

Junior varsity

Hinsdale Central juniors Laila Drury and Sara Folliard were feeling the effects of homecoming week and schoolwork in their recent cross country races.

More rest brought out their best in the Red Devils' junior varsity race Thursday, Oct. 10.

Folliard easily won and Drury was named Athlete of the Meet as the Red Devils defeated Downers Grove North 25-30 and Proviso West 15-50 at Katherine Legge Memorial Park to finish 6-0 in West Suburban Conference Silver Division duals.

Folliard (19:27 for 3.0 miles) won by 28 seconds over junior teammate Val Yager (19:55). Drury (22:01) was 15th as the Red Devils' No. 6 finisher.

"I was really feeling it," Drury said. "The past two meets before this one, I haven't done my best. I've kind of been really stressed about school so I haven't slept as much as I would have liked. I was really ready to come back and do well in this one and I was glad I did. I was very proud, very happy with my time."

Junior Colleen Leahy also was an integral part of the victory, taking fourth (20:06) just one and two seconds ahead of Downers North runners, and juniors Maddy Melin (20:49) and Susan Spencer (21:33) were eighth and 10th. Seniors Cristina Tye (22:26) and Rose Huang (22:28) and junior Rachael McCann (22:34) were 19th through 21st.

Hinsdale Central's JV also edged Lyons Township 25-30 in their dual. LT enters the Silver Meet with a 5-1 dual record and Downers North is 4-2.

"It's been great to be part of a team that works hard and also say that it's paying off," Drury said. "I wouldn't be disappointed if we had lost a meet. It's just an added bonus that we've been undefeated on JV."

In her last race, Folliard was fourth in the open race at the St. Charles North Invite Oct. 5 (20:25.5) but still felt she could have done better. She considered Thursday's victory among her top five cross country performances.

"I thought it was definitely a lot better than the last two races I've had," Folliard said. "I was just feeling a lot better during the race. My legs felt fresh and stuff and I'd been taking care of myself the day before.

"(Last week) I was just so tired, and it's hard to be mentally engaged when you're tired and your legs are also tired. I just realized the importance of being mentally engaged and getting enough sleep. I just had a lot of schoolwork, a ton. It all just happened on the same night, the night before the meet."

Drury just missed breaking 22:00, as she had at the Minooka Invitational Sept. 21. She edged out two Trojans by one and two seconds but still finished behind four others.

"It was a little extra competitive edge," Drury said. "In the last 600 meters or so I did end up passing two Downers North girls I had been trailing the whole race and caught the pack in front of me."

Tye led the Red Devils' next pack after being a co-Athlete of the Meet at the St. Charles North Invite with junior Jillian DeBoer, who missed Thursday's race because of illness.

"I was trying. I wanted that T-shirt (given to Athletes of the Meet)," Tye said.

Thursday resulted in different emotions because it was her last race at KLM. Tye is among a group of just nine racing seniors this season. Senior Amanda Koronkiewicz and junior Tillie Kummerer, among the JV's stronger runners, were promoted to varsity for Thursday's race.

"It wasn't my best time, but I felt probably the strongest. I think it just all depends on the course," Tye said. "It's weird, very weird (as a senior). Last year was so different with a different coach and everything. I always knew I would do (cross country this season) and it was a good feeling."

Since the overall Silver title is a 50-50 combination of dual-meet and Silver Meet results, the Red Devils only need a top-two finish Saturday for at least a share of the crown.

Hinsdale Central hasn't won the JV conference title since three straight from 2007-09.

"Thinking about it (after Thursday's race), just looking back on the season, it's been such a good season to have for my senior year," Koronkiewicz said.

"Sometimes I'm almost thankful I'm running JV because it takes a little bit of the pressure off, but now that we're undefeated, we have a little bit more pressure to do so well in the conference meet. I think it's just been such a good group of girls and we get along so well. We know the ins and outs of each other so well and we just understand each other on more than just a running level. If we're running in a race, we don't necessarily have to talk to one another to communicate. I can tell who is coming because (of how) they're breathing. It's just been a great way to lead out."

Frosh-soph

Hinsdale Central sophomore Mackie Stevens won a few track races in the spring with the help of a powerful kick.

On Thursday, Oct. 10, she used the same strategy to achieve similar success in cross country.

Stevens' final burst proved to be the difference as she won her first cross country race in the Red Devils' frosh-soph victory over Downers Grove North 22-33 and Proviso West 15-50 at Katherine Legge Memorial Park.

Stevens (19:44) edged sophomore Anna Yang (19:46), Downers North sophomore Angela Budach (19:47) and freshman Olivia Carter (19:48).

The victories give the Red Devils a 4-2 dual record heading into the West Suburban Conference Silver Division Meet Saturday, Oct. 19, at Proviso West.

Besides the historic first place, Stevens also broke 20:00 for the first time.

"It felt really cool. It was like a confidence booster. I'm looking forward to conference now, going in with a positive attitude right now," Stevens said.

"You know, the kick is different in every race. Maybe in a race earlier this season, I wasn't running as hard during the mile, like during that middle mile I wasn't running as hard as I was this race. Today, it almost seems more rewarding when I'm able to still kick and still have those decent mile splits. It almost seems like I had the same amount of energy."

Sophomore Maddie Sullivan (20:20) secured fifth place just ahead of a pack of four Trojans. Three freshmen, Molly Caveney (20:45), Taylor Reinhardt (21:41) and Abby Berberich (21:49) were 10th through 12th, and Emma Stapleton (22:13), Tracy Wohlever (22:15), Brooke Secola (22:28) and Brigid Mulligan (22:43) were 15th through 18th.

Stevens had plenty of motivation before pulling out the race. She entered the homestretch battling Budach for third behind Yang and Carter. Then Stevens saw the clock at the finish line and realized she not only had a chance of beating her previous best of 20:05 but even breaking 20:00.

"It was like 19:32 when we came around to the hill. I saw it and I was like, 'I'm breaking 20:00 right now,' and I just kind of went for it. I was like, 'It has to happen eventually,' " Stevens said.

"Our last dual meet (Oct. 3) I didn't do too well at that so I was a little worried, but then this dual meet went really well. Physically, I felt awesome. There were no aches or pains. I'm excited and I think it's going to be good (at the Silver Meet)."

Caveney once again was a top-five finisher as part of an enthusiastic and deep freshman group. Older brother T.J. is a senior and top-five varsity standout for the Hinsdale Central boys cross country team, which is in contention for a top-three state team trophy.

"The night before races, he always tells me to drink a bunch of water and always gives me strategies for races and how to pace them," Caveney said. "I know during practice Maddie Sullivan and I always encourage each other and push each other, and I have my dad and older brother giving me tips."

Caveney built upon the momentum of what she believes to be her best race, the St. Charles North Invite Oct. 5. Caveney finished 20th overall in the frosh-soph race (21:02.9 for 3.0 miles) and was the No. 3 finisher for the Red Devils. Sullivan dropped out of the race with breathing problems, and Yang was promoted to the varsity.

"Instead of running, for the first time I felt like I was racing. I wasn't just worrying about running. I was trying to pass girls as it went on," Caveney said. "I

know whenever during a race and I'm not feeling strong, I know I have to keep going because I know the team needs me. I don't want to let anybody down."

The final Silver standings are a 50-50 combination of dual-meet and Silver Meet results. Hinsdale Central went 4-2 in duals, losing to Lyons Township (6-0) and York (5-1).

-- by Bill Stone