

At Last, Warriors Are All State Champions In Cross Country

At Gardner Municipal Golf Course on Saturday, the Warriors knew everything would come down to the next 18 minutes.

The Lincoln Sudbury girls cross country team was looking to win their first state title in school history. However, with the Warriors taken a disappointing second to Dennis-Yarmouth a year ago they made a pact to bring home a victory in 2007. From that day on, the Warriors knew what the goal was for 2007: winning that elusive state championship. After five months of training, which stretched from the long, hot summer to cold, windy late fall, the seven harriers racing at Gardner were ready to prove that L-S girls cross country is the best program in the state. The girls were also searching for more recent redemption, as rival Newton South had beaten them the week before at the Class A Championships after L-S had won the previous three meetings. When the gun went off, the Warriors' pack shot out of the box, ready to tackle the hilly 2.9-mile course. There were no flat stretches, as even the start and finish were a long, gradual hill. However, the Warriors didn't let the course faze them.

The team's strength all season has been racing as a pack, and on this day the Warriors did that perfectly. Through the first mile, Andrea Keklak, Dana Jamieson, Claire Arthur, and Ellie Hylton were all together at the front of the race. Soon after them were Emily Mephram and Holly Clarke, running side by side, and then Rachael Potter, right near Newton South's 3-5 runners. The Warriors all maintained their composure. Then, on the final, uphill straight, Keklak moved by Newton South's Kelsey Karys, who, along with teammate Madeleine Reed, had beaten her the previous week. Keklak finished strong in seventh place overall in a time of 17:27. Right after her was Jamieson, who ran a gutsy race to rebound from last week and take 11th in 17:39. Arthur continued to step up, finishing just one place behind Jamieson in 17:44.

Only three seconds later, Hylton, who had been forced to miss the Class A race due to sickness, finished in 16th place. Next came Clarke and Mephram, who had run the whole race together and ended up taking 27th and 29th places, respectively, in 18:11 and 18:12. Clarke completed L-S's scoring, giving the Warriors a total of 48 points (the places of harriers who qualified for the meet as individuals aren't counted in the team totals). Potter finished her race very strongly (51st place, 18:41), passing a Newton South runner, thereby adding an extra point to the Newton South score.

Overall, the complete team effort was enough to defeat Newton South 48-103 and earn the harriers the state championship.

After the race, the whole L-S team, from the seven who raced, to their teammates who had come to cheer them on, to coach Chris Tarello, were elated.

Everything had gone perfectly, and now the Warriors could celebrate. They had accomplished their goal of winning Massachusetts All States.

This Saturday, they will try to make the season even more memorable, as they will travel to New York to race in the Nike Team Nationals Northeast Regional meet. If they place in the top two there, they'll qualify for Nike Team Nationals in Portland, Oregon.