

Hinsdale Central's Reilly Revord is used to competing against Glenbard West's Lindsey Payne, but when they met on the cross country course Thursday, Oct. 9, the stakes were higher.

The freshmen were battling down the stretch for fourth place in the dual meeting between the Red Devils and the defending Class 3A state champion Hilltoppers – currently the top-two rated 3A teams in the state.

"She and I always raced in seventh and eighth grade. It was always the mile, and I was beating her," Revord said.

When Revord edged Payne by one second, it was one of many great races that combined to give the Red Devils an emotional 25-30 victory over the Hilltoppers at Katherine Legge Memorial Park. Both teams also defeated Lyons Township with the Red Devils winning 15-46.

Sophomore Alexa Haff (17:02 for 3.0 miles), senior Annie Zaher (17:16) and Revord (17:28) finished second, third and fourth to Glenbard West junior Lindsay Graham's course-record 16:35.

Freshman Grace McCabe was fifth (17:49), followed by seniors Sara Folliard (10th, 18:05), Camila Horowicz (15th, 18:38) and Sarah Brennan (17th, 19:00).

The Red Devils now just need a second-place finish at the Silver Meet at 12:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 18 at East End Park in Elmhurst to clinch at least a share of their first overall Silver title since 2008. The Red Devils placed second in 3A that season.

"We're in a difficult conference. Winning conference is just important on the track to state. It's important to us," Zaher said.

"It wasn't easy. It was probably the most important dual meet we had all season. We had our top seven runners here for this meet and it obviously counts for the conference title so we took it seriously. We didn't hold back. We ran as hard as we could."

It showed. Zaher, Revord, McCabe, Folliard and Horowicz ran KLM personal-best times, and Haff and Brennan weren't too far off theirs.

"It's a great team effort, just top to bottom," Hinsdale Central coach Mark McCabe said. "That was what a classic dual meet should be all about, three good teams going head-to-head. It doesn't always play out that way in those triangular meets but it certainly did.

"Glenbard ran every bit as well as we did. I know (Glenbard West coach Paul Hass) was happy with the way they had run. It was a great matchup and both teams rose to the occasion. We talk about the fact that it's a dual meet and it counts in the conference standings, but other than that it's another step along the way to the most important meets at the end of the year."

Glenbard West has won or shared the past three overall Silver titles, the last two outright. This was the Hilltoppers' first Silver dual loss since Oct. 6, 2011 to York before they won the Silver Meet on a sixth-runner tiebreaker to share their first conference title since 1990 with the Dukes.

This also was the Hilltoppers' first loss this season in any race or invite. In the teams' only other meeting this season, they won the season-opening Hornet-Red Devil Invite Sept. 6 at KLM (36 points) with the Red Devils (68) second.

The Hilltoppers' top-five finishers Thursday were 1-5-7-8-9.

"KLM is a tough course. It's very hilly," Revord said. "I think just knowing it was our home course and that we've been practicing on it and we know how to run it well, that definitely helped to the great race that everybody had."

Since then, the Red Devils have not lost to an Illinois team. They've won both of other their Illinois-based invites, and beaten top-five ranked Naperville North, Palatine and New Trier head-to-head along the way. They have been ranked No. 2 in the state since beating Naperville North; second in state in 2013, to win the

First to the Finish Invite Sept. 13 at Peoria's Detweiller Park, site of the state meet.

On a much tougher KLM course, the Red Devils' average time of their top-five finishers Thursday was only about a second off their top-five average time last month at Detweiller.

After the Silver Meet, the Red Devils won't see any of the state's other top-five rated teams until the state meet.

"I think what (this dual victory) does, too, is give us the confidence that we can run with any team in the state," Mark McCabe said. "We believed that, but it's the first time that we've faced Glenbard and been able to do that. There's Naperville North and Palatine and New Trier as well so it gives us confidence that we can race with or ahead of anybody."

