

Junior varsity race

Glenbard West sophomore Kathryn Kenwood's cross country race at the season-opening Hornet-Red Devil Invitational Sept. 7 was her first one ever.

As she prepared for her next race at Saturday's Lake Park Invitational, her comfort zone was considerably better. Sophomore and good friend Caitlyn Reick was joining her in the junior varsity race after missing the opener.

"We warmed up together. She helped in preparing me," Kenwood said.

"Having that (first race) out of way, I felt good and also just running with the team (helped). During the first mile, (Glenbard West coach Paul Hass) talked about how to get into position. I tried my best and it worked."

Kenwood nearly came away an individual champion as she finished an impressive second to lead the Hilltoppers to a second-place team finish (65 points) behind St. Charles East (56). Downers Grove North (82) was third.

Kenwood (18:56.2 for 3.0 miles) found herself in a title battle with St. Charles East sophomore Anastasia Honea (18:51.5) thanks to making a significant improvement from 19:46.51 in the season-opening Hornet-Red Devil Invitational Sept. 7.

Honea began picking up the pace as they entered the stadium for the final 300 meters of the race on the track.

"I tried to stay with her, but she was really good. She went really fast. I was really surprised, like wow," Kenwood said. "The last part, I started trying to catch up to her again after she made a little bit of a gap, but I didn't make it the whole way (to catch up)."

Reick (7th, 19:28.0) and sophomore Abby Shaver (9th, 19:31) also were in the top 10, and sophomore Kate Dorsey was 11th (19:35.7). The Hilltoppers' other finishers were Nicole Berneche (36th, 20:29.5), Nicole Rogus (43rd, 20:41.1), Sarah Cholewinski (66th, 21:20.3), Julia Kochert (67th, 21:25.9), Amanda Ortiz (71st, 21:27.7) and Meredith Miscinski (73rd, 21:32.2).

A Glenbard West soccer player last spring, Kenwood said she was persuaded into joining cross country this season by good friends Reick and sophomore Christina Sedall.

"I've known Kathryn for a while. We used to be on the same soccer team so I was excited when she decided to train for cross country," Reick said. "She knows what to do, but mostly I helped her out with the nerves (Saturday)."

The two also discussed trying to run together, and that assisted Kenwood to have a strong start.

"I felt really good when running actually. Around the second mile, I was surprised I wasn't exhausted," Kenwood said. "(This race) makes me feel good. I'll still probably always be nervous before races, there's no stopping that. I've just got to keep working."

Reick was encouraged by her performance after a slight iron deficiency was discovered just before the season opener. As she raised her iron level, Reick sat out the Hornet-Red Devil Invite as a precaution. On Saturday, she was still battling a cold.

"I was pretty nervous and excited (to compete), mostly nervous because it was my first one and I wanted to do well. I was more just pretty excited and pumped up," Reick said.

Last year, Reick competed at the Hornet-Red Devil and injured her hip flexor. That forced her to sit out the Lake Park Invite. After a great track season, in which she was part of the state-qualifying 3,200-meter relay along with Sedall, Reick said she has learned more about taking care of her body and reduce the probability of injuries.

"I was happy that I was showing improvements. I'm still disappointed with my time, but (the coaches) said not to expect too much and to keep working and my time will drop more and more."

Open race

While freshman Jenna Kelly may have been Glenbard West's frontrunner in the open race at the Lake Park Invitational, she was far from alone.

"While (teammates from other races) were running on their cool down, they cheered me on," Kelly said.

There was plenty to be excited about in the final girls race of the invite. Kelly finished 12th in the 2.0-mile race (13:15.7) as the team's top finisher. Sophomore Molly Burt was 20th (13:28.8).

"I felt really accomplished with myself, and it helped with the support from the team cheering on the sidelines while I was running," Kelly said. "I think it went pretty well for me. I didn't expect myself to be that fast, but the workouts the past week helped me go faster."

The Hilltoppers were fifth (172 points). Their other finishers included Claire Filippelli (55th, 14:05.2), Abigail Dibadj (64th, 14:13.9), Morgan McEnroe (70th, 14:19.7), and Lindsay Lifka (83rd, 14:27.2, Grace Zemenak (112th, 14:43.1) Macy Lemke (130th, 14:54.6), Emma Gambol (138th, 15:02.0), Julie Garcia (139th, 15:02.1), Rebekah Crail (141st, 15:02.8), Madelyn O'Gorman (148th, 15:06.3) and Jennifer Orozco (272nd, 16:34.4).

Kelly ran for Hadley Junior High in seventh and eighth grade. At the conference meet last season, Kelly improved her 2-mile time by a minute and a half by running 14:39.

Kelly said she hopes to keep running in the low 12s for two miles and to challenge breaking 21:00 for three miles. Kelly ran the 3.0-mile frosh-soph race at the season-opening Hornet-Red Devil Invite Sept. 7 and finished in 22:51.64.

"I think (Saturday's race) will help me, knowing that I could run that fast," Kelly said. "It'll help me push myself harder, but I wouldn't want to go too fast in the beginning. I wouldn't want to die out at the end."

-- by Bill Stone