

Abby Korak wins Granite City girls individual title, helps lead Tigers to GC team crown

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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GRANITE CITY – Edwardsville's Abby Korak came away with the win in Saturday morning's 45th Granite City Invitational cross-country meet varsity girls race at Wilson Park.

Korak won the season's first major championship, covering the three-mile course around the park and part of the GCHS campus in a 17:52.18 clocking, leading the Tigers to the girls' team championship; she was followed by Hannah Stuart (who finished fourth), Elise Krone (who took 16th), Kiara Delgado (who finished 19th) and Emiley England (who took 22nd to complete the scoring for EHS).

"I wasn't too happy with my time, but I was happy with my place," Korak, a junior, said. "I was happy that I was able to stay with the Quincy girl (Lydia Kurfman, who finished nearly 13 seconds behind Korak) and then try to break off from her in the last mile.

"It's definitely a nice meet to have; it's very local and a lot of people come here, so it's nice to get kind of an idea of how you race with big packs before you go to Peoria (for next weekend's First to the Finish race at Detweiler Park – the site of the IHSA cross-country state meet – in Peoria). It's a nice race to have."

The Granite City course is a fairly flat one without hills or valleys to run through. "I definitely love this course," Korak said. "It's nice and flat and you just fly on it; the race goes by super-fast."

Saturday's conditions were fairly humid and somewhat overcast, not atypical for the area at the end of summer. "It was a little humid, but everyone has to run in it," Korak said. "You just have to get over it; it was pretty dry – it wasn't too muddy like last week's (at Belleville West), so that was nice.

"It was a nice race; I wish I could have gotten out a little faster, but I was happy with the way I finished."

Leading the Tigers to the girls team championship was also a good thing as well. "It was really nice because the girls have been battling lots of injuries," Korak said, "so that might have played a little bit of a factor in how the girls ran."

The Tiger Fall Classic will take place at 4 p.m. Wednesday at the SIUE Mud Mountain course followed by the First to the Finish Invitational in Peoria at 9 a.m. Saturday.