

CJHS cross country honored with state championship rings

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Championship memories became permanent keepsakes as members of the Clinton Junior High School (CJHS) boys cross country team received their state championship rings during a ceremony held at the Clinton High School Culinary Arts Center.

The ceremony commemorated a historic 2025 season that culminated in the program capturing the MHSAA Middle School Cross Country Invitational crown recently. The rings were presented by cross country coaches Nicole and Eric Solis in front of parents, family members and CJHS Principal Dr. Ivory Gray.

The championship rings featured clear diamonds bordered by red diamonds surrounding the Clinton Arrow logo at the top of the ring, while the words "State Champion" completed the design with bordered detailing above and below. One side of the ring commemorated the 2025 championship season, while the opposite side displayed each athlete's last name alongside "XC" pierced by an arrow. The bottom of the ring featured "ARROWS" in bold lettering.

The championship performance was fueled by significant improvement throughout the season. The Arrows trimmed fifty three seconds off their team average time from earlier in the year, showcasing the growth and consistency that defined the squad throughout the fall.

Posting an average time of 11:59 from their top five runners in the middle school standard 3000 meters at Brookhaven earlier in the season, the Arrows improved their top five average time to 11:06 at the state championships held at Mississippi College's Choctaw Trails. The performance marked the second fastest team average in CJHS history, trailing only the 2024 squad by nine seconds.

"I am really proud of these young men," Eric Solis said, following the state championship meet. "Honestly, I didn't expect us to be as fast as we have been this year. However, we ran together, we worked hard all season, and they did everything that they needed to do to achieve this state championship."

Members of the CJHS championship team included Maddox Box, Adrian Brown, John Chittom, Jaden Dasary, Coleman Finch, Micah Kieffer, Ethan McQueen, Michael Onyia, Emmaus Vandersteen, Jace Williamson and Hyrum Boone.

Of the ten runners who competed in the state meet, six recorded personal



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Pictured (l to r) are runners and coaches of the CJHS boys cross country team posing with their state championship rings during a ring ceremony held recently at Clinton High School.

best times, including Box (11:48), Brown (11:13), Kieffer (10:47), McQueen (11:26), Vandersteen (12:19) and Williamson (11:07).

Kieffer led the Arrows with a second place finish, while Finch and Williamson placed sixth and tenth, respectively, during the championship meet.

The Arrows won seven of the eight meets they competed in during the 2025 season, while also recording a runner up finish in the lone event they did not win.

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