

RECAPS

York and Lyons Township

Bill Stone
Sept. 16, 2011

VARSITY GIRLS

Hinsdale Central junior Jill Hardies completed her first race of the season Thursday (Sept. 15) in a phenomenal time.

She still wanted to do better.

Even though she once again battled shin splints, Hardies covered the 2.85 miles at Elmhurst's East End Park in 16:13, dusting the previous course record of 16:29.4 going into the West Suburban Conference Silver Division triangular against state-ranked host York and Lyons Township.

However, Hardies finished second to York junior Emma Fisher's 16:05.

"It was probably one of the worst races of my life, but I was in a lot of pain," Hardies said. "(Fisher) had a great race. I give her a lot of credit for that. I think it would have turned out a little different if I wouldn't have been hurt these last two weeks, but it's a motivation to do better."

The Red Devils had at least five varsity finishers to constitute a full team for the first time in three outings this season. They lost to York 19-42 and LT 20-42, while the Dukes edged the Lions 27-29 with four finishers among the top eight.

Hinsdale Central junior Becky Ventura was 13th (18:09), followed by juniors Kate Gelman (19th, 19:22) and Allison Shaner (20th, 19:41) and senior Grace Klein (21st, 20:06) all making their season debuts against two strong teams going for dual victories that count in the overall Silver standings. York entered the meet ranked No. 7 by the Illinois Track and Cross Country Coaches Association and No. 4 by DyeStat Illinois, and LT was co-No. 15 and No. 21, respectively.

Ventura is the only Red Devil to compete in all three varsity races so far. Sophomore Becca Marcotte, a senior Taylor Troy and junior Morgan Mulhern hope to make their season debuts this week. Hardies, Shaner, Klein, Marcotte and Troy are the returnees from last year's state lineup.

"Jill ran a great race. Both Emma Fisher and she smashed the course record, which was a beautiful day in terms of conditions," Hinsdale Central coach Mark McCabe said. "Becky Ventura ran another solid race and she keeps coming on. It's just a matter of taking a little more of a risk. She's 10-to-15 seconds off where we think she can be. For (Gelman, Shaner and Klein), it was a starting point. It was more of a hard training run for them."

With McCabe adding 54 seconds to give Thursday's times an estimated 3.0-mile equivalent, Hardies would

have run 17:06, already in sight of the 16:34 she ran to take second at the 2010 state meet.

Because of her shin pain, Hardies sat out the Peoria Woodruff Invite Sept. 10 after she dropped out one mile into the Hornet-Red Devil Invite Sept. 3.

Hardies only ran one full workout this past week. Yet she was stride for stride for more than the first half of the race with Fisher, who was 24th at state last year and was 10th in the 3,200-meter track meet in May. Fisher ran 17:00 Saturday (Sept. 17) at Detweiller Park to take second at the Peoria Notre Dame Invite to Lake Park's Kaylee Flanagan (meet-record 16:44).

"(My shins) felt fine until about the mile and a half mark. I rolled my ankle a couple of times and then I just lost my footing and my shins just starting really hurting," Hardies said.

"It was not a good last mile but, whatever. At least, I finished. That's probably the reason I'm so mad. I had a really bad race just because I mentally gave up with how bad my shins were but Emma had a really good race. I'm happy for her."

The two runners beat the course record set by then-Hinsdale Central junior Elaine Kuckertz in winning the 2007 Silver Meet in mid-October. That strong field resulted in the top five finishers actually breaking the previous record of 16:54.

This race had a similar mid-October feeling with temperatures in the low 60s, sun and no wind. "When you look at all of the people run on that course over the years and records, times for (Hardies and Fisher) were very impressive. And it was a beautiful day in terms of conditions," McCabe said.

Speaking of history, Hardies noted that in the 2009 track season, she was beaten at York by Fisher in the 3,200 at the Silver Meet but then eventually finished third at the Class 3A state meet to help the Red Devils win their first state team title in the sport.

"Hopefully something like that (will happen again). Hopefully this will give me motivation," Hardies said. "It's just good to know that I can run that fast this early in the season, being in pain. Hopefully as soon as the pain goes away and my legs feel good, I can run even faster."

The Red Devils continue Silver action against Downers Grove North and host Proviso West Thursday (Sept. 22) in Hillside and at the Whitney Young Invitational Saturday (Sept. 24) at Chicago's Washington Park. Downers North was ranked No. 20 last week by DyeStat Illinois.

JUNIOR VARSITY GIRLS

Fall-like weather gave Hinsdale Central junior Zoe Larson a warmer feeling going into the junior varsity race Thursday (Sept. 15) at Elmhurst's East End Park.

She responded with what she considered among her best races ever – a team-best time of 19:41 on the 2.85-mile course to finish 18th overall against host York and Lyons Township in Silver action.

"I like the colder weather. It's a refresher, kind of. It helps motivate me because it's not so hot," Larson

said. "This is a flat, fast course so it was good. It wasn't too bad. I kind of used it to my advantage."

