Text by Steve Gorten

## ATHLETES ON THE FAST TRACK CROSS COUNTRY





**TYLER BELL** Coral Springs senior Best time: 16:26 Comment: Crossed finish line 36th at state meet (16:39) after 10th with PR at regional, third in district and



**MATTHEW BUTLER** St. Thomas Aquinas junior Best time: 16:07

Comment: Won BCAA title, was fifth at regional (16:16) and 16th at states (16:11), and steadily improved times while leading Raiders.



**ANTONY CRUZ** 

eighth at BCAA meet.

St. Thomas Aquinas junior Best time: 16:17 Comment: Set personal record time in finishing 21st at states after 12th at regional meet (16:28). Was consistently Raiders' No. 3 runner.



**ALEXANDER HAUGEN** 

JONATHAN KLUMPP

North Broward Prep junior Best time: 16:10

St. Thomas Aquinas junior **Best time**: 16:03 Comment: Posted second-fastest time in Raiders history as their top finisher at state meet (12th overall). Also won district championship in 16:11.

Comment: Finished 15th at state meet (16:37) after capturing district and regional championships, ran PR at



Foot Locker national regional race.

the BCAA meet (17:30).

**JOEL LACY** South Plantation freshman, Best time: 16:23 Comment: Came in 32nd at the state meet (16:30) after

finishing ninth at regional (16:25). He was also ninth at



**CARLOS PENARANDA** Pembroke Pines Charter sophomore **Best time:** 16:13

Comment: In first year of cross country, was second at BCAA meet, district champ and set PR at states while finishing 29th.

### **BOYS SECOND TEAM**

Francisco Baglieri	Monarch	Sr.	16:22
Brandon Bejarano	Westminster Academy	Jr.	16:51
Avonte Boykins	Flanagan	Sr.	16:31
Gabriel Darosa	St. Thomas Aquinas	Jr.	16:38
Matt Nelson	University School	Sr.	16:55
Bryce Statham	St. Thomas Aquinas	So.	16:43
Nassor Whitehead	Cooper City	Sr.	16:25

#### **BOYS HONORABLE MENTION**

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#### **GIRLS FIRST TEAM**



**MARINA BRAYNON-MOORE** St. Thomas Aquinas junior Best time: 18:54 Comment: Finished 15th at state meet (19:12) after running her PR in sixth-place finish at regional. Also finished second at BCAA meet.



St. Thomas Aquinas junior Best time: 18:27 Comment: Raiders' second-best finisher at state (11th, 18:56) recorded her PR while second in regional. Won UM Greentree Invitational (19:25).



**KAT MACNEAL** Cypress Bay junior Best time: 18:38

Comment: Became first Lightning runner in four years to medal at state (seventh, 18:49). Third at BCAA meet, second at district and fourth at regional.



Pine Crest freshman Best time: 17:52 Comment: Won 2A state title (18:20), becoming county's first individual champ since 2001. Ranked nation's 15th best freshman by MileSplit.com.



**BRIANNA RISCHAR** 

**JULIA MONTGOMERY** 

**CHRISTINA KALIS** 

St. Thomas Aguinas sophomore Best time: 18:57 Comment: Finished 13th at state meet (19:00) and posted her best time at regional. Also was fourth at BCAA meet.



**DAESHA ROGERS** 

American Heritage eighth-grader Best time: 18:08 Comment: Last year's Runner of the Year finished third at state (18:40) after second in 2011. Also won regional (18:58) and district (18:22) titles.



**MEG SCHLOSS** 

St. Thomas Aquinas sophomore **Best time:** 18:47 Comment: Key runner for state champs recorded personal-best time while placing fifth at regional. Finished 18th at state (19:22) and third at districts.

## **GIRLS SECOND TEAM**

Rachelle Alexander	American Heritage	Sr.	19:32
Jade Fungquee	Monarch	Jr.	19:31
Savanna Gornisiewicz	Pine Crest	Sr.	20:04
Katherine Jovanovic	Pine Crest	8 <sup>th</sup> grade	19:54
Lily Kloepfer	St. Thomas Aquinas	Fr.	19:42
Morgan Rodriguez	Cardinal Gibbons	Sr.	19:44
Ella Wurth	Pine Crest	Sr.	19:42

## **GIRLS HONORABLE MENTION**

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# **ANTHONY DELEVA**

Boys Runner of the Year 
Coral Glades junior

#### Season highlights

An All-County selection last season, Deleva improved dramatically on last year's 32nd place at the state meet. He finished eighth this year with his second-best time of the season (15:55). A week earlier, Deleva won the regional meet with a personal-record time of 15:48 while beating this year's Palm Beach County Runner of the Year Salvador Medrano by five seconds. Deleva also was district champion (16:15) and finished third at the BCAA meet (16:45). He also won the Westminster Academy Invitational (17:27) and placed eighth at the Spanish River Invitational (16:53) and 11th at the Junior Orange Bowl Invitational (16:41).

