

Frosh-soph girls

Before she arrived at Glenbard West this season, freshman Claire Kenwood observed the girls cross country program from the sidelines.

Kathryn Kenwood, her older sister, competed for the Hilltoppers for the first time in 2013 as a sophomore and went to be a part of the Class 3A state championship lineup.

"I saw her (compete) a couple of times," Claire Kenwood said. "I saw how much fun she has and she loves doing it so I wanted to be a part of it."

Just like her older sister, Kenwood made her cross country racing debut at the Hornet-Red Devil Invitational Saturday, Sept. 6, at Katherine Legge Memorial Park in Hinsdale.

Kenwood was the Hilltoppers' top finisher as she took 14th by covering the 3.0 miles in 20:09.48. Glenbard West finished sixth with 158 points.

"I was definitely nervous because it was my first race," Kenwood said. "I was really energized and I didn't know if I was going too fast, but it turned out pretty well. It was good."

Sophomore Annie Pasterz also earned a top-25 medal by taking 24th (20:54.70). The Hilltoppers' next six finishers were freshman Mary Kate Shaver (29th, 21:12.19), sophomore Jenna Kelly (53rd, 21:53.79), freshman Claire Dibadj (55th, 21:54.88), sophomore Grace Zemenak (64th, 22:16.85) and freshman Jana Manalo (65th, 22:17.25).

Even a long, gradual incline to the finish line didn't faze Kenwood.

"I liked my finish. I wasn't even really focused on what I was running on. I was just focused on getting to the end as fast as I could," Kenwood said.

Because the frosh-soph race was the first of the three girls races, Kathryn

Kenwood was unable to watch most of Claire's race. The varsity runners were busy warming up for their upcoming race, which followed the varsity boys and was the fourth race overall.

"Claire did awesome. I was really proud of her, awesome to see her run. I wish I could have cheered her on more," Kathryn Kenwood said. "I just told her it's not as stressful as you think it is because right when the gun goes off, all you can think about is running. She did well."

"(Kathryn) told me how to run, don't go out too fast," Claire added. "The whole season she's been helping me with running and with mental (preparation), what to do at home and everything."

It's been quite a change for Claire Kenwood because she has never run cross country before. She has played soccer since third grade, but she is not playing any soccer during the cross country season. She said she has not decided whether to participate in high school soccer or track. After Kathryn Kenwood joined cross country for the first time in 2013, she continued with track for the first time after playing soccer as a freshman.

"For sure, I love the people on the team," Claire Kenwood said. "I really enjoyed running around and cheering for the other team members (in the other races), going from place to place. That's really fun, running around."

Pasterz put on a strong finish to claim 24th with eight seconds to spare. She said she didn't realize at the time that she was battling for a top-25 medal.

The performance had special meaning to Pasterz because she was injured for the 2013 Hornet-Red Devil Invite."

"I'm really happy about it. I passed some people at the end and I'm really happy about my place," Pasterz said. "I just wanted to compete, push as far up as I could. It was a fun race. It was hard, but it was fun."

Open girls

Five Glenbard West runners participated in the open girls race – Jennifer Orozco (85th, 14:25.99), Sarah Leone (117th, 14:53.80), Grace Davidson (130th, 15:06.65), Katie Appleby (169th, 15:37.64) and Emma Siemsen (209th, 16:27.41). The Hilltoppers were ninth with 311 points.