

Mankato Marathon volunteers are GIVING BACK



John Cross

The Mankato East girls cross country will become volunteers for the Mankato Marathon on Saturday, Oct. 23. The Cougars will be working one of the water stops for the event.

East girls cross country team working a water stand while their coach runs the race

By Drew Lyon
Special to The Free Press

MANKATO — During most races, it's Mankato East girls cross country head coach Neil Paarmann who's lending vocal support to his team.

For the upcoming inaugural Mankato Marathon, however, the roles will be reversed.

The team members will be encouraging their coaches when they volunteer at one of the event's water stops.

Paarmann will be running the half-marathon and his assistant coach, Amanda Kozitza, is signed up for the full marathon.

"The girls usually run and I cheer," Paarmann said, "and now it's their turn."

Paarmann said the marathon will provide an opportunity for his team to express its gratitude to the local

community for their support, and allowing cross country teams the use of area parks and golf courses.

"I thought it was time for us to give back a little bit," Paarmann said. "I feel very good about it. I've always believed Mankato was a great running community."

"Mankato has been a great community for us to run and now it's the team's chance to say, 'We're runners, but we're not running today. What can we do for you?'"

The Cougars are looking forward to switching positions

with their coach, if only for a day.

"For once, we'll be cheering for him," said East senior Emily Ludwig. "It'll be fun. And we're excited to see the runners."

"I don't think we've ever seen him race before," added senior Mollie Juberien.