

MND Cross Country Update

Volume 1, Number 5

October 4, 2015

Oct 3	St. Xavier Invitational	14 th of 16 Season Record: 18 - 29	Highlights		
			Allison	20 th	20:36.52
			Beth	33 th	21:02.19
			Erin	104 th	22:58.11
			Personal Records		
			Erin	104 th	22:58.11
			Faith	128 st	23:53.78
			Sarah R	163 rd (JV)	25:01.59
			Anna	165 th (JV)	25:03.53
			Gabby	223 rd (JV)	25:57.02
			Nastia	246 th (JV)	26:25.10
			Allie	257 th (JV)	26:46.86
			Sarah H	259 th (JV)	26:49.17
			Moriah	303 rd (JV)	28:14.77
			Season Records		
			Allison	5 th	20:36.52
			Beth	33 th	21:02.19
			Audrey	117 th	23:33.52
			Reilly	121 st	23:37.57
Katie	122 nd	23:38.45			
Sydney	334 th (JV)	25:12.56			

Lebanon Results: <http://www.finishtimingresults.com/2015/09-05-LEB/index.html>

Lakota Results: <http://www.buckeye-timing.com/Results/2015/08-29-LAK/index.html>

Cedarville Results: <http://www.finishtimingresults.com/2015/09-19-CED/index.html>

New Richmond Results: <http://www.baumspage.com/cc/ccevent.php?peventid=212&table=C>

St. X Results: <http://www.ghgtiming.com/Website/Results/2015/StXavier/results.html>

Individual Results and Season Comparison

Athlete	East Classic		Lebanon Inv		Cedarville Inv		New Richmond		St. X	
	Place	Time	Place	Time	Place	Time	Place	Time	Place	Time
Allison Rogiers	7	21:00.7	7	20:52.2	15	21:03.08	5	20:51.95	20	20:36.52
Beth Heimbuch	13	21:38.5	20	21:25.9	19	21:18.29	8	21:21.21	33	21:02.19
Erin McLean	54	23:51.5	-	-	74	22:58.32	23	23:19.81	104	22:58.11
Chloe Griffith	16	22:01.3	33	22:38.0	60	22:40.00	12	22:09.65	107	23:05.86
Moira Fiebig	57	24:03.6	47	23:51.8	87	23:15.29	28	23:50.00	111	23:24.46
Audrey Stevenson	77	24:55.7	40 (JV)	25:15.0	142	24:10.43	32	24:12.54	117	23:33.52
Reilly Hass	69	24:34.9	48	23:58.4	145	24:11.63	33	24:17.73	121	23:37.57
Katie Hohman	75	24:52.0	57	24:56.0	140	24:06.76	27	23:47.60	122	23:38.45
Faith Harold	78	24:55.7	44 (JV)	25:27.2	154	24:14.53	31	24:11.61	128	23:53.78
Emma Sander	-	-	-	-	139	24:06.63	-	-	-	-
Maddie Farlow	60	24:14.7	58	25:03.5	169	24:35.01	34	24:30.26	131	24:18.12
Kelly Snyder	-	-	64 (JV)	26:24.5	178	24:39.76	-	-	155	24:51.45
Anna Hale	88	26:03.0	70 (JV)	26:44.9	209	25:18.18	48	25:34.53	165	25:03.53
Taylor Chatlos	114	27:55.4	90 (JV)	27:30.2	-	-	40	25:11.95	216	25:50.73
Sarah Ray	90	26:11.1	-	-	217	25:32.48	-	-	163	25:01.59
Sydney Collins	-	-	-	-	302	28:29.45	69	27:25.88	334 (JV)	25:12.56
Jordan Cline	98	26:42.0	77 (JV)	27:06.4	255	26:36.45	49	25:37.17	204	25:42.27
Gabby Marcum	116	28:10.7	98 (JV)	27:55.8	252	26:32.18	-	-	223 (JV)	25:57.02
Nastia Cappozzo	109	27:43.7	-	-	286	27:41.40	68	27:13.38	246 (JV)	26:25.10
Abi Brennen	122	28:47.4	-	-	264	26:54.41	51	25:52.71	247 (JV)	26:30.29
Allie Kendall	129	29:53.0	95 (JV)	27:49.3	285	27:37.71	67	27:02.16	257 (JV)	26:46.86
Sarah Horton	117	28:11.0	-	-	287	27:45.75	65	26:56.73	259 (JV)	26:49.17
Mariah Bradley	133	30:25.7	129 (JV)	30:41.2	320	30:14.98	85	28:36.36	303 (JV)	28:14.77
Elaine Edwards	134	30:31.1	135 (JV)	31:22.5	322	30:47.44	86	28:37.05	319 (JV)	28:44.08

Coach's Comments

Some of you might have noticed that I was a bit anxious at the meet on Saturday. Unbeknownst to any of you, St. X was our "Meet the Team Night" for the other SW Ohio cross country programs.

