

Prep Sports | updated: 9/23/2017 6:13 PM

Girls cross country: Libertyville's Manetsch continues her impressive march at Palatine



York's Sarah May heads for the finish line during the Palatine cross country invitational at Deer Grove Forest Preserve on Saturday.

Joe Lewnard | Staff Photographer

By Michael Eaken
Daily Herald Correspondent

Libertyville senior Melissa Manetsch has found a new gear this season.

The Wildcats senior had an injury- and illness-plagued junior cross country season, but after taking sixth place in the 3,200 at the Class 3A girls track and field meet in May she has definitely been back in elite form.

ADVERTISING

[Learn more](#)



inRead invented by Teads

Manetsch took fourth place at the First to the Finish Invitational on the state course at Detweiller Park in Peoria in early September. The next week she won the Libertyville Invitational, and on a toasty Saturday at the Palatine Invitational the Wildcat junior kept things rolling.

With 800 meters remaining, Manetsch switched gears and rolled to the title on the Deer Grove East course, crossing the line 17:32.

"Thankfully I found that gear today," said Manetsch who outran Barrington senior Jocelyn Long (17:38) and Lake Forest senior Brett Chody (17:39) to seal her title run. "I still feel like I'm building up speed, so I still have places to go and things left to do."

And that is good news for Libertyville and coach Bill Entyre, as the Cats' standout only seems to be getting better and better.

Last week she controlled her victory run at Libertyville Invite from start to finish. This week she had a bit of company but demonstrated a nice closing touch by holding off a hard charge by Long and Chody.

"We've been picking our spots on where we want to run fast," said Entyre, who credited Manetsch's state track finish for flipping that finishing switch. "Today was a stop where we wanted to run fast, and it was encouraging because this is where her training is, and she is only going to get better and faster as the season progresses."

Dunlap, currently the top ranked team in Class 2A in the Illinois Cross Country Coaches Poll, rolled to the team title with 77 points after placing five runners in the top 28. Barrington (147) placed second.

Lyons Township (160) nipped Vernon Hills (161) for third place, with host Palatine (175) rounding out the top five.

Long passed Chody in the final 400 meters to secure second place. Next for the Fillies was freshman Molly Fitzpatrick (17:43) in an impressive fifth-place finish.

"They are doing their job," said Barrington coach Deb Revolta of her two front-runners. "And I know the next three runners will come around. We're young and we have a lot of work to do, but it'll come together."

Long has been a fixture at the Palatine Invitational over the last four years. On Saturday she secured her fourth consecutive top-10 finish after closing with authority.

"I wanted to leave it all out on the course," said Long a two-time all-state runner. "As a team we're excited about our finish -- we just have to keep working together."

Freshman Anne Berquist (36th place), sophomore Alyssa Norris (47th place) and freshman Katherine Shein (57th) powered a young Fillies squad that had three freshman and one sophomore in their top five.

That list includes Fitzpatrick, a revelation this season as she's combined with Long to give the ninth-ranked Fillies a dominant 1-2 punch.

"My goal was not to lose sight of Jocelyn (Long)," said Fitzpatrick. "I wanted to stick with her as long as I could. I think we all are getting more comfortable."

Senior Lauren Katz (18:19) and junior Payton Makowskyj (18:37) gave Vernon Hills a nice 1-2 profile by taking 12th and 17th place.

"Times were obviously off today because of the heat," said Katz, who finished with a flurry. "But I was able to keep moving up and I felt strong at the end."

Palatine also offered a solid four-pack in racing to a fifth-place finish.

Freshman Anne Marie Jordan (18:37) led the charge by taking 16th place and was followed by junior Kate Lechowicz

(18:43), junior Liz Lechowicz (18:45) and senior Lauryn Simons (18:45) in 21st, 23rd, and 24th place.

"Our top four ran solid and were engaged throughout the race," said Palatine coach Joe Parks, whose team missed the contributions of freshman Ellie Roy; she was a scratch due to an injury. "I think if we run like we are capable of we'll be right there."

"We stayed positive and kept pushing each other today," said Kate Lechowicz. "The work we put in during the summer is definitely paying off."

Senior Isabella Sparreo (18:05) helped spur Stevenson to a sixth-place finish by passing two runners down the stretch for an individual seventh-place effort.

Sparreo won the Palatine Invitational in 2015 and finished fourth last season. She missed her junior track season but has definitely made a nice comeback this fall.

"I'm right about where I was last season," said Sparreo. "I hope to keep improving so I can be up with the top girls in state."

York junior Sarah May (18:18) also had a nice run in capturing 11th place and pacing the Dukes to a seventh-place team finish.

Libertyville senior Nora Tucker (19:05) finished 33rd and combined with Manetsch in lead the Wildcats to ninth place.

Prospect senior Mikayla Olsen (18:47) and junior Julia O'Grady (18:49) hooked up in taking 25th and 26th place as the Knights finished 10th.

"I went out way too fast," said Olsen. "I definitely felt it at the end."

Alice Abbott (18:23) has given St. Charles East a nice jolt this season, and the Saints freshman continued her impressive start by capturing 14th place on Saturday.

"I'm approaching each race as a learning experience," said Abbott. "I'm trying to figure out how to run my race. Today I was able to push through the discomfort and finish strong."

