

Jenks wins Metro Spotlight Award

Written by Metro Sports Report

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Linn-Mar sophomore Stephanie Jenks is this week's winner of the Metro Spotlight Award for high school girls, the Metro Sports Report announced Sunday.

Jenks is the top female distance runner in the state and a world-class athlete in the triathlon. She won the state cross country title last year as a freshman, then followed with two titles at the Drake Relays and two more titles at the state track meet.

Jenks placed second at the Pan American Triathlon Championships in Brazil this June as a member of Team USA. She also finished second at a major triathlon in Virginia and placed third at the USA Triathlon National Championships in Ohio.

Jenks is not running for the Linn-Mar cross country this year, but she is competing with the Linn-Mar swim team as she prepares for an international triathlon in London in September.

Here is our Question-&-Answer session with Jenks:

MSR: What has been your favorite individual highlight in sports?

STEPHANIE: Finishing second at the Pan American Triathlon Championship in Brazil. It was a blast swimming in the ocean and trying to communicate with others who didn't speak English on the bike. On the run it was everything you had left in the tank. After coming out of the water a minute back from the leader, the chase pack and I managed to make up some ground on the bike, but the rest of the gap was made up on the run. The last three-quarters of a mile were the

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longest three-quarters of a mile EVER! My legs were so numb, but I knew the faster I could run the faster I could finish. I closed the gap by the end of the race from one minute to seven seconds. That had to have been the best race, so far, of my triathlon career.

MSR: Who has had the biggest influence on your sports career?

STEPHANIE: My parents. They have always been there to support me and travel to my races. I can always count on them to cheer me up if I have a not-so-good race. During rough workouts my mom tries to make it fun for me and runs the last sections with me, to keep pushing me when I get tired. My parents give me every opportunity there is out there, from the little league track meets to my triathlons outside of the country. I don't know what I would do without them in my life. They are the reason I am where I am today.

MSR: What are your future goals in sports?

STEPHANIE: To run for a Division I college.

MSR: What are your favorite subjects in school?

STEPHANIE: Math and the sciences (exception earth science).

MSR: What has been your favorite community service project?

STEPHANIE: Volunteering at local races and cheering people on, and helping out with the club team at Mach II Multisport helping kids create a love for triathlon.