

Gorman excels as member of 'Team Jenks'

Written by Jim Ecker

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WATERL00 - Pound for pound, inch for inch, year for year, Reagan Gorman of Cedar Rapids Washington is the best distance runner in the Mississippi Valley Conference and perhaps the best in the state.

The petite freshman finished a resounding second at the Mississippi Valley Conference Super Meet on Thursday at Byrnes Park in Waterloo by a scant six seconds behind Iowa City High junior Mary Arch.

Gorman, who measures 5-foot-2 and about 85 pounds, might have caught Arch if the 5K race had been a little longer. She was getting closer and closer as the race wound around the Irv Warren Golf Course.

It's hard to believe a 14-year-old girl who is that small could have so much strength and energy, but Gorman has been running since was about 7 years old and excels in triathlons, a grueling event that combines running, swimming and biking.

Gorman trains for the triathlon with "Team Jenks," a group of outstanding young athletes that features Linn-Mar senior Stephanie Jenks and is operated by the Jenks family. Gorman placed 31st at the national triathlon meet in Westchester, Ohio, this August in the youth elite 13-to-15 age group and is the second-highest ranked triathlete in the state in her division.

Gorman trails only Kennedy sophomore Hannah Fusselman in the state triathlon rankings, but Fusselman will be advancing to the next age group when the triathlon season resumes next spring and Gorman will stay in the

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13-15 bracket.

Fusselman placed fourth at the MVC Super Meet Thursday, giving "Team Jenks" two of the top-four finishers.

Gorman feels the triathlons make her stronger for cross country. And best of all, she enjoys the sport.



"My teammates are really nice and fun to be with," she said. "It just pays off in the long run for running and swimming and everything to get better with cross training."

Stephanie Jenks has stopped competing in triathlons to focus on distance running, but she helps with "Team Jenks" and is a role model for Gorman.

"For sure. Yup," Gorman said, smiling. "She always helps out at practices."

Stephanie Jenks was featured in a recent issue of Running Times magazine.

"We bought that," Gorman said brightly. "Multiple copies."

Gorman just turned 14 in July. She said she began school a year early, so she's basically a

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year younger than other freshmen.

Gorman is a part-time member of the Washington swimming team this fall, but her cross country races come first. She toured Byrnes Park Thursday in 18 minutes, 58 seconds compared to 18:52 for Arch.

Gorman thought she might catch Arch. "I did towards the end," she said, "but not after the straightaway."

Gorman is ranked 10th in cross country in Class 4A, making her the highest-ranked freshman in the state. Her older sister, Shannon, ran distance races for Washington a few years ago and Reagan got an early start in the sport.

Gorman began taking it seriously a long time ago. "After a mile race when I was like 7 or 8 and I did really well," she said.

She joined a running club when she was about 10 and hasn't stopped since.

Iowa City High nipped Cedar Falls, 64-77, for the team title Thursday. Linn-Mar placed third.

Maddie Mann of Linn-Mar finished fifth in the standings. Meredith Koenigsfeld of Jefferson was sixth. Jenny Dickes of Xavier finished seventh.

Gabby Skopce of Iowa City West, one of the top distance runners in the state, did not compete Thursday due to injury.

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Team standings

1. Iowa City High 64, 2. Cedar Falls 77, 3. Linn-Mar 93, 4. Iowa City West 98, 5. Hempstead 120, 6. Jefferson 206, 7. Dubuque Senior 219, 8. Wahlert 237, 9. Prairie 251, 10. Washington 258, 11. Kennedy 278, 12. Xavier 290, 13. Waterloo West 343.

Top 5 individuals

1. Mary Arch, Iowa City High 18:52
2. Reagan Gorman, Washington 18:58
3. Tia Saunders, Iowa City West 19:14
4. Hannah Fusselman, Kennedy 19:23
5. Maddie Mann, Linn-Mar 19:24

Linn-Mar - 5. Maddie Mann 19:24, 11. Morgan Garcia 19:42, 15. Amber Decker 19:50, 28. Deanna Newhouse 20:19, 34. Abby Van Rheenen 20:36, 42. Rachel Bohnenkamp 20:57, 50. Maddy Genskow 21:13.

Jefferson - 6. Meredith Koenigsfeld 19:30, 17. Sarah Hanna 19:53, 59. Adriana Hargrove 21:32, 61. Caleigh Meyer 21:39, 63. Megan Ely 21:44, 64. Makayla Belew 21:45, 70. Alex Smith 22:02.

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Prairie - 41. Cayla Renwick 20:57, 44. Victoria Enyart 21:06, 47. Avery Henderson 21:08, 52. Alissa Neubauer 21:15, 67. Kirstin Skriver 21:55, 72. Eady Forrest 22:07, 80. Meghan Brune 22:59.

Washington - 2. Reagan Gorman 18:58, 23. Sarah Altemeier 20:02, 62. Serena Eck 21:42, 84. Mekela Spence 23:26, 87. Sierra Sheets 23:55, 89. Olivia Kennedy 25:24.

Kennedy - 4. Hannah Fusselman 19:23, 56. Ali Meyer 21:25, 68. Hannah Ratzer 21:56, 71. Courtney Wampole 22:02, 79. Anna Klein 22:51, 82. Emily Manders 23:23, 86. Claire Pardubsky 23:36.

Xavier - 7. Jenny Dickes 19:31, 65. Megan Lenss 21:49, 69. Kiana Stanek 22:01, 73. Abigail Tanko 22:12, 76. Annie Sigmon 22:23, 78. Lydia Brown 22:39, 81. Emiko Coffey 23:07.