

Jenks runs away with MVC title

Written by Jim Ecker

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CEDAR FALLS - Stephanie Jenks likes to take naps, but she does it quickly.

That figures, because the Linn-Mar High School freshman is incredibly fast at just about everything she does.

Jenks continued to make a shambles of the high school cross country season Thursday by running away with top honors at the Mississippi Valley Conference meet at Birdsall Park in Cedar Falls.

Jenks helped the Lions win the team championship with 65 points in a tight battle with Iowa City High (75), Kennedy (77) and Iowa City West (79).

Jenks won the 4-kilometer race in 14 minutes, 10 seconds. That gave her a 10-second victory over Allison Gregg of Cedar Falls, who finished third in the state meet last year.

Jenks has been ranked No. 1 in the state for several weeks and has posted four impressive victories. She won the Cedar Rapids Invitational by 16 seconds, captured the Heartland Classic in Ames by 14 seconds, blew away the field at the Charger Classic Invitational in Aurora, Ill., by 43 seconds and now has an MVC title to her credit.

The young phenom has shown she has the talent to become a four-time state champion during her high school career, but Linn-Mar Coach Todd Goodell shied away from that idea Thursday.

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"You can't look at it that way. You have to take care of business right now," he said. "Obviously she's shown she has the potential for that, but a lot of things can happen over the years."

Her performances have been extremely impressive this season, but it's even more remarkable when you consider that she's also training and competing with the Linn-Mar swimming team this fall. That makes for some very long days.

"I wake up at 4:45 in the morning and I have swim practice at 5:30," she said. "After that I'll come home and eat a quick breakfast and I'll go straight to school. And from school I'll go straight to cross country practice."

Her day is not done at that point, however, because the swim team practices at night as well.

"I'll go home for an hour or 45 minutes or whatever after cross country practice," she said. "Then I'll go back to school, get on the bus and go down to Coe until 10 o'clock for swim practice. And then I'll go home, snack really quick and then I'll go to bed."

And don't worry about her school work. She's doing quite well in that department, too.

"I'm doing pretty well right now," she said. "I have all A's in my classes. I'm really excited about that."

"I try to get my homework done as quick as I can. High school has really taught me to be efficient with my time and not to waste much."

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