

**Glenbard West junior Lisa Luczak rarely is satisfied with her times this cross country season.**

**After her final race this season on Camera Park, the Hilltoppers' home course, Thursday, Oct. 10, even Luczak had to take notice and smile.**

**Luczak ran one of the fastest times ever on the course as easily captured first place and the Hilltoppers defeated Lyons Township 25-32 Thursday, Oct. 10, in West Suburban Conference Silver Division dual action.**

**Luczak's 17:24 for the 2.92 miles won comfortably over LT junior Katie Hamor, who ran a respectable 17:45.**

**It's the No. 4 best time by a Glenbard West runner and No. 5 all-time since the Hilltoppers made Camera Park their home course starting in 2008. The all-time best is 16:53 in 2011 by senior Madeline Perez, who also ran 16:56 in 2012.**

**"Of course, I didn't think it was my best race and I just felt like that because I keep on comparing myself to last year, but when I heard my time I was like, 'Wow. Actually, maybe this is as good as last year,' so I was pretty happy," Luczak said.**

**The victory completed a 6-0 Silver dual mark for the Hilltoppers, who now just need a top-two finish at the Silver Meet Saturday, Oct. 19, at Proviso West to guarantee at least a share of their third straight overall conference title.**

**The Hilltoppers ran like it, collecting great performances throughout the lineup on all three levels, even with a depleted varsity lineup.**

**Sophomore Grace Rogers (18:06) and Janie Nabholz (18:14) were fourth and fifth, sophomores Kathryn Kenwood (18:17), Kate Dorsey (18:24) and Abby Shaver (18:31) were seventh through ninth and senior Annika Manning (19:07) was 12th.**

All of them were among massive improvement by the Hilltoppers from when they raced at Camera Park just one week earlier against Downers Grove North.

Dorsey beat her Oct. 3 time by a stunning 1:10.

“Every kid who ran (also Oct. 3) improved, except one, which was incredible,” Glenbard West coach Paul Hass said. “For Lisa, it was the best time she ever ran there. Granted, all of the other times she ran at Camera Park (in 2012 and 2011) were in the first two meets of the season and we ended at Camera Park (this season), but to run a 17:24, that’s very impressive.”

While Nabholz edged LT sophomore Hannah Dutler at the finish, Dorsey made her varsity debut and Shaver ran varsity for just the second time.

Instead of running scared, they ran great. What was the reason behind theirs and the other Hilltoppers’ huge improvements from just a week before?

“The weather was good, but I think we’re starting to see all of the benefits of the hard work we’ve done. I think it’s the training and the effort the girls put forth,” Hass said.

Luczak has been working her way back from pre-season injuries but has continued to compete. She more than fulfilled her role as the Hilltoppers’ top runner Thursday since they were minus Lindsay Graham, Perez, Megan Ozog and Christina Sedall.

It was the first meet missed this season by Graham, who has been the Hilltoppers’ No. 1 runner in the absence of Perez, the defending state champion who has not competed this season.

“I knew that I really needed to get first since we were down a lot of people,” Luczak said. “That’s why we were like, ‘Everyone needs to step it up, do

amazing, since we need to win this if we want to win conference. This is our only meet this week, we need to give it our all and it think we did.

“Everyone was probably a little bit more nervous than usual. Everyone was pretty anxious, pretty in the zone. A lot of times, sometimes some of the girls are laughing and joking around before the meet, but that didn’t really happen before this one. I think almost everyone dropped time. Some people, like Kate Dorsey, dropped a whole minute. You’re like, ‘What the heck? Kate Dorsey, where did you come from?’ A lot of the younger kids stepped up so that was really good to see.”

Luczak edged 2012 graduate Maddie Nagle’s 17:25 from 2009 to move into No. 5 all time. Last season, Luczak ran times that are the No. 7 all-time best (17:26) and share the No. 9 all-time best (17:31) with Graham, who achieved the feat Oct. 3.

