

Decker wins Metro Spotlight Award

Written by Metro Sports Report
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Linn-Mar sophomore Amber Decker is the winner of the Metro Spotlight Award for high school girls this week, the Metro Sports Report announced Sunday.

Decker is one of the premier cross country runners in the state and is ranked No.5 in Class 4A by the Iowa Track Coaches Association.

She won the state qualifying meet in Marshalltown last Thursday by one second with a strong finishing kick, passing two runners down the stretch. She also won the Valley Division title at the Mississippi Valley Conference meet, was named the Valley Division Athlete of the Year and placed second at the MVC Super Meet.

Decker fared well at the Class 4A state track meet last spring as a freshman, finishing fifth in the 800-meter run and ninth in the 400-meter dash. She also helped Linn-Mar take fifth place in the distance medley with the anchor leg.

Last fall, Decker placed ninth at the state cross country meet to help the Lions finish second in the team standings.

Here is our Question-&-Answer session with Amber Decker:

MSR: What is your favorite individual highlight in sports?

AMBER: My greatest accomplishment in track has been qualifying for five events (800, 1500, 4x800, 4x400, 800 sprint medley) for the Drake Relays as a freshman. In cross country, my greatest accomplishment was being an All-State finisher as only a freshman.

MSR: What is your favorite team highlight in sports?

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AMBER: For cross country, my favorite highlight was placing second (in the team standings) at the state meet last year and being able to stand up on the balcony with all my teammates. In track, my team highlight was placing fifth in the distance medley at the state meet and breaking the school record with my teammates.

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

AMBER: My current coaches Goodell, Hopp, Kuda, Ritchie, Hopkins and Hoffman are all very supportive of my teammates and I, and continually push us to be the best we can be. My parents have always been my main supporters and challengers. Ever since I was little they have pushed me to work hard to reach my goals. They are always the most honest with me and never let me lose sight of what I want to accomplish.

My trainer, Marek, changed my running mentality completely. The first session I had with him in the winter of my eighth grade year, I had to do a speed workout. Up to that point I was all distance and never considered being a mid-distance runner. Throughout that winter he made me into a 400 and 800 runner and built up my confidence in all aspects of my sports performances. To this day I talk to him every week and every night before a meet. My parents and I refer to him as my security blanket. My first cross country coach, Steve Pershing, was who made me fall in love with the sport.

MSR: What are your future goals in sports?

AMBER: My long-term goal in running is to be a Division I runner. From the first time I started running when I was 7, I knew I wanted to run in college. It was only until a few years ago I decided it would be at a large school. While I'm still in high school, I am going to work to become a state champion in any of my events in track (800, 400, 4x800, 4x400, 800 sprint medley, 1600 distance medley) or team state champions in cross country.

MSR: What are your favorite classes in school?

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AMBER: My favorite classes are math and history. I love history because I learn why historic events happened and how they affect my life today. I love math because every problem has one exact answer. Everything in math is black and white and there is no grey. It's the perfect subject for me because I'm a very black and white person. I have to know exactly how to do things and why.

MSR: What has been your favorite community service project?

AMBER: I am looking forward to the possibility of being a part of the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program with a few of my teammates after the season is over. I am currently looking into doing a card campaign for our local hospitals for one of my school projects.