

RECAPS

Wheaton North Falcon Classic

Bill Stone
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Freshmen Sarah Brennan and Susan Spencer are becoming quite a strong racing pair for the Hinsdale Central girls cross country team, even when they can't compete together.

Brennan was forced to run alone during the frosh-soph race at Saturday's Wheaton North Falcon Classic, but she still pulled off her best race of the season to finish fifth at St. James Farm in Wheaton.

Brennan covered the 3.0-mile course in 19:10.2, 19.6 seconds behind the winner, Naperville North freshman Jenny Smith (18:50.6).

"Definitely time-wise it was a lot better than all of my races and it felt better than all of my other races while running it," Brennan said. "I hope that this is just a starting point, that I can just get better and better."

"I think the weather was really nice and I had been fighting a cold and finally got over it. It had been worse the week before and I just have been taking Vitamin C."

Spencer overcame being knocked down twice early in the race to still finish 15th (19:40.6). Sophomore Annie Wysopal (20:28.7) and freshman Tillie Kummerer (20:31.3) were 63rd and 66th, followed by sophomore Amanda Koronkiewicz (87th, 20:58.8), freshmen Sara Folliard (96th, 21:07.9) and Anya Patel (130th, 21:39.1). Sophomores Rose Huang (134th, 21:41.6) and Cristina Tye (152nd, 21:55.5) also broke 22:00 and sophomore Sara Ramasastry (192nd, 22:26.1) and freshman Rachael McCann (193rd, 22:27.1) finished under 23:00.

The Red Devils (207 points) were seventh among 22 full teams. Brennan and freshman Jillian DeBoer (242nd, 23:12.9) were named Runners of the Meet, and Hinsdale Central coach Mark McCabe also cited strong personal performances for Folliard and Koronkiewicz in just her third race this season.

"Sarah had her best race ever," McCabe said.

"She and Susan have really established themselves as legitimate varsity runners. They were kind of thrown into that earlier in the season than I would normally like, but it's paid off and it's going to pay off for them as we move into the postseason. Every week they're learning and learning how to put together their best race."

Brennan made strides as a competitor in many ways Saturday. She's already had to cope with many varsity races along with Spencer to help a lineup trying to mend from injuries. The Red Devils did not to compete in the seven varsity flight races Saturday.

Brennan thought the St. James Farm course was pretty but very muddy. She usually finishes behind

Spencer, but Spencer was knocked over twice in the first 100 meters of the race. While Spencer worked her way back into the race, Brennan had to work off other competitors, such as Naperville North frontrunners in first and second place. Brennan missed catching the Huskies' No. 3 finisher by a second.

"Actually I was looking back for (Spencer) because I knew it wasn't typical. My goal was to stay with her this race. It was like, 'Where are you?' I was just glad it wasn't anything too serious," Brennan said.

"Susan was knocked down twice and had to deal with that," McCabe said. "If it's going to happen, it's better it happened in this race and you learn how to respond. The first time that happens, it can rattle you."

Junior Katie Gelman continued her progress in her second invite race by taking a team-best 24th (19:59.0) in the Open Girls race. The Red Devils were 12th (348 points).

Other top finishers were junior Zoe Larson (72nd, 21:01.0), senior Lauren Paul (98th, 21:28.5), juniors Meg Knister (105th, 21:36.2) and Julia Tabaczyk (134th, 21:54.2), junior Runner of the Meet Mia Larson (161st, 22:20.8), junior Grace Cook (170th, 22:34.8) and seniors Brittney O'Grady (174th, 22:35.8), Lisa Valcarengi (176th, 22:37.3), Liz Marcotte (188th, 22:47.4) and Grace Berg (193rd, 22:51.8).

"Katie's coming along very nicely. She's taking little steps along the way. We'll see big improvements out from here on in," McCabe said. "It was a good week for (Mia Larson). Zoe certainly ran well again, and Lauren Paul, Julia Tabaczyk and Grace Cook."

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