

# A RUNNER RUNS THROUGH IT

Mud, rain, sleet, rocks, streams

By: Kelli Rogers

## Go Figure

**43**  
girls on the  
team

**31**  
total miles  
raced

**2nd**  
in GMC

**9th**  
in Regional

Eat, sleep, run. What else is there? For the Girls Cross Country team, the fall season is dedicated to these three essential activities. Despite the constant flow of whispers, "There! She's the one who runs for *fun*," the girls maintain that they are sane, and that cross country is not all sweat and tears.

After a demanding week of after school practices, Friday mornings meant the cross country team arrived at school at 5:45 AM to run their 12 laps on the track, and met again on Friday nights when the girls flocked to the home of a senior for a pasta party. There they loaded up on carbs, laughed at each others jokes, and got pumped for the race on Saturday morning.

"Pasta parties are a good time just because it's a bunch of hungry girls hanging out together," said **Julie Saha, 10**. These fun group activities helped the team to bond throughout the season.

3.1 miles, 167,680 feet, 5 kilometers. No matter how you say it, a cross country race sounds intimidating. Learning to push yourself through pain, frustration, or exhaustion is never easy. So how do they do it? Each girl had her own racing quirks.

"I try to laugh a lot during my warm-up," said **Jennifer Steinhardt, 12**. The girls prepared for a race by trying to stay relaxed beforehand. Others had a certain way of thinking during a race.

"I think about how good I'll feel when I pass the girl in front of me," said **Kelly Wills, 11**. Coach Scott Popoff often urges his girls to keep in contact with an opponent from a rival team to keep them motivated.

Motivation was not a problem for senior **Amy Sanders**, who constantly led the team. The Varsity team had goals from the start of the season and everyone worked together to meet them. **Kim Sykes, 12, Kelly Wills, 11, Kelli Rogers, 11, Theresa Steinhardt, 12, April Zhang, 10, and Alison Kirgis, 9**, made up the rest of the "Top 7" Varsity runners.

After a very successful season, including placing 2nd in the GMC's, the girls competed in the toughest district in Ohio and went on to place 9th as a team in the Regional Meet in Troy. **Sanders** qualified for state as an individual with an amazing place of 15th.

To others, cross country may seem insane and unbearable, but to the 43 girls who devote their time and energy to running, it is the most fulfilling experience imaginable. The girls will not only remember their personal records and favorite meets, but the friends they made and what they learned about themselves along the way.



**Feeling the Pressure.** The Varsity girls wait for the gun at the Regional Meet in Troy. They pushed nervous thoughts away and ran their hardest. The girls placed 9th as a team.



**Fly down the hill.** Kelly Wills, 11 and Kelli Rogers, 11 used the downhill to pick up speed and gain ground at the Eaton Invitational. The sidelines of the races were constantly packed with cheering fans. "I know both Wills and Rogers will step up and take the lead next year as seniors," said **Coach Popoff**.



**Stick together.** Brittany Stephens, 10, Sami Burdett, 10, L Walsh, 10, and Victoria Biddle, 11, raced their hardest. Many girls had their personal records at the Harrison course.

## Girls Cross Country Overall Record

<b>Fairfield</b>	<b>2 of 13</b>	<b>Eaton</b>	<b>5 of 15</b>
<b>Greenville</b>	<b>2 of 24</b>	<b>GMC</b>	<b>2 of 10</b>
<b>Mason</b>	<b>3 of 16</b>	<b>Districts</b>	<b>4 of 15</b>
<b>Eaton</b>	<b>1 of 18</b>	<b>Regionals</b>	<b>9 of 20</b>
<b>Harrison</b>	<b>2 of 14</b>	<b>State*</b>	<b>10 of 145</b>
<b>Farmington</b>	<b>3 of 14</b>		<b>runners</b>

\*Amy Sanders

## Vital Statistics

**MVP**  
**Most Improved**  
**Coaches Award**

**1st Team All Conference**  
**2nd Team All Conference**

**Amy Sanders**  
**Amy Sanders**  
**Jennifer Steinhardt**  
**Amy Sanders**  
**Kelli Rogers**  
**Kim Sykes**



**Focus.** Theresa Steinhardt, 12, kept her eyes up on her competition as she raced tough hill at the Fairmont Invitational. "Kill the hill" was a motto said to motivate the girls to use the hills to their advantage.

**Left: Try and catch me.** Amy Sanders, 12, continually led the team. She placed 15th at Regionals and continued on solo to the State Meet, placing an impressive 10th.