

Prep Sports | **updated: 9/10/2015 9:49 PM**

Prospect powers up, tops Hersey

By Michael Eaken
Daily Herald Correspondent

Prospect may have changed home courses, but the results remain the same for the Knights.

The girls cross country team moved its home course to Melas Park this season due to construction on its old home course, which is on the Knights' campus.

But the outcome sure seemed familiar on Thursday as the Knights cruised to a 20-41 Mid-Suburban East victory over visiting Hersey in Arlington Heights.

Junior Brooke Wilson, who was coming off a first-place finish at the Fenton Invitational on Saturday, kept things rolling on Thursday by cruising to a first-place finish in 18:47, easily outdistancing Hersey junior Hailey Bowes (19:34).

"I'm feeling good," said Wilson, who led wire to wire on a crisp afternoon. "I'm definitely feeling stronger than last year."

The Knights also look stronger as a team after placing seven runners in the top 10 to pull away.

Prospect offers a lot of depth this season, and coach Pete Wintermute inserted four freshmen into the varsity lineup on Thursday.

And they responded, with Marissa Valentini (19:42), Julia O'Grady (19:45) and Jenna Baltes (19:47) taking 3-4-5 positions.

"We got some girls coming in that are excited about running," said Wintermute of the freshman contribution. "They are pushing the older kids and the older kids are responding really well."

Junior Aileen White (20:06) completed the scoring by taking seventh place for a program that has won seven consecutive MSL East titles.

"I think we are definitely going to surprise some people, and maybe even surprise ourselves," said Wilson, who is hoping she and her teammate can improve on last season's sixth-place overall MSL finish last season. "We just have a ton of depth and it's really exciting."

Hersey also has high hopes -- especially Bowes, who has powered the Huskies' early races. The junior finished in tenth place at the Fenton Invitational and is definitely off to a solid start.

"I have a lot more confidence this season," said Bowes, who trained with the varsity boys team over the summer. "I'm motivated to keep improving and the team has been behind each other."

Junior Sarah Harden (19:56) has added to the Huskies' attack and continued to impress Thursday with a sixth-place finish.

"This group has a good work ethic and some patience," said Hersey coach Jim Miks. "We're excited about competing."

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