



Photo courtesy of John Wagner

Revord all-state 14th; Devils 17th at state meet

By Bill Stone
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PEORIA -- Moments before her race at the Class 3A girls cross country state meet Saturday Nov. 3 in Peoria, Hinsdale Central junior McKenna Revord received quite a boost.

Her sister Reilly, a 2018 graduate and former all-stater, made an unannounced visit from the University of Missouri to watch McKenna and the Red Devils compete for the first time this season.

"It definitely helped my nerves going in," McKenna Revord said. "Although I tried to stay mentally positive, it motivated me to do my best because I wanted to give her a good show because she came all the way there."

Revord did just that. She finished an all-state 14th to lead the Red Devils at Peoria's Detweiller Park.

Revord (16:49.66 for 3.0 miles) achieved the program's No. 4 fastest state performance to easily earn top-25, all-state honors for the second straight year. Senior Kayla Byrne was 72nd (17:56.99), followed by seniors Melanie Chafin (117th, 18:18.51), Bella Pisani (153rd, 18:38.03) and Caitlin Chval (163rd, 18:44.46), junior Taylor Wagner (165th, 18:45.54) and sophomore Diana Denmark (180th, 19:00.90). Hinsdale Central (415 points) was 17th – just nine points from 15th – and won out on a sixth-runner tiebreaker with O'Fallon (415).

The Red Devils made their seventh straight state team appearance and 18th in the past 19 seasons.

Revord, Byrne and Chafin were named the team's Athletes of the Meet.

"They certainly enjoyed seeing (Reilly). It was a nice surprise," Hinsdale Central coach Mark McCabe said.

"Our top three ran really well. McKenna is a gamer. At meets where it counts the most, she's always there. She proved that again at state."



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This was the third state cross country meet for Revord, Byrne and Pisani and the second for Chafin and Chval.

Revord was 24th in 2017 (17:23) after being 85th as a freshman (18:11). She becomes the sixth multiple all-stater in Hinsdale Central history to add to three all-conference (top 16) and all-sectional (top 10) finishes and two all-regional finishes (top 5). The only Hinsdale Central runners to achieve all-state more than twice are Jill Hardies four times (2009-12) and Elaine Kuckertz (2006-08) three times.

"It's really exciting. I'm just so pleased that I've been able to work so hard over this past year and been able to improve by so much. This is just everything that I could

hope for,” Revord said.

“This season has been really fun. It’s definitely been a lot of hard work. I’ve had to put in a lot faster times and a lot harder workouts during practice, but it’s paid off and I’m really excited.”

Byrne ended on a high note by breaking 18:00 for the first time. Chafin also finished with “her best race ever,” McCabe said.

Chval enjoyed her best season as a senior and significantly improved her race consistency. Pisani was coming off her best track season but was just fortunate to compete again at state as she battled a foot injury that resulted in her sitting out sectionals to aid her recovery.

“It’s a great group of seniors,” McCabe said. “They’re really an enjoyable group to work with. There were many highlights for the season but regardless of results on the field of play, it’s been an awesome group. They’ve done everything to be the best they can be and a joy to work with.”

The seniors set the tone for other underclassmen who enjoyed breakthroughs.

Wagner competed at state for the first time after being stopped by injury and illness the past two seasons. This also was the first cross country season for Denmark, who had a solid debut as a freshman sprinter in track. Junior Lucy Fischer, a 2017 state competitor, ran in place of Pisani at sectionals.

“I think all of (the seniors) really complement each other in kindness and definitely their ability to bring the whole team together,” Revord said. “When people are feeling down in practice, they’re able to lift them up because they all have positive attitudes and really help with the team morale.”

Naperville North (80) and Yorkville (87) finished 1-2 just like in 2017 with Downers Grove South (127) third for its first team trophy in the sport.

All six West Suburban Conference Silver Division programs that field seven-runner lineups qualified the 25-team state field. Lyons Township was fourth (191), followed by Oak Park-River Forest in 10th (318), Glenbard West in 13th (365), York in 16th (413) and Downers Grove North in 23rd (501).

The Red Devils were coming off arguably their best team race at the Marist Sectional Oct. 27 for third place behind Downers South and LT. Tenth at 2017 state (269), they finished among the top 15 in their previous six state appearances.

“We had a team this year where we weren’t particularly deep,” McCabe said. “(State) was a meet where if we all hit like the sectional or Midwest Invitational (Sept. 22), we were solid. We knew it was going to be tough otherwise with the competition we face in the state.”

The strength of Illinois girls cross country was displayed further at the Nike Cross Nationals Midwest Regional Nov. 11 in Terre Haute, Ind. Revord finished 23rd (18:18.2 for 5,000 meters/3.1 miles) – a personal record by 11 seconds -- as one of 12 top-15

individual finishers from Illinois in the five-state field with Indiana, Iowa, Ohio and Michigan. Teams comprised of runners from Naperville North, Yorkville and Downers South swept the top three team spots.

Past and present teammates have contributed to Revord's success.

Reilly Revord was an all-state sixth in 2015 and fellow 2018 graduate Grace McCabe, now competing at the University of Iowa, was an all-state 23rd last season and 20th in 2014.

At the girls track and field state meet in May, McKenna Revord ran in the preliminaries of the 3,200-meter relay before the Red Devils won the state championship race with Reilly Revord, Grace McCabe, Byrne and Pisani. The 2016 relay with Reilly Revord, McCabe and Byrne also achieved a state championship.

"Definitely seeing (Reilly and Grace) race so well and just seeing their composure going into race in years past, I tried to emulate them and tried to stay mentally positive going into races like they always are," McKenna Revord said.

"(Reilly's state meet) advice to the whole team was that you put in all of the work beforehand and you're ready to show everyone because you've worked so hard. And trust in ourselves and do what we wanted to accomplish."



Photo courtesy of John Wagner