

Yes. No. I Ran A Lot

Horner and team win state

Sophomore Paige Horner became the first girls' cross-country state champion in history. Not long before the state meet, Horner participated at Triathlon Nationals in the Netherlands. Coach Patrick Hennes talked about Horner being a key component to the team.

Going into the state meet did you think you were going to win?

Paige Horner: No.

Coach Hennes: I thought we talked about...

Both laugh

Horner: I'm so bad at this.

Did you believe that you would have a state champ going into the meet? Or Paige as the state champ?

Hennes: I certainly believed that Paige had the potential to be a state champ. If things went her way and it was the right race... I knew it was possible.

How did you prepare for this meet?

Horner: I ran... a lot.

Did you think going to Nationals in the Netherlands for a triathlon benefited your performance at state?

Horner: I think that doing triathlons before I started the cross-country season helped a lot. Cross training, I think, helps me become a better runner.

When did you start the cross-country season?

Horner: I started a week after I got back from the Netherlands.

Hennes: So it was like right in the middle of September.

Were you worried or frustrated that Paige was starting the season later?

Hennes: No, even before her freshman year, she's done a great job of getting with me in terms of what her schedule is going to be like. So we've just been able to make it work. I think the biggest, most important thing is that once she starts our cross-country season she is with us full time so that we're not having to go back and forth between training for triathlons and training for cross-country...that helps a lot.

What were your first thoughts when you crossed the finish line?

Horner: I couldn't believe that I won.

Hennes: Was it pretty exciting?

Horner: Yes.

What is it like to have Paige Horner as a state champ?

Coach Hennes: Well, she's our first individual state champion on the girl's side of cross-country and the boy's had the individual state champ last year, Patrick Bose, so it's pretty cool that in back to back years Johnston had the state individual champion for boys and the girls. I think, it's evidence of the strength of the team that we have and what Paige brings to our team and it obviously makes us a lot stronger. I think that it definitely benefits her to have the type of teammates that she has to train with, so it works out for everyone.



Leading the pack in the last part of the state meet, sophomore Paige Horner tries to stay ahead of Bailey Nock of Iowa City West who finished second. "At this point of the race I had just passed Bailey Nock," Horner said, "I was surprised that I had passed her, but I was so focused on my race that I wasn't thinking that much about it until the end." Horner placed first in the state meet with an 18:04 time. (photo by Evan Newcomb)

What motivated you while you ran at state?

Horner: My team definitely motivated me. Jessica Mckee was out front with me and that pushed me to stay with her and go up there.

What were you thinking while you ran?

Horner: I'm not really thinking. I thought that Jessica was right behind me and so I thought that we were right together and then I got up there and then I realized that Jessica wasn't there.

Did getting sixth place last year at state motivate you to get in the top three or even win?

Horner: I wasn't really planning on winning.

Hennes: Do you think it helped not having a plan to win?

Horner: I don't think it helped, but I don't think it hurt either.

Hennes: Do you think it helped to not have to feel that pressure?

Horner: Yes.

How did you prepare the team for the state meet?

Hennes: Well, we just try to focus on the things that we can control, which is our training. We don't spend a lot of time thinking about what other teams are doing. We have a general idea of who the main competition is going to be and then we try to talk about what each of us can do individually to have our best possible race.

Hennes: I think Paige is just an awesome representative of our student athletes here at Johnston. The fact that she's able to balance all of the activities that she's in along with being a student is a testament to her.



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2. Sophomore Clara Toot aims to help out the team by finishing at the Heartland meet in Ames. "I was really excited that my team won, especially because we were missing some girls," Toot said. (photo by Evan Newcomb)

3. At an Ames meet, freshman Addyson Franklin digs deep to finish. "It was a challenging race because of all the hills and different terrains it had throughout the course," Franklin said. (photo by Evan Newcomb)

4. Senior Jessica McKee feels a sigh of relief after crossing the finish line at the state meet. "It was a tough race for me having to deal with the mental blocks and not being in the place I wanted," McKee said. McKee managed to secure third place and finished in 18.31 minutes, 20 seconds slower than last year. (photo by Evan Newcomb)



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5. Keeping it moving at the Tom Karpen Invite at Valley, senior Mackenzie Laughlin fights for a varsity spot at the next meet. "My time was pretty slow at this meet because of the heat, and it's one of my least favorite courses because its so repetitive," Laughlin said. (photo by Will Burch)

6. Sophomore Paige Horner hugs the two sisters, sophomore Brooke McKee and senior Jessica McKee after they finished the state meet in Fort Dodge. In an upset of sorts, Horner won the meet. Jessica finished third and Brooke fourth. (photo by Evan Newcomb)



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7. This is it, make it count, give it everything you got, push yourself, you're almost there," junior Lindsey Batkiewicz thought to herself as she pushed to finish in the Heartland Ames race. (photo by Evan Newcomb)

8. Looking forward to at least placing in the top 15, sophomore Brooke McKee comes close to the end in fourth place. "I knew there was a girl close behind me, and I was only 50 steps from the finish line," McKee said. (photo by Evan Newcomb)



33 Fall

Pleasant Valley Spartan Challenge Score 114
Heartland Classic Score 108
Roy Griak Invitational Score 355
Fort Dodge Invite Score 40
CIML-Iowa Conference Meet Score 27
4A State Districts - Southeast Polk Score 31
IHSAA 4A State XC Championships Score 74

Suffering from strep throat, freshman Bella Heikes stays determined to reach the end with junior Lindsey Batkiewicz not too far behind her. "I was really focused on finishing strong and praying that I would have a good time," Heikes said. (photo by Evan Newcomb)

Special Instructions