



The Friar Runner

A biannual newsletter about the Fenwick Distance Programs

Girls

“**W**ork hard; enjoy the process” was the motto created by senior **Nicole Finn** for the Fenwick Girls’ Cross Country team this season. This guided the Friars as they continued to impress this year, achieving three meet



A jubilant team following the announcement that they are Conference Champions.

championships, each for the first time. In their first year racing at the RB invite, the Friars emerged victorious at both the varsity and junior varsity levels, which set them up for two other first time victories: the GCAC Championship and the 3A Regional Championship.

While the season began on a positive note showing near unprecedented progression week to week, the breakthrough race for the Friars occurred about halfway through at Palatine. Many finished with elation having dropped immense time. **Franny Lorenzini** lost one minute from her season best and beat her personal record by over 15 seconds, **Tess Wagner** PRed by 45 seconds and **Margaret O’Brien** got back to her former racing self, finishing almost a minute faster for the season. The story of the meet, though, was **Marisa Morella**. She ran out of her shoes! She dropped over two minutes from her previous season best and PRed by almost a minute. It is rare to have that type of growth for veteran runners, let alone one meet in the middle of the season. It was an incredible day.

For most of the team, the week of Conference is the culmination of the season’s racing. Despite the harsh wind and softer course, 24 of the 37 racers ran their fastest on that day. For the Varsity squad, it was about earning a trophy. The week before, the coaches laid out the predicted varsity results. Even

Fenwick was estimated to be securely in second place and about 15 points behind Loyola for first. When asking the team how they wanted to approach the race they said, “Let’s take a risk and go for it.” They believed in themselves, racing audaciously from the gun.

Finn, **Delaney Gibbons** and **Laura Durkin** were pushing together in third, fourth and fifth places, setting the tone for the Friars. As the race progressed and the field spread out, the girls knew that they had to pass any Loyola runner for a shot at the team championship. Come the finish, Finn defiantly outkicked one Rambler and Durkin used her heroic speed to pass by Loyola’s second, third and fourth. The proverbial nail in the coffin came from sophomores **Arlene Amaya** and **Mary Bridget Donahue** who have pushed each other in the spirit of healthy completion all fall. They each passed Loyola’s fifth runner in the final stretch creating a four-point swing and securing the win. The final score was 44–48, earning the Friars their first GCAC Championship in only their second year in the deep, 20 school conference. All five of the Fenwick scorers earned All-Conference honors along with the team championship. The Friars believed that they had a shot and were trusting in their teammates to compete. This race was a testament to the power of faith.

That faith continued to persevere through regionals with not only a 3A Regional Championship but two All-Regional runners, Finn and Durkin. The following week at Sectionals, the Friars finished respectably in eighth place. Finn, who has been a driven leader all fall, earned what she dreamed about ever since freshman year: a trip to State. Just like at Conference, Finn raced boldly from the start. With about 1000m to go, Coach Collins, who was counting places, was jumping up and down and slamming the ground telling her that she needs to get to that next pack to qualify. Finn found another gear passing that pack and earning her spot to State. The entire team was beyond proud of Finn’s accomplishment. How apropos for the runner who gave us our mantra for the season to find such success with it.

There is a strong correlation between leadership and success. Captains **Claire Cahill** and Margaret O’Brien along with Manager **Maria Ritten** worked to evolve the team culture to be ever more outstanding. The harriers are now building upon the work they have already done and working ever harder as they focus on track. It is with faith in each other and faith in the process, all the while cherishing the time they have together, that we all look ahead to the 2017 campaign.

Follow the girls on Twitter and Instagram: [@FHSGirlsRunning](#)

Friars Caring

With a trip to Feed My Starving Children and the annual coordination of the in-school shoe drive, it is clear that the runners make it a point to give back to their own communities each fall.

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This year was special since it required their care turn inward when a teammate was diagnosed with cancer. From prayers to posters, the boys' and girls' teams rallied around him. The most powerful moment was at his anointing of the sick when all of the runners and coaches, even some from past years, came to pray with this senior and his family.

With the help of his loving family, great doctors, close friends and caring teammates he is doing very well. Please continue to pray for further health.

Boys

After a tremendous fifth place State finish in 2015, the Boys' Cross Country Team moved up to the most competitive class, the 3A level. This makes it much more difficult for a smaller school to succeed, but true to Fenwick spirit, the guys took it in stride by buckling down and getting to work. Training hard all summer and racing each meet like it was their last, the Friars represented what Fenwick stands for this season. It wasn't until the first week of October that the team placed all of their top seven in the same race. This was at the incredibly deep Peoria Invite with six of the eventual top ten teams in State that the Friars placed 16th. Heading into the state series, the top seven consisted of three sophomores and four seniors, which bodes well for the future with almost half of the team being underclassmen.



The tight senior class at camp before the start of their senior year.

The sole state qualifier was **Alex Marks** after running a tenacious Sectional race. In fact, all season, Marks was determined in his pursuit of this goal. The way he devoted extra time to remain healthy and strong with all of the work he was putting in was inspiring. Drills before practice, extra stretching after, and welcoming the discomfort of foam rollers and trigger points were all a part of his regimen to stay healthy throughout the fall. It surely worked as it allowed him to run a 15:12 at the Palatine Invite which, at the time, placed him as one of the top 50 times in the state. At the Sectional Meet he placed an impressive 12th place with a time of 15:37, securing a coveted trip downstate. At the State Meet, Marks went out and positioned himself well, running one of his fastest first miles ever. Through mile two, he used all of his might to hang on but at mile three, the fierce pace caught up to him. It was in the last 200 meters that he was forced to stumble to the finish. The entire team is proud of his valiant racing tactics. It was difficult watching him get passed by about 50 people in those last 200 meters but what a pleasure it was to watch him truly compete one last time. Just as you should at State, Marks put it all out there. He finished in 137th place with a time of 15:40.

As mentioned before, the future of our program looks promising with such a talented, close-knit group of underclassmen with an innate desire for success. The way they work hard and encourage each other on even the toughest of days reminds us of what makes high school sports so great. Although the team will be losing strong leaders in this senior class, it will be exciting to watch how the next generation of Friars become excellent leaders in their own way.

Follow the boys on Twitter: [@FriarRunners](#)

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