Graham broke the course-record time of 16:52.79 that Haff had set when winning the Hornet-Red Devil Invite. Graham was second in that race in 17:03.48.

At the invite, Payne was third (17:23.13) and currently injured senior and two-time all-stater Lisa Luczak was fifth (17:31.86), both ahead of the rest of the Red Devils.

But Thursday, the Red Devils consistently held a four-to-five point lead throughout the race. Individually, Revord was excited to beat Payne after finishing 10th at the Hornet-Red Devil Invite (18:00.13), 37 seconds behind Payne.

"(At the) Hornet-Red Devil, she beat me and I really wanted to come back and prove myself," said Revord, a standout runner at Clarendon Hills Middle School. "(Payne is) a great girl and it was just really good, knowing I can still beat her and it was just really exciting the whole race."

Grace McCabe also had an exciting result, one second ahead of Glenbard West junior Grace Rogers, an all-state 21st in 2013.

"I think all of our hard work paid off and we still were getting ready for the next couple of weeks. I was glad that I could do that well. I was happy," Grace McCabe said. "We knew that we were going to make it count so we just did our thing. There was a point in the race where I was like, 'This is our home course.' It was on agony (hill) but it helped because you can have a little mental advantage."

"In a meet where you're scoring it as a dual, that's a two-point swing when you get ahead of the girl from the other teams," Mark McCabe added. "Reilly and Grace were able, in those last 200 meters, to be neck and neck with their second and third girls and dig down and hold them off."

Junior varsity race

Senior Molly Leahy possibly ran her final race for the Hinsdale Central girls cross country team on the Katherine Legge Memorial Park home course Thursday, Oct. 9.

In a key West Suburban Conference Silver Division dual showdown with Lyons Township and Glenbard West, Leahy ran a KLM personal-best by more than one minute.

"I did kind of think about it could be my last time running at KLM and that was a little sad, but it also just gave me more motivation because I knew I had a job to do and we all had a plan that we wanted to carry out," Leahy said. "I think that just really made the race a lot more meaningful than our last race was one that mattered. It felt really good and I thought about that during the race."

Leahy and the Red Devils felt even better afterwards as they defeated LT 25-30 and Glenbard West 23-33 to put themselves in position to defend their overall Silver title.

Junior Emma Sullivan (18:40 for 3.0 miles) and Leahy (18:53) went 1-2 in the race to set the tone. Senior Val Yager (6th, 19:26), junior Anna Yang (10th, 19:41) also finished among the top 10, followed by senior Susan Spencer (14th, 19:57) and

Marissa Meyer (15th, 19:59), and senior Tillie Kummerer (22nd, 20:50).

"All of our top five were under 20:00, which is awesome. I don't think we've ever had that before," Leahy said. "It was really awesome because we want to obviously win the JV conference and beating the two teams today, which both have really strong JVs, meant a lot."

Hinsdale Central and LT finished first in Silver duals at 5-1, meaning whoever wins the Silver Meet at 1:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 18, at East End Park in Elmhurst will win the outright title.

Last year, the Red Devils and Lions shared the overall Silver title. Hinsdale Central went 6-0 in duals but LT won the Silver Meet.

"They're very motivated. They set that goal at the beginning of the year to win JV conference and they've put themselves in the position to do it," Hinsdale Central coach Mark McCabe said. "We've talked all year about that. (Thursday was) the first time we put a full lineup in there at the JV level. And we'll do the same at conference."

Sullivan, a two-time state meet competitor, won her second straight JV or Open race. When the Red Devils lost 28-27 at York Oct. 2, they did not have Sullivan or Leahy in the JV lineup. LT's top five finishers Thursday were 3-5-8-11-13 overall.

"I'm happy that we won because it's a confidence booster going into the conference meet," Sullivan said. "For most of the seniors, this is their last time running at KLM so going in with that aspect, they really wanted to race as hard as they could. They pushed themselves to run as best as they can and they obviously did."