By my design, our previous meets have been small and off the beaten path. We did not compete at the OHSAA Invitational, the Moeller Primetime Invitational, Tiffin, Mason, Galion, or Centerville's Saturday Night Lights. Instead, we raced at meets like the East Classic, Lebanon, Cedarville, and New Richmond. I did not set up this schedule to avoid the tough teams. It is actually impossible for us to avoid the tough teams because we have the GGCL league meet and Districts on our schedule every year. What I tried to do, though, was give our relatively young team the time it needed to understand what it takes to run Division I cross country in this region. And we are a young team. Even though we have 5 seniors, 16 of our 19 other runners are in their first or second season of running CC for MND. And our seniors have not had the education you would expect seniors to have had. For example, even the seniors needed to learn the importance of running even splits. So, I realized way back in June, that it was going to take some time before this team had had the preparation to run at the Division I level, in general, and specifically in SW Ohio and in the GGCL. The St. X Invitational, with its top teams, and with it being only 2 weeks before the GGCL, would be the perfect place to get a sense of how well we captured those lessons and how well we were likely to race at GGCL. So, to me, St. X was a very, very important meet.

Our Uplifting Team Meeting

To prepare our team for the biggest meet of the season, I held a team meeting on Friday. At the meeting, I proceeded to heap bad news after bad news on the team.

First, I officially informed the team that Emma was out for the season. Injury is a part of sports but not a part I will every happily accept. My goal is to have all of our athletes run and injury is the worst-case scenario. I work very hard with each girl to get a sense of how they are feeling and what issues they have. Emma made a huge sacrifice to miss the first few meets so she could work on her form. My hope was that such an effort would reduce her risk of injury in the future. Clearly, Emma and I have more work to do on her form but I have no doubt that we will get this issue squared away and Emma will be back and running faster than ever.

I followed that piece of wonderful news by listing the teams that would be at St. X and promptly informing the team that we had not beaten a single one of those teams this year.

I continued the string of bad news by having everyone get their laptops so I could show them the Enquirer and the GGCL Performance Lists. These are lists of the top times in SW Ohio and the GGCL, respectively. (See "[Important Links](#)" on the MND CC website.) By viewing these websites, each girl could see where she ranks in the region and in the league. What the girls saw was that there are a lot of very good runners in this area. While we all admire and are amazed at how Allison and Beth run every week, it was eye opening for the team to realize that those two ranked about 75th and 110th in the region!

Finally, to add insult to injury (at least from the girls' perspective), I told the team that for us to be competitive at St. X, and especially at GGCL, each runner would need to lower her season best time by a full minute. I told the team that the last place finisher in the varsity race GGCL last year was our own Kaitlyn Young. And she ran 1 minute faster than the fastest times of our current 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th runners. And last year's GGCL JV race was just as competitive. Our current 8th – 23rd place runners have seasonal records that would put them ahead of only 1 person in that race.

In Defense of Doom and Gloom

My reason for holding such a meeting was not to deflate the team or ruin their chances of a good race the following day. Nor was I upset or frustrated at our progress over the year. Just the opposite, in fact. The races at Cedarville and New Richmond had shown me that we were reaching the goals I had set. Over the last few weeks, I had designed our workouts to get each runner to perform at a certain level and each runner was consistently performing at that level, under all weather conditions (remember New Richmond?) and all terrains (remember New Richmond?) So, given that, it was time to set new goals for each runner. Specifically, run the GGCL 1 minute faster than her current seasonal best times.

In truth, we had already started working toward a goal of racing faster. On Wednesday, I reduced the number of intervals for each girl, but I also significantly quickened their interval pace. The purpose was to start getting the girls accustomed to running a faster pace. We will continue to run shorter intervals at a much faster pace each week until GGCL. But, typically, any workout you run during a week will not benefit the race you are running at the end of that week. These things take time (actually repetition) before they take effect. So we are on a three-week plan to lower our race time by 1 minute.

The real purpose of the team meeting was to start changing what the girls think is possible and what they think is improbable. The most important ingredient to racing fast is believing in one's ability to race fast. So the purpose of the meeting was not to make the team feel bad about how fast they were running but to change their definition of "fast." My hope was that showing the team that there are almost 300 girls in this region running under 23 minutes, all of them, freshmen included, would realize that running under 23:00 is quite common and something they should be thinking about doing, too.