The Red Devils' other top finishers were juniors Meg Knister (28th, 20:04), Runner of the Meet Julia Tabaczyk (32nd, 20:21), senior Lauren Paul (33rd, 20:24), junior Grace Cook (35th, 20:34), senior Grace Berg (44th, 21:03), junior Mia Larson (45th, 21:04), Zoe's twin sister, and senior Liz Marcotte (48th, 21:07).

To get an estimated equivalent time of the usual 3.0-mile distance, McCabe said about 54 seconds should be added. Hinsdale Central lost to York and LT 15-50.

"Zoe ran a great race. She's coming on like she did a year ago," McCabe said. "A couple of other people ran particularly well. For Meg Knister, that's her best 3.0-mile equivalent time. Grace Cook and Grace Berg continue to do well, making good progress each week. Lauren Paul and Mia Larson also had good races."

Zoe Larson's converted 20:35 time is a nice drop from the 21:25 she ran at Peoria's Detweiller Park at the Peoria Notre Dame Invite Sept. 10. Against York and LT, Larson and Knister ran alongside each other for the first couple of miles as usual before Larson felt the urge to keep pushing.

"I've kind of gotten to (Knister's) pace now because she trains with varsity. We usually push with each other, just feed off each other," Larson said. "There was an LT girl in front of me and I really wanted to pass her so I just kept going."

"Usually it's kind of hard because you really want to pass them and when you do, it's hard to stay in your place. I don't know what happened, but I just felt really good and once I passed them, I still had enough energy to keep going. I was really surprised because I never expected that (time)."

FRESHMEN/SOPHOMORE GIRLS

Hinsdale Central freshman Tillie Kummerer has been participating in cross country since sixth grade at Westview Hills Middle School, but she had been following it several years before.

Her older sister, Katie, was a standout runner for the Red Devils and now is a sophomore standout for NCAA Division III Carthage College (Kenosha, Wis.).

"I always went to her races when I was younger," Tillie Kummerer said. "My sister talked me into (cross country). She's like, 'It's such a great sport,' and then my parents encouraged me and it just went on from there. I just like it a lot."

On Thursday (Sept. 15), Kummerer showed more improvement in the Red Devils' frosh-soph race against host York and Lyons Township in the West Suburban Conference Silver Division opener at Elmhurst's East End Park. The Red Devils lost to LT 26-31 and York 23-36.

Hinsdale Central freshmen Susan Spencer (18:15) and Sarah Brennan (18:20) took third and fourth in the 2.85-mile race behind LT freshman Katie Hamor (18:05) and York sophomore Alyssa Adam (18:13).

Kummerer (18:55) and sophomore Annie Wysopal (19:05) were 11th and 15th, followed by sophomore Rose Huang (21st, 19:28), freshman Sara Folliard (27th, 19:43), sophomore Runner of the Meet Cristina Tye (33rd, 20:12) and sophomore Amanda Koronkiewicz (34th, 20:16).

Hinsdale Central coach Mark McCabe also cited strong races by freshmen No. 9-10 team finishers Rachael MaCann (42nd, 21:02) and Sara Ramasastry (46th, 21:12). Freshman Sophie May, the team's No. 3 finisher the first two outings, sat out because of a minor injury.

"We've got a great group of freshmen and frosh-soph girls. Susan and Sarah ran great races again. Tillie had her second strong race in a row," McCabe said.

To get the estimated equivalent time of the usual 3.0-mile distance, McCabe said about 54 seconds should be added. With the shorter course, Kummerer figured she could break 19:00, but the performance showed she's coming in range to breaking 19:00s for 3.0 miles.

"I think I've gained more confidence because my sister runs so it helps me want to do better. Then I think I kind of set a goal for myself each meet, trying to do better in practice and then do better at the meet," Kummerer said.

"I think it went pretty well. Today, I think I exceeded my expectations. Since my sister runs, she kind of like influences me to do better so that's what helps me and I think the team overall, we're coming along."

Katie Kummerer competed at state for the Red Devils her final three seasons and was the No. 3 team finisher in 2009 and No. 4 finisher in 2007 and 2008 (63rd), when Hinsdale Central finished second. In 2010, Kummerer was named College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin Women's Cross Country Freshman of the Year after being the top freshman finisher (23rd) at the conference meet. On Sept. 13, Kummerer was named CCIW Women's Cross Country Runner of the Week for taking third at Aurora University's Spartan Open Sept. 9 (23:38.90 for 6,000 meters).

With the proximity of Kenosha, Katie Kummerer attended the season-opening Hornet-Red Devil Invite Sept. 3.

"She helps me with the process before a race, she gives me advice about what to do with snacks, positive thinking before the race and warming up," Tillie Kummerer said. "(Her biggest contribution is) probably just positive thinking overall. Before the race, (she says), 'Don't worry, just be excited.'"

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