

**Prep Sports**

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# Prospect's Wilson plans to keep improving



**Barrington's Jocelyn Long, left, and Prospect's Brooke Wilson battle for the lead during meet at Beese Park in Barrington.**

Joe Lewnard | Staff Photographer

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Prospect's Brooke Wilson was good her freshman year -- but nobody really knew how good.

Wilson proved just how good she was with a sensational sophomore running campaign that has elevated her to one of the elite runners in Illinois.

Wilson gave a glimpse of her potential when she finished 24th in at the Class 3A state cross country meet last November. In May, she solidified her status by taking second in the 3,200 (10:51.36) in the Class 3A meet, and she capped a breakout sophomore season by taking sixth in the 1,600 (4:58.78).

Her three state medals helped to cement her status as one of the top upcoming runners in Illinois, and clearly someone to watch this fall.

"She kind of showed up at the end of last cross country season," said Prospect coach Pete Wintermute of Wilson's progress. "Before state track I knew she was good -- but I didn't know how much closing speed she had.

"She has a fire that keeps her going."

Even Wilson was a bit surprised by her sophomore-year accomplishments -- especially after she was slowed at the end of her freshman cross country season by an iron deficiency.

"Yeah a little bit," said Wilson. "I don't think I expected that. I think I gradually started to believe I could accomplish some of those things."

Wilson didn't really turn a lot of heads early last season. She finished a respectable 13th at the loaded Palatine Invitational in September, and then made a bit more progress with a third-place finish at the Peoria Central Invite in early October.

But she sure heated up in the postseason. Wilson finished fifth at the Mid-Suburban League meet, added a sixth-place finish at the Schaumburg sectional, and then battled a pack of 10 runners to secure her 24th-place finish and state medal at the Class 3A state meet.

"I had been running OK, probably similar times to what I had been running my freshman year," said Wilson. "I wasn't happy with how it was going, but things shifted for the better."

"She just continued to progress," said Wintermute. "I don't know if there was one specific race that was a breakout for her. At the state meet she put herself in contention."

Wilson continued to progress during the track season, hitting career bests in winning her second consecutive MSL 3,200 title in 10:47.72.

She flashed the closing speed she used at the state cross country meet to pass Plainfield North junior Rachel Lau at the finish in taking second in the 3,200 finals, and then Wilson showed her toughness by coming back to secure

another state medal in the 1,600.

"That is the difference about winning a lot of races, the ability to close on that last bit," said Wintermute. "And mentally, she is one of the strongest kids I've ever coached."

Wilson comes from a tennis family. Her grandfather, Brad Wilson was the former head coach at Maine East. Wilson's father Dan played tennis at Maine West and is an assistant girls tennis coach at Niles West. And Wilson's older sister played tennis for Prospect.

Brooke decided to find a different niche.

"They tried to teach me, but I wasn't very receptive," Wilson said.

But she definitely has been receptive to running. Wilson is the first Knights runner to win medals in cross country, the 1,600, and 3,200 in the same school year.

Now the challenge for Wilson is to build on her sophomore year -- and it won't be easy in a conference that features Palatine's senior Kelly O'Brien, the defending MSL champion and two time top ten state medalist, Barrington's twin powers of senior Lauren Conroy and sophomore Jocelyn Long, Hoffman Estates senior Meagan Biddle and Buffalo Grove senior Kaitlyn Ko.

"She's always been pretty confident, that's just her swagger," said Wintermute. "Time will tell where she ends up reaching. This fall will be a testament to how far she has come along."

The rain was pelting the cement around Prospect as the Knights prepared for an early Saturday workout, and Wilson took a moment to ponder her breakout sophomore season.

"After I won the two state track medals I thought like, 'Wow I'm going to be walking on clouds or something,' " said Wilson, "But then you look at professional runners and they are excited after a really great race. Then they are like, 'What's next, how much further can I go, how much greater can I be?' "

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