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Jared Scott runs. As the defending Class 4A boys state cross-country champion, he has done that very well.

But when he injured his right Achilles' before the season started, running was no longer an option. He didn't run away from the problem though, and because he didn't, both he and his Lewis-Palmer teammates are better off, according to coach Suzanne Kuehl.

"Jared was there the whole season to help the team," Kuehl said. "He was the best 'manager' I ever had. He was there at every corner, supporting his teammates."

The hardest part of being out was that Scott, a senior, saw his best season being taken away from him.

"I was in the best shape of my life," he said. "But there was absolutely nothing I could do about the injury. I figured, 'Why moan and groan about it - what good will that do?' If you are negative about it, that can bring you and everyone around you down. I figured I'd better look at it positively."

He did, and helped salvage the big Kent Denver meet early in the season.

"We didn't get notified that the meet had been moved up," Kuehl said. "We showed up about 10 minutes before the race was to start."

Scott moved quickly.

"He laid the jerseys on the ground and pinned on everyone's number - just took care of everything he could," Kuehl said.

"I didn't want my teammates to worry," Scott said. "I knew I had to help in any way I could. I tried to do whatever I could so they could just focus on getting warmed up and ready."

The team fared well that day, and did the entire season, in fact.

"I'm so proud of everyone," Scott said. "They all became so much better - they really picked it up. My teammates really supported me, too. And guys stepped up and took my place."

Scott also stepped it up. He came back in mid-October, in his first meet of the season, won the Metro League. But his goal was not necessarily to win.

"I just wanted to finish," Scott said with a smile. "I don't take anything for granted any longer."

He's also planning to run in college.

"I've still been recruited even though I was out," Scott said. "That makes me feel really good. This injury really helped me grow as a leader. This whole experience has shown me that I can overcome things - that when something is tough, you don't look back, you keep pushing forward."

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