

MND Cross Country Update

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September 3, 2017

OHSAA Early Season Invitational

August 19, 2017

Results: www.finishtimingresults.com/2017/08-19-OHSAA

Varsity Race: 5k 23rd of 24 teams 240 Runners		
	Place	Time
Addison W	157	22:20.9
Fiona Y	159	22:23.5
Reilly H	165	22:31.5
Taylor K	182	22:55.5
Gretchen R	190	23:19.9
Emma H	196	23:31.3
Emma S	219	24:34.1

Open Race: 2.25 miles 11th of 13 teams 131 Runners		
	Place	Time
Lindsey B	30	16:44.7
Lauren W	45	17:27.1
Samantha H	48	17:36.4
Maddie H	55	17:51.4
Gretchen W	60	17:57.2
Gabrielle M	76	18:28.6
Katie H	88	18:59.3

Coach's Comments

The official start of the 2017 OHSAA CC season is August 23rd. That makes the OHSAA's own meet, the Early Season Invitational, on the 21st, the only CC meet in the entire state. Add to that fact that the meet is held on the same course as the OHSAA State CC Meet in November, and this meet attracts some of the best teams in the State.

I typically do not schedule such a high-powered meet so early in the season, let alone as the season's first meet. But I believe that MND has the talent to send an athlete, or an entire team, to the State meet before the current set of freshmen graduate. With that thought in mind, I felt it was a good time to introduce our team to the State Meet course and the type of teams that typically qualify for the State Meet.

We faced 23 other teams in the Varsity race. Nine of those teams are currently ranked in the Top 20 in the State, including 2-time defending State Champion Centerville. In the end, we only beat one of those teams. In the JV race, we finished ahead of only 2 of the 13 teams we faced. On those facts, alone, we did not have a very good outcome and we showed that we are not yet ready to race against such high-level teams. However, when you look at the team's performance, you see that we started this season racing at a level that we only reached at the very end of last season.

In the Varsity race, Freshman Emma H opened her MND career running faster in her first meet than any current MND runner had as a freshman except Addison W and Emma S. Fiona Y and Addison W both ran their 3rd fastest times ever (called "#3 all-time"). Their only faster times were from last year's GGCL and District Meets, which were the last two meets of the season. Gretchen R and Reilly H ran their #2 all-time, only running faster in the GGCL and District race, respectively. And Taylor K

ran a PR (Personal Record), meaning that ran faster in her first meet this season than she ran in any meet last season. Emma S did not run well but, as time would show, her issues were not due to a lack of fitness or commitment, but a lack of iron.

In the 2.25 mile race, we ran well, too. Lindsey B finished 30th and earned her first CC medal. Lauren W and Samantha H opened their MND careers with impressive 45th and 48th place finishes, respectively. Maddie H made a commitment to summer conditioning and, as a result, is a completely different runner than she was last year. Just 51 weeks earlier, in our 2016 pre-season time-trial, Maddie H ran the 1-mile time trial in 9:28. At the OHSAA meet, she averaged under 7:54 for 2.25 miles. Gretchen W, Gabrielle M, and Katie H are still a few weeks away from reaching the racing form they exhibited at the end of last year. I do not doubt that with more training, they will return to the form that put Gretchen W on last year's District team and resulted in Gabrielle M running 23:52 at GGCL.

Conclusions: 5 #1's

Cross country races are scored by summing the finishing places of each team's top 5 runners with the lowest score winning. In 2015 and 2016, MND was fortunate to have exceptional #1 runners. In 2015, senior Allison R (19:48.8 and 1st Team All-GGCL) was our #1 runner and she was a full 1:10 ahead of Beth H, our #2 runner at that time. Last year, after Allison R graduated, senior Beth H (19:38.86 and Regional Qualifier) was our #1 runner and she was over 2:00 faster than Addison W, last year's #2 runner. Because Allison R and Beth H finished so high, they scored very few points so they helped keep our team score low. But, by definition, more than 80% of a team's score is determined by their #2 - #5 runners. So, a strong set of #2 - #5 runners, that can finish close to your #1 runner, can easily offset the lack of a "big-time" #1 runner. To that end, I am asking the team to give me five #1 runners. That means, before the season is over, we have 5 different girls who have finished a race as our #1 runner. If we can achieve that goal, we are clearly going to be very good from #2 - #5 and have a chance to be one of the best teams in recent MND CC history. After the first race Addison W is our first #1 runner. We need four more.