One of those seniors was Camila Horowicz, who was competing the same race but for the varsity. Horowicz finished just one second ahead of Sullivan, also with a KLM best.

"I was ahead of her the whole race and then the last 100 meters she just came

out of a cannon and did awesome and totally kicked in and passed me,” Sullivan said. “I’m completely happy for her, especially because hills aren’t the best for her legs because of her hips so doing that on a hilly course is awesome. I’m really proud of her.”

Hinsdale Central has one meet left at KLM as the host of regionals Oct. 25. In the meantime, Leahy is focusing on another strong conference race after being fourth in the 2013 JV race.

“It’s just really exciting, looking forward to JV conference. I can’t wait for us to dominate again and show York and all of the other schools that we’re the best,” Leahy said.

“It felt awesome (Thursday) to go out there and use the course to my advantage because obviously we’ve run there so many times. So I really thought about that. I worked together with my teammates and that really helped. Once the team works together, I feel like the individual times then just come.”

Frosh-soph race

Hinsdale Central sophomore Molly Caveney and freshman Sophia Horowicz raced side by side to lead the girls cross country team’s effort in the frosh-soph against Lyons Township and Glenbard West Thursday, Oct. 9.

When Horowicz had to drop back with pain behind her knee, Caveney tried even harder on the home Katherine Legge Memorial Park course.

“I wished that (Horowicz) was able to do it with me, but I knew that I had to do something for our team because I knew we had a chance to beat Glenbard,” Caveney said. “I knew that I had to push myself the best that I could to help our team.”

Caveney not only ran a KLM best but also broke 20:00 for the first time in any 3.0-mile race. It helped the Red Devils defeat Glenbard West 27-30 while LT prevailed 20-39.

Caveney (19:53) was third overall, three seconds from second place. Tracy Wohlever (8th, 20:06) and Olivia Carter (10th, 20:20) also finished among the top 10, followed by Abby Berberich (15th, 20:51) and freshmen Andie Davis (21st, 21:13) and Sophia Karris (24th, 20:20) and Horowicz (26th, 21:21). LT's top-five finishers were 2-4-5-6-9 overall.

The Red Devils and Lions came into Thursday undefeated in Silver duals. Despite the loss, the Red Devils still can earn a share of the overall Silver title if they can win the Silver Meet at 11:30 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 18, at East End Park in Elmhurst.

"We were still able to get the split (Thursday) so we're 5-1 heading into the conference meet," Hinsdale Central coach Mark McCabe said. "We lost Sophia (being up) there, but she'll be back for conference."

At East End Park Oct. 2, Caveney ran at a sub-20:00 pace (18:45), but this was her first time breaking 20:00 on an actual 3.0-mile course.

Caveney and Horowicz were third and fourth through the first half of Thursday's race.

"The back of the knee was hurting (Horowicz). We were working together but then once we were on the second lap at agony hill, I could tell that she wasn't doing well," Caveney said. "I could tell that she wasn't doing well so I said, 'We're almost there,' and then she just dropped (back). I was just glad that she was able to finish because that must have been tough after she got hurt."

Several other Red Devils also performed well. McCabe said that Wohlever and Carter had great races and Davis, a first-time cross country runner, and Berberich continued to step up.

"We were really pumped going into (Thursday). The vibe was really good," Berberich said. "At conference, we are planning to kick butt and totally dominate because we are ready for this."

This season has gone much better for Berberich, who often had self-induced breathing problems as a freshman because she would get so anxious for races.

"It's actually been a great season this season. I'm really enjoying it. I've had some of my best times," Berberich said.

"I've really focused a lot on breathing and a lot on my footwork and speed management because I'd go out too fast last season. I'm running at a way more constant pace then going out too fast and totally slowing down. I'd get myself a lot worked up before my races last season and I'd just be scared so I'd start breathing a lot faster. I really started slowing it down."

--by Bill Stone