

When it comes to running, Hinsdale Central senior Maddie Sullivan is known primarily as an all-stater in track and part of the Red Devils' strong sprinting crew. As a cross country runner Thursday, Sept. 24, Sullivan combined her stamina with that speed for a strong finish. Sullivan was the Red Devils' top varsity finisher in their West Suburban Conference Silver Division triangular with host Glenbard West and York at Camera Park in Glendale Heights.

Sullivan covered the 2.88 miles in 20:38 to place 15th overall, followed by juniors Olivia Carter (20:45) and Sarah Nelson (21:35), senior Alex Lithgow (21:37) and junior Emily Derezinski (23:05).

"My finish felt really good. I didn't have a ton of issues with my breathing problem today so I could definitely feel the difference," Sullivan said.

Sullivan ran the last .88 in a blistering 6:08. She just missed passing all three Glenbard West junior varsity runners who were three seconds ahead of her at the two-mile mark.

"I didn't know that was my split," Sullivan said. "When it's hot and humid, that's when I'm at my worst so today wasn't humid and it was colder so it was good. I think it's my best (race) of the year."

The Red Devils' usual varsity runners trained independently and did not compete. Starting this season, the dual meets no longer count toward determining the final overall Silver standings.

Glenbard West, which did not compete Saturday, went full out. Sophomore Lindsey Payne finished in 16:38.9 to set the all-time Camera course record. Current senior Lindsay Graham set the previous record of 16:42 Sept. 18, 2014 on her way to the individual Class 3A state championship. Graham is not competing this season as she rehabilitates from injury.

Sullivan continues to battle having her vocal cords constrict and inhibit her breathing while running. She has methods to reduce the effects, her performances often can be directly related to weather conditions.

The combination of humidity and heat especially was tough during pre-season workouts. But between that adversity and possibly training specifically for track, Sullivan knew she wanted to compete this season.

"I knew I was going to do cross country. I love the team and it's a fun way to intro into track," Sullivan said. "I wasn't even questioning (coming out). Cross country is a good sport."

"Other than Argo (Invite Sept. 19), most days have been pretty bad. It wasn't as

humid again. I think I felt better today than I did at Argo," Sullivan said.

In track, Sullivan was an individual state qualifier in the 400-meter dash as a sophomore. Last season, she was part of an all-underclass lineup that was an all-state fourth at the 2014 3A state meet in May for the 1,600 relay and all-state eighth in the 800 relay. She also helped the state-qualifying 400 relay run a season-best time in prelims.

She's still considering whether she wants to run track in college.

"I'm thinking about it. It's getting kind of late so I have to decide soon but I'm moving forward about it," Sullivan said. "I'm supposed to make a meeting with my counselor, which is (Hinsdale Central girls cross country head coach Mark McCabe) pretty much any day now. I've got to get on that."

Frosh-soph

Freshman Grace Risinger built upon her best race of the season Thursday.

Risinger ran 21:41.4 as the Red Devils' No. 7 finisher in the frosh-soph race against Glenbard West and York, arguably two of the top frosh-soph teams in the state.

Freshman Taylor Waldron was a team-best fifth in the three-team race (19:37.7) with sophomore Sophia Karris (20:06) and freshmen Bella Pisani (20:10.9) and Caitlin Chval (20:17.6), 10th, 11th and 13th. Sophomore Meg Keller (21:22.1), freshman Annie Huetteman (21:24.2), sophomore Claire Callahan (21:40.8) and freshman Olivia O'Bryon (21:49.7) also broke 22:00.

"I'm happy with my time," Risinger said. "Because I was sick for like a week and a half, I'm happy with the way I'm running. It just pushes me to do more and to run faster and just keep going."

At the Argo Invitational Sept. 19, Risinger was 20th (20:53.6) and the team's No. 5 finisher as the Red Devils placed second. Although her time was slower Thursday, Risinger was excited that she closed the gap between her and Callahan, who was seventh and 25 seconds ahead of her at Argo.

"She helped motivate me because my goal was to catch up to her and run with her," Risinger said. "She ended up beating me, but I'm happy that I almost beat her. It was closer, a lot closer."

With pride on the line, Glenbard West and York loaded their lineups as much as possible. Glenbard West sophomore Claire Kenwood won the race in 18:50.6.

Waldron was among the next seven finishers to break 20:00.

The Red Devils' lineup and particularly Waldron were affected when freshman frontrunner Kayla Byrne was a late scratch to rest a slight injury.

"It was really hard because Kayla and I always run together and she's the one who always keeps me pushing myself all of the time," Waldron said. "A lot of the teams are coming and closing on you and there's nobody to pace yourself with so it was kind of hard not having Kayla there, but I don't want to get even worse hurt so I'm glad she sat out.

"When I was running, she was screaming, 'Come on. If you were here I would be pushing you.' She was over there giving me advice and cheering me on. It was helpful."

Pisani, meanwhile, tried her best to stay with Karris, who was five seconds behind the Hilltoppers' No. 5 finisher.

"I was trying to stick right by her because we're usually quite close in time," Pisani said. "That's not my (personal best) but it's good because today was kind of a rushed day. We got on the bus and got here late. A lot of things happened."

Waldron understands the disappointment Byrne must have felt not competing.

Waldron was set to run at Peoria's Detweiller Park, the annual state meet course, Sept. 12 at the First to the Finish Invitational. Then she became nauseous the night before. She called Coach McCabe and decided to make the trip but felt worse as the day progressed.

"I woke up in the middle of the night and threw up and then I was like, 'No. No. You've got to go to Peoria. This is Peoria,' and then I just puked on the bus," Waldron said.

"I was so on running when I got there and I just passed out in the tent. I was sleeping through all of the races. I feel much better now."

One of the benefits of Thursday's race experience is that the Silver Meet will be at Camera Park Saturday, Oct. 17. Waldron said the coaches emphasized to pay attention to the terrain and hills to help determine a better race strategy for that meet.

"They always tells us to look at a specific point and just get there when we're running because it makes it easier," Waldron said. "I just want to try a lot harder next time for conference. I kind of have a better feel for the terrain here. I think it'll be better than we did this one race here in the next one."

Junior varsity

Junior Alyson Chatterjee (23:34), senior Elena Frizzell (23:46) and junior Elle Schaefer (23:53) broke 24:00 to lead the Red Devils' junior varsity entries. Most of the Red Devils' regular JV lineup competed in the varsity race.