“I beat (Nagle’s) time by one second and last year I was behind by one second. So now she’s sandwiched in between. I’ll have to tell her about that,” Luczak said.

“Last year, I was doing well but now I need to think it’s not last year, it’s this year. I need to focus on that, but I was still pretty happy with it, pretty shocked because I was like, ‘Whoa, I didn’t expect this.’ It was pretty exciting.”

Even as well as Luczak ran, Dorsey had perhaps the race of the day.

Dorsey was promoted to her first varsity race after being the Hilltoppers’ No. 2 finisher (8th place) behind Sedall (7th) in the frosh-soph open race at Wheaton North’s Falcon Classic Oct. 5.

“It is my best race ever,” Dorsey said. “Before the race, I was a little scared. (Assistant coach Mark Staron) told me to think it was a half hour later than the

frosh-soph race, but it was fun. Mr. Hass told everyone we had to step up and we all felt like we should because we wanted to go undefeated in the conference again.”

Against Downers North, Shaver won the frosh-soph race in 19:08 with Dorsey in second, 16 seconds behind. On Thursday, Dorsey and Shaver finished ahead of LT’s No. 4 and 5 finishers with 10 seconds to spare. This was Shaver’s first varsity race since the season-opening Hornet-Red Devil Invite Sept. 7.

“We moved Abby Shaver and Kate Dorsey and said, ‘OK, you’re not up her just to get experience. You’re here to help us out,’ and they were running against one of the top teams in the state in LT (No. 17 ranking),” Hass said.

“To throw some sophomores who have very limited varsity experience, and in Kate Dorsey’s case no varsity experience, to see them respond like that, I was very impressed.”

Luczak ran a 5:56 first mile, and the Hilltoppers followed with a pack of Rogers, Kenwood, Dorsey, Shaver and Nabholz between 6:10 and 6:12. Dorsey was able to maintain through the second mile and was at 12:41, two seconds behind Rogers.

“We have a pretty solid team so I don’t think we were too worried not doing as well because we have so many people so close in the back,” Rogers said. “(A stronger lineup) still would have helped a lot, but our mindset stayed the same. We just knew we had to step up a little bit.”

While Dorsey fell off slightly down the stretch, further encouragement came from her finishing within seven seconds of Kenwood, a first-year runner who has been forming strong packs with Nabholz and Ozog.

“I kind of thought I could probably go out a little faster. I tried to stay with Abby and see how I felt,” Dorsey said. “I didn’t have the best workouts this week. I

was kind of a little down on myself so I thought maybe I could race better and make up for it. I just ended up feeling good so I kept staying faster.”

With the victory, Glenbard West took another step to winning three consecutive conference titles for the first time.

The Silver Meet is Saturday, Oct. 19, at Proviso West. The varsity girls race is scheduled for 12:30 p.m.

The final standings are a 50-50 combination of regular-season and Silver Meet standings, so the Hilltoppers can guarantee at least a share of the overall title by taking second Saturday. Hinsdale Central finished 5-1 in duals.

Last year, the Hilltoppers went 6-0 in duals and won the Silver Meet to take the overall title outright after sharing the 2011 crown with York, winning the Silver Meet after the Dukes won the dual.

The top 16 finishers also are individual all-conference medalists, such as Perez (2nd) and Luczak (3rd) in 2012. Only six of last year’s medalists were seniors, but five were in the top eight, including graduated champion Emma Fisher of York, who beat Perez by 9.1 seconds at Schiller Woods. Rogers won the frosh-soph race.

Hass said Perez is expected to compete Saturday, as well as Graham, Ozog and Sedall. Perez has not raced since her 1 mile and 2 mile track events at the New Balance Nationals in June.

“We should have a full team, which is awesome, finally, the first time all season,” Luczak said. “(Thursday) gives me more confidence with our team since I know that everyone can do so well. I think we have a good chance of doing our best and maybe winning it.”

-- by Bill Stone