

## RECAPS

### Hinsdale Central at Glenbard West

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#### VARSITY

Hinsdale Central freshman Susan Spencer's perseverance paid off against Glenbard West Thursday (Sept. 29) at Camera Park in Glendale Heights.

Spencer put in a strong final mile and took fifth place to lead the Red Devils in their 16-44 loss in West Suburban Conference Silver Division dual action.

The Hilltoppers, ranked No. 6 last week in Class 3A by the Illinois Cross Country Coaches Association poll and No. 9 by DyeStat Illinois, owned the top-five places through the first two miles of the 2.92-mile race.

"In the beginning, I was a little like, 'This isn't going to go so well,' because I didn't feel great, and my first two miles kind of showed that," Spencer said. "I was kind of unsure of myself but by the time the third mile rolled around, I felt really good and just kind of let it all go."

The Red Devils had just four finishers in the race. Junior Becky Ventura (19:54), freshman Sarah Brennan (20:22), still battling a cold, and senior Liz Marcotte (23:26) were seventh, ninth and 11th. Senior Grace Klein, working her way back from injury, dropped out near the 2-mile mark.

"Susan ran another good, competitive race. Becky's getting there. She hasn't quite put it together in a complete race. As soon as she gets 100 percent of the race, she's going to be in a good place," Hinsdale Central coach Mark McCabe said.

"Once we have all our teammates back at the end of the season, we'll use these (meets) as building blocks to see where we can be when everybody's here. That's how we'll view them, knowing that we're going to take our lumps teamwise, but we've got to keep our eyes on the big picture."

In their final home races, Glenbard West seniors Katie Born and Maddie Nagle took first and second in 19:02 with junior Emma Reifel (19:03) and sophomore all-state candidate Madeline Perez (19:04) right behind.

Spencer had to fight off being 30 seconds behind that pack to do her best. She finally passed Glenbard West junior Cynthia Mote (19:35) and then held on when Mote made a mad dash just before the chute.

"Mentally, it kind of brought me down, seeing that they're so far ahead. I thought I could never catch up, try to get there, but somehow I did. I was happy about that," Spencer said.

"They have some fast runners, but I thought the whole team did amazing. This was a hard meet. The

weather conditions were not perfect in any way. They gave us wind, rain, hills, everything. It was definitely a challenge for the team and everybody.”

## JUNIOR VARSITY

Hinsdale Central senior Lauren Paul initially joined cross country to help her performances in track.

“This is my third year, but I wish I did it all four years because I love it,” Paul said. “I do this for fun. Obviously, I still try really hard but I’m actually looking to run in college for sprinting.”

Paul hopes to compete at NCAA Division III Tufts University. In the meantime, the all-state sprinter is getting much faster in her cross country races as well.

She was among the reasons that the Red Devils defeated Glenbard West 22-38 Thursday (Sept. 29) at Camera Park.

While Hinsdale Central junior Zoe Larson (20:54 for 2.92 miles) won the 2.92-mile race by 24 seconds over the Hilltoppers’ Emily Davies (21:18), Paul (21:19) was a close third.

“That’s not quite my best (time), but I’m still happy with it because it was so windy and it started raining in the middle (of the race) and it was a little cold. I got a lot of sleep this week and things are going pretty well,” Paul said.

“Especially this year is definitely much better than I’ve done in the past. In the summer, I worked out a lot so I think that helped, too.

It’s all in the preseason that makes a big difference.”

Junior Meg Knister (21:53, seniors Brittney O’Grady (21:57) and Lisa Valcarengi (22:01) and junior Julia Tabacyzk (22:07) were fifth through eighth. Juniors Grace Cook (22:34) and Mia Larson (22:34) led another group of five straight Hinsdale Central finishers in 10th and 11th. Seniors Grace Berg (12th, 22:50) and Sam Gianakas (13th, 22:52) also broke 23:00.

“Zoe Larson had a great race. (And) Lauren Paul and Brittney O’Grady had another good one,” McCabe said.

Since the varsity and junior varsity races were run together, Zoe Larson didn’t actually know she won the JV race after finishing 11th combined. It’s her first race victory.

“It’s pretty exciting. It’s kind of difficult (having combined races) because you see all of the varsity going so much faster and sometimes it’s a little bit discouraging but it kind of motivates you to keep up with them and get a good time,” Larson said.

“I felt I could push myself a little harder but the conditions were pretty bad. I felt I did pretty well overall, one of my better races.

I was just trying to push myself and not let myself fall behind, knowing behind me was a lot of people.”

Paul was part of the Red Devils' fifth-place 800-meter relay team at the state track meet in May. She hopes to continue that success in the spring, although the Red Devils may need help from younger runners since their number of upperclass sprinters is small.

O'Grady, a Runner of the Meet, is another primary track competitor who is peaking in her third and final cross country season. She is an 800-meter and distance runner in track who said she appreciates sub-3.0-mile cross country distances.

"I'm a senior and (this cross country season) makes me feel so good about myself. We put our names on the board in school. It builds my confidence and my teammates help me a lot and really support me, and so does my coach," O'Grady said.

"I ran in middle school (Clarendon Hills Middle School) and I did summer running and (McCabe) got me into it and I had new friends that really liked it so I joined sophomore year. It's a great sport and I might continue it in college."

## SOPHOMORES

Annie Wysopal has grown as a runner in her second season as a key member of the Hinsdale Central sophomore lineup.

"Freshman year, I didn't really know what to expect. I didn't know what my pace was and now I'm better at judging and how fast should I go, to pass girls, things like that," Wysopal said.

Wysopal also is becoming a leader in races, especially in the face of several lineup changes. In the Red Devils' 21-38 dual loss to Glenbard West Thursday (Sept. 29), freshman Tillie Kummerer (20:26.6 for 2.92 miles) and Wysopal (20:35.2) were third and fourth to Glenbard West freshmen Megan Ozog (19:48.9) and Colette Bare (20:13.1).

"It's definitely one of my better ones because I started off faster and in some of my other past ones, I didn't get ahead as much as I would have liked to," said Wysopal, named a Runner of the Meet.

The Red Devils' other top-seven finishers were eighth-place sophomore Rose Huang (21:01.0), freshman Anya Patel (21:33.7), sophomore Amanda Koronkiewicz (21:45.2) and freshman Sara Folliard (21:45.8) in 11th through 13th and sophomore Cristina Tye (17th, 22:28.4). Freshman Rachael McCann (18th, 22:46.4) and sophomore Runner of the Meet Sara Ramasastry (19th, 22:49.1) also broke 23:00.

Once again, the sophomore team was challenged with having freshmen Susan Spencer and Sarah Brennan, normally its top two runners, promoted to the varsity level.

The extra responsibility to finish higher may turn out to benefit Wysopal and her teammates.

"It's more encouraging for me because I'm more in front with the leaders," Wysopal said. "I think it makes more of us step up, and we need to step up. It helps us improve because we know we have to be better and it makes us realize how good we can be without those two."

Then at conference, when we get them back, then we'll be even better."

The key now will be how strong the Red Devils' overall lineup will be by the conference meet Oct. 15. Freshman top-five contributor Sophie May remains sidelined by injury.

"At conference, we're going to put Susan and Sarah back down (at the sophomore level) so we need a fifth runner there," McCabe said. "It could be Rose, Anya, but somebody's got to step up and do that. They're capable of it."

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