Race Day

But I am not completely heartless. After the meeting, and even as late as my drive to the meet on Saturday, I was worried that I had caused more harm than good. I was worried that my talk would leave the girls intimidated and rob them of the confidence they would need to compete in a meet of this caliber. And the weather and the sloppy condition of the course did not look like they would help lift the team's spirits.

But I couldn't have been more wrong. Instead of walking around with bowed heads and thousand yard stares, the girls were just as immune to the gravity of the situation at St. X as they have been at all of our previous races. At one point, while walking the course before the races, I pleaded with the girls to get focused because we were "not out on a nature walk." In the end, my

anxiety got the best of me and I turned to Coach Witte and told her “you deal with them” and left. Otherwise, I was bound to have a fit.

So, on a rainy, cold, and very muddy day, when it seemed (at least to me) that the entire season was about to fall apart, the girls shook off the doom and gloom, shook off the rain and the mud, and ran their best race of the season!

Seven of our 10 varsity runners ran their best time of the season and two others were within 10 seconds of their best time. On the JV side, eight of our 13 JV runners ran their best time of the season with another two within 10 seconds of their best.

I am still getting to know this team but it is clear that their method for handling stress (chatting up a storm) is much better than my method for handling stress. At GGCL, I will try to respect the team’s unique approach to pre-race preparation.

But, despite their tremendous races, we still finished 14th of 16 in the Varsity race and 15th of 15 in the JV race.

And my reaction? I was ecstatic.

If you only measure success by how high the team finishes, then no, we were not very successful. But, if you measure success that way, you have a very shallow definition of success. A team is a collection of individuals. So, success should be measured not just by how high the team finishes but also by how far each individual has progressed. And under that definition, I was (and am) very pleased because, our team, our collection of individuals, ran with heart and purpose. They supported each other during a very tough race. And they competed the entire race. In short, they ran a big-time race at a big-time race. What more can a coach ask?

And lest you think I am merely putting icing on a fallen cake, I talked to several coaches after the meet. When I told them all but 4 of our runners had outright season bests or their 2nd fastest times of the season, their jaws dropped. Literally. One coach said “Today? In this?” Every one of those coaches said that they didn’t get anywhere near that kind of performance from their team. Two GGCL coaches actually commented to me about how well our girls were running.

Again, just to let you know I am not making this up to make me look good or the team feel better: the reason more than one GGCL coach has commented on our team this year is that in the 2013 GGCL meet, only 2 years ago, Mercy and Ursuline put all 7 of their varsity runners in front of MND’s first runner (Maddie Gentile) and McAuley put 6 runners in front of our first runner. That means, MND’s top runner beat a total of one runner from those 3 teams (if you add St Ursula, our top MND runner beat 2 runners from the 28 top 7 runners on those 4 teams). However, at St X this year, Allison and Beth ran very fast. Not only did they both crack the top 7 of all three of those teams, (and Chloe would have done so, too had her shin not flared up), but Allison beat Ursuline and Mercy’s #2 runners, Beth beat Mercy’s #3 runner and Ursuline’s #4 runner. Against McAuley, they fared even better. Allison finished ahead of McAuley’s #1 runner (meaning she beat every one of their top 7 runners) and Beth finished ahead of McAuley’s #2 runner. All totaled, Beth, all by her lonesome, beat a total of 12 of the 21 top 7 runners from Mercy, Ursuline and McAuley. Allison finished ahead of 17 of the 21 top 7 runners from Mercy, McAuley, and Ursuline.

And our success is not limited to just Allison and Beth. Even on a bad shin that caused her to run her slowest time of the year by a full minute, Chloe still ran 2:45 faster than she did at last year's St. X meet. One of the reasons we have an off week this week (that is, no race) is to get healthy. I am sure with a rest and a lessened workout schedule, Chloe will be racing well below her SR by GGCL. Erin ran another PR improving on her time from last year's St X meet by over 1 minute. Erin has to learn that the best way to help the team is to run as fast as you can, even if that means finishing ahead of one of your teammate. I think Erin would have been much faster if she had made an earlier commitment to run ahead of Chloe instead of behind her. When she finally pulled ahead, it helped Chloe, too.

