran his own race at OFSAA.

Teams were ranked on their times over a 6-kilometre course with points totalled to create each team's score.

This year's competition was held in pouring rain which turned much of the course into mud and made running difficult over much of the terrain. An added feature this year was a 300-yard stretch along a beach meaning runners had to run over sand. A couple of places on the course also had hay bales on the trail so runners had to leap over them to keep going.

The runners only found out about the sand and the hay when they walked the course prior to the competition.

Logan Willcott was the first ODSS runner to cross the finish line in the senior competition with a time of 20:21.08. Teammates Craig Stevenson and Thomas Beukeboom finished just two seconds apart with times of 21:08 and 21:10.

“The start wasn't too fast, it was a big line and I was trying to get out ahead of everyone else,” said Logan Willcott about his race. “The sand slowed you down, and you don't get much traction so you lose your speed, but after that you hit grass and you pick it up again.”

Cross-country races typically have a string of leaders, spread out, followed by packs of slower runners in groups.

“Usually, the first top 15 or 20 guys are all strung out,” Logan explained. “After that you start seeing clumps of guys. I was the last single guy to come in. At the end of the race, I was gassed, I was done.”

Junior individual competitor, Liam Willcott finished his five-kilometre race with a time of 18:41.76.

“It was hard, I qualified as an individual so when I started, I started at the back,” Liam said. “It was fun. It was definitely an experience starting at the back then having to catch them. The sand was really hard to run on ? it definitely slowed me down. I felt like I was trying harder but going slower. As an individual runner it was a fun experience.”

The ODSS senior girls team also had a good showing but didn't medal at the event. The senior girls ran a 6-kilometre course.

“It was super muddy and it was raining, everyone was sliding,” said senior girls team member Talia Osborne. “It was a super-fast start because everyone who makes it is really good, so they all sprint crazy at the beginning. I felt pretty good in the race but it was really challenging because we had to run on the beach and we had never run on sand and there were hay bales that we had to jump over.”

Ailsa Bogan was the top finisher for Orangeville in the senior girls division.

“I had to start fast and I lost anyone I knew that I could pace with, so I had to figure that out myself,” Ailsa said. “The course was really muddy ? I skidded down hills. People were sliding and falling.”

All the runners said they enjoyed the experience of competing at the provincial level.