#### Comment

Deleva, a two-year varsity runner who would like to attend Florida, Florida State or Miami after what he hopes will be a successful senior season, thrived as a junior. He began the season running in the 17s and 16s, but steadily dropped his times as the season ap-

"I set a whole bunch of goals before the start of the season – to win districts, to win regionals and then place at states -- and I accomplished all of those goals, so it was a good season for me, a big one. It was a hard course at states. I was planning to finish top-5, but it just the fact I placed, I was really happy about that. My goal next year is to be state champion, and win districts and regionals, too. And I'd like to run below 15:20, hopefully."

proached the finish and peaked late in the year. Aside from his performance in a talented field at the Class 4A state meet, his best run was at regional, where his closest competition from Broward County that day, St. Thomas Aquinas' Matthew Butler, finished 28 seconds behind. That proved to be a breakthrough performance for Deleva, who had never before finished under 16 minutes. At states, he then crossed the line in under 16 minutes for the second consecutive

## ALEXA CRUZ

Girls Runner of the Year 

St. Thomas Aguinas freshman

## Season highlights

Cruz ran her personal-best time (18:09) in winning the regional, and then finished second in the Class 4A state championship meet the following week (18:14). Her time was the fastest by a Broward County girl runner at state. Cruz also won the BCAA (19:09) and district championship (18:45) races this season and finished first at the University of Florida Mountain Dew Invitational (18:52) – winning by nearly 15 seconds in a field of 274 runners -- and seventh at the Florida State Invitational, where she crossed the finish line in 18:18. In her first high school race, Cruz finished second at the University of Miami Greentree Invitational behind teammate Christina Kalis.

## Comment

Despite being a newcomer at St. Thomas Aquinas, Cruz had pressure on her from the outset in her first year as the top runner for the state's top-ranked team. She handled that tremendously well, according to coach Trish Butler, and led the Raiders the entire

"It was an exciting season as a freshman at a new school. It meant a lot to finish [second at state] because I worked and I just wanted to end the season on a good note. The races leading up to that were just encouragement for me. They just pushed me to work harder and harder to try to do great at states. ...It's been just an awesome experience, with the team also doing great at states. It was just so much fun."

season, performing well at every major race for a talented team that needed a No. 1 to rely on. Cruz led a pack of five runners who averaged 18 minutes, 39 seconds and were ranked 35th nationally by MileSplit-.com. At the state race, Cruz said her expectations going in were to medal. After passing two runners to move into third at the two-mile mark, she told herself, 'I might actually finish high in this race. I may have to re-set my goal."

## **COACH OF THE YEAR:** TRISH BUTLER, ST. THOMAS AQUINAS BOYS AND GIRLS TEAMS



Boys team comment: Led St. Thomas, which lost eight of its top 10 runners from 2011 and every varsity runner except Alex Haugen, to its best showing at the state meet (third) in program history. The Raiders' previous best was fifth in 2005. Under Butler this season, the Raiders (14-0) captured the county championship for the seventh consecutive season and also claimed a district and regional title. "I'm so proud of what they accomplished," Butler said. "It was truly amazing. Not being ranked coming into the season, knowing they were underdogs and they were seen as 'The Replacements,' the whole team every

day was mentally focused. I saw a bunch of guys work off of each other and use that to motivate them. They were one of the hardest working teams I've ever had and it paid off."

**Girls team comment:** Led St. Thomas to the first state championship in program history and first by a Broward County girls team since 1989. The Raiders' top five runners finished 18th or better at state meet to topple two-time defending champ Tampa Plant. Butler's bunch also won county, district and regional championships as well as the University of Miami Greentree Invitational and University of Florida Mountain Dew Invitational and posted a 14-0 record. "We have had some great teams at St. Thomas, but I have to say this was the best," Butler said. "We're a school of champions and the one championship banner that was missing was that cross country one. Coming so close so many times before, it's kind of like we got that monkey off our back now and opened the door for the future, hopefully."



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