

Junior sets eyes on state crown

Malyka Abramson discusses her dream of a No. 1 ranking

By Priya Shields

Junior Malyka Abramson sat in class during the fourth week of school, drifting in and out of a daydream. She imagined the Franklin Invitational cross-country meet, which would happen on Aug. 31. It would be the second meet of the season, but her first real test: Abramson, ranked in the preseason as the fourth fastest runner in the state, would go up against the second-ranked runner, senior Mackenzie Caldwell of Columbus North.

Later that week, the daydream became a reality. Abramson won the race, breaking the 5K course record with a time of 17:56.

As a kid, Abramson did not dream of being a runner. She was too busy playing basketball, soccer and softball. She did not even start running competitively until seventh grade, and even then, she said that it was only to help her condition for basketball.

"My mother was a good runner in high school," Abramson said. "I thought it would be easier for me."

She quickly found out there was nothing easy about cross-country. She realized it was not just a physical challenge, but a mental challenge.

However, in her first cross-country race, she placed second on her team. She was good, she realized, and she would only get better. After repeatedly shaving seconds off of her personal best, Abramson once held the school record for 3K.

Her entrance into high school running was dramatic, achieving the fastest time for a freshman in the state of Indiana for 5K with a time of 18:22.

"It felt really good, it was my goal in the beginning to [be] the fastest freshman in the state," Abramson said.

Despite running spectacular times, she had been feeling discomfort in her hip throughout the season. It was diagnosed before the state meet as Iliac Apophysitis; it was an inflamed pelvic growth plate.

"I lied to myself when I was racing, so that I wouldn't feel the pain," Abramson said.

After coming back fully recovered her sophomore year, she dropped over 30 seconds to achieve a personal best of 17:51 at the Carmel semi-state. She also ran the second fastest time for a sophomore in the state. However, while flying down the sloping hill to the finish line, Abramson rolled her ankle, once again impaired before the state meet.

Now back for her third season in high school cross country, Abramson is already running times under 18 minutes, and is striving for times under 17 minutes, a ticket to nationals and a chance to beat junior Anna Rohrer of Mishawaka.

Rohrer has several national titles under her belt and is the current state champion, but Abramson will not go down easily.

"She's a nice girl, but I really want to beat her," Abramson said.

With the only opportunity to spar with Rohrer occurring at the state meet Nov. 2, Abramson is working hard. Physically, she is improving every day. Mentally, she says she knows what it takes to train and prepare to win competitions.



Junior Malyka Abramson practices at Washington Township Community Park. She runs 49 to 50 miles per week. "To focus while running, I remind myself what I want to accomplish and the hard work that it will take," Abramson said. "I love how if you put in the effort, you can see results and be successful in reaching your goals."

"I think what makes anyone a good runner is what they would do to win, and I want to win really badly," Abramson said.

There is still a month between now and the race, which means there is an abundance of time for daydreaming. If you have class with her, and you ever notice her staring off into space, maybe at that moment she is planning race strategies. Maybe she is visualizing the moment she crosses the finish line ahead of competitor Anna Rohrer.

Editor's Note: On Sept. 16 we read on indianarunner.com that Rohrer is out for eight weeks with a broken foot. This was confirmed with Avon head girls cross country coach Bradford Rosebrock.