



The Friar Runner

A biannual newsletter about the Fenwick Girls' Running Program



Sectional Champions!

At the risk of sounding cliché, this 2019 spring was competitively historic for the Friars. To Coach Heidloff's recollection, this was the first time ever winning an invite (Argo's Arthur L Sullivan Invitational in February). It was then that the runners knew what the coaches already saw: This was going to be a special season for the team.

Special moments kept happening: the 4x800 of Arlene Amaya, Laura Durkin, Marie O'Brien and Maria Quinn ran sub 10 for the first time at the uber-competitive DGS relays since competing there six years ago; the Friars placed 3rd for the first time at indoor Conference; qualified for 6 events (TJ, PV, 4x800, 4x400, 400, 60mH) with athletes in the above 4x800 along with Maggie Van Ermen, Delaney Seligmann, Colleen Grogan and Claire Gatermann for Illinois Prep Top Times.

The outdoor season was a little choppy competitively because of multiple school breaks,

but the girls again all came together for Conference where they defended their bronze trophy earning 3rd at outdoor Conference.

At Sectionals, the Friars came to win and they did so with a true team effort. Fenwick won by 28 points scoring in 16 of the 18 events qualifying 12 athletes (Amanda Behrend, Claire Gatermann, Colleen Grogan, Katie Cahill, Lauren Hall, Mikaela Burns, Natalia Kuchinic, Laura Durkin, Marie O'Brien, Maria Quinn, Maggie Van Ermen and Delaney Seligmann).

Here are a few personal, moving stories that brought the Friars to this first-ever sectional win:

- Grogan's fortitude was again on display as she put everything on the line for the 300h. She had to sit out for two weeks leading up to this sectional race. She had to trust herself as she gave one last effort. Thankfully, she not only made State, but won the race.

- In the mile, freshman Mikaela Burns was excited and ready to fight for a ticket to State. Mikaela ran a gutsy race, holding on to the lead pack for some time. The leader pulled away towards the end and it was a fight for second -- the only other guaranteed spot for State. Although she ended up coming in 3rd, Mikaela ran a great race and was fiercely competitive. That drive and poise in high-stakes races like this will serve her well in the coming three years, not to mention the fitness that comes from a sub 5:40 mile.

- Delaney Seligmann was busy running from one event to another as she competed in the high jump, triple jump, long jump and 4x400. She did it all like a kid playing in a park: fully engaged and joyfully. She ended up winning the HJ, TJ and was on the winning 4x400. She placed 2nd in the LJ. This means that she qualified for State in four events, which is amazing!

At State, the Friars placed 30th in 2A. The points were earned in the 4x800 and the pole vault. The 4x800 of Quinn, O'Brien, Van Ermen, and Durkin placed 5th, moving up a spot from last year. The quartet showed their mettle, bouncing back from an underwhelming prelims, running an all-around quality race in finals to earn the impressive 5th place. Quinn ran a smart race going at the right times; O'Brien showed her toughness running alone for much of it yet remained pushing; Durkin finished her leg strong with an impressive kick on the home stretch; and Van Ermen's anchor leg had her running to the ground for her teammates -- she nearly caught the 4th place team, missing by a fourth of a second. It was a proud day for these Friars as they are all now 2x All-State runners.

Although Claire Gatermann has been breaking records for Fenwick, she had yet to earn All-State honors as 2A pole vault is the best in Illinois. At prelims, Gatermann had a clean sheet through 11'. She was super excited because much of the field did not even make it to 11'. She was frustrated to learn that since only eight competitors were at or above 11', they were to take the next height, 10' 6", which meant 16 vaulters at finals. She desperately wanted All-State and thought that it was assured with the narrowing field at prelims, but the decision to bring more competitors to finals changed all of that. Two years ago

Gatermann would have dwelled. However, just outside the stadium with her family, she shook off the frustration reframing it as a way to prove and truly earn this honor. She knew that she was one of the top vaulters in the state; Saturday was her day to prove it. She returned the next day, ready to compete, and placed 6th proudly earning her All-State medal.

It was a fun year with many different groups clicking. Coach Lavins and his high-jump crew had four girls clear 4' 8" and two qualify for state (Seligmann and Amanda Behrend). The distance team had seven runners under 6 minutes for the mile, and the new sprinters brought energy to the squad.

There is a sense of pride seeing three more All-State runners to added to the wall in The Link from the class of '19 (Durkin, Gatermann and Van Ermen). Over the past eight years, 20% of the All-State athletes on the board have been women cross country or track and field athletes.

Ending the spring qualifying 12 athletes to State, five of whom earned All-State honors, and placing 30th as a team in 2A, the Friars are eager to bring their best in the fall where they are again down in 2A for the first time in eight years.



Gatermann preparing before the crowds arrive at State Finals where she earned her All-State medal.

Friar Teamwork

The open 1600 of the outdoor Conference would be the final race for senior Cara Conniff, who wanted to end her high-school career on a high note. Her teammate Olivia Rill, a junior, wanted to cap off a solid season herself with a great race. Cara's excitement had her running the first 1000 meters leading, forcing an honest pace for the remainder of the field. Olivia was able to take the lead at that point where Cara then held on. The next 600 meters was them in 1, 2. It was there that the word compete (Latin: *to strive together*) was ostensibly defined. It was a poignant example of how competing teammates make each other better. It was an exciting finish with Olivia PRing and Cara just missing hers. After catching their breath there was a special moment between the two athletes as they congratulated and thanked one another for bringing their best for each other.

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