I am not sure where this team would be without Moira. Moira runs hard and she runs smart. She is a leader in practice, at the meet, and even in the race. Because of that, not only did she run a SR and break 24 minutes (by a long way) for the fourth(!) time this year, she barely missed her SR by 9 seconds, and she led the second half of our varsity team to their PRs, too. Audrey, Reilly, Katie, and Faith spent the entire race chasing Moira. And while they never caught her, they were rewarded for their effort with their own sub 24 minute SRs. Of the followers, Audrey was the leader of those chasing Moira. Her 23:33 is very quick and hints of even faster times in the future. Audrey has done the extra bit of stretching and rolling her muscles that has to be done to stay healthy. Reilly passed on basketball conditioning so she could focus on running and keep her body healthy. That sacrifice paid off on Saturday. Katie started off this season with a broken toe and that delayed her training. But, her training is improving very quickly now and her times are dropping just as quickly. I have no doubt she will run very fast at GGCL, especially as the meet will be held on a very fast course that suits her natural speed. Maddie just missed a SR by 4 seconds. After starting the season as one of our faster runners, Maddie got swamped by work and school and had a middle-of-the-season lull. But she found a way to get everything done and get her workouts in, too. She is even running before school on those days she cannot make practice. As a result, Maddie is back to racing well again.

Anna ran a terrific race and lowered her PR by 32 seconds. Every one of Anna's races this year has been faster than her fastest race last year. Sarah R did not race last year at St X so the mere fact that she is healthy this year is a great improvement over last year. But add to that the fact that Sarah also ran a PR and came ever so close to breaking 25 minutes and it is clear she is having a very good season. Sidney, in her first race of the year in spikes, took 2 minutes off of her season best. In three races this year, Sidney has dropped over 3 minutes. Kelly, had she managed to stay on her feet the entire race, would surely have run 11 seconds faster to improve her seasonal record. Taylor's race at St. X was 40 seconds slower than her PR, which seems like a lot until you realize that she still ran 1:40 faster than any other race this year besides her PR.

But, as usual, the newcomers led the way in lowering their SRs (which, for them, is the same as their PRs). Nastia, in typical Nastia fashion, decided that there is no point waiting until GGCL to lower her PR by 1 minute when she could do that in the rain and mud of St. X. So, Nastia dropped her PR by 1:15. Gabby ran a tremendous race and became the first MND freshman to run under 26 minutes, lowering her PR by 35 seconds in the process. Allie and Sarah H ran side by side and each helped the other at different parts of the race. As a result, both ran PRs, Allie dropping her PR by 15 seconds and Sarah dropping hers by 7 seconds. Moriah and Elaine are probably wondering why I didn't ask for the 1 minute drop before last week's race as they

dropped their PRs nearly 2 minutes at New Richmond. Nevertheless, they both proved that their fantastic drop a week ago was not a fluke and Moriah ran a 12 second PR and Elaine missed her PR by only 7 seconds. For the both of them to run back-to-back races that much quicker than any of their previous 3 races is a sign that the previous races were the fluke, not the current ones. Abi and Jordan did not run PRs on Saturday. In both of their cases, they lowered their PR by about a minute at New Richmond. However, they both ran their #2 times of the season (and their careers) at St X and their times were much closer to their PRs than they were to the times they had been running before New Richmond. Jordan only missed her PR by 7 seconds. It is impossible to expect to run a PR or SR every race. But the sign of a good runner is consistency and following up a PR with your #2 time is a sign of consistency.

Finally, of all our newcomers, Faith deserves special recognition for her race. On July 3, Faith's name does not even appear on my Attendance sheet as she was not on the team. On August 5th, I her workout consisted of two 1200m intervals. Two! Running a total of 2400 meters is not exactly ideal preparation for a 5000m race. Especially when you can stop and rest between the intervals. But Faith was a newcomer and I had no idea what she could do and not do. Fast-forward 2 months. Faith can run 5-6 1200m intervals and at New Richmond, Faith ran her PR, was our 7th runner, and earned her spot in the varsity race at St. X. Being placed on the varsity should be every runner's goal. But sometimes running varsity is not all that it is cracked up to be, especially if your first race on varsity is the St. X meet. When the gun went off, the field went out blazingly fast and Faith (and the entire varsity team) was swept away with them. Their instructions were to get out fast and then slow down and settle into race pace. They followed the "get out fast" part of the instructions perfectly but they seemed to forget all about the "slow down and settle into race pace" part of the instructions. I will know more when I review the mile splits, but I am pretty sure that Faith set her PR in the mile on Saturday. Setting your PR in the mile is not a bad thing, unless it happens in the first mile of a 3.1 mile race. Somehow, Faith held it together, fought to stay with her teammates, and she finished in a PR 23:53.

Conclusion

MND is starting to look and act the other quality Division I cross-country teams in our region. Whether it is Maddie, Allison, and Beth running in the morning, Reilly and Audrey using the rollers during stretching, or the freshmen filling up the ice bath before anyone asks them, we are demonstrating the characteristics of a quality cross country team.

Let's continue the commitment through the end of the season. GGCL in 2 weeks!

Next Week's Race

No race.