

Sophomore Cross Country Runner Riley Knoyle Is iCAN Clinic Female Athlete Of Month At Edwardsville High School

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Sophomore cross country runner Riley Knoyle had a marvelous breakout season as a freshman for the Edwardsville High girls cross country team, helping the Tigers to a very successful 2019 campaign, and she followed up on it during her sophomore season with another highly successful year on the courses.

Knoyle finished in the top ten in many of her meets, and during the postseason, she excelled again. Knoyle finished third in the IHSA Class 3A regional meet at Granite City with a time of 17:19.05, followed up with a fifth-place finish in the Normal Community sectional, coming in at 18:01.37, and finished the season with a 14th place finish in the Illinois XC Championships in Chillicothe, which served as the unofficial state meet, having a time of 18:42.10.

For her accomplishments this season on the courses, Knoyle has been selected as her school's Riverbender.com female Athlete of the Month for December 2020.

Knoyle, who runs for head coach George Patrylak and assistant coaches Maggie Dust and Dustin Davis, had another great season, and her accomplishments were many.

"I placed first at the Madison County Meet," Knoyle said, "third at regionals, fifth at sectionals, and in lieu of a state meet, I placed 14th at the ShaZam Meet of Champions that was held in Chillicothe. It was a by-invitation-only meet, and both the boys and girls teams were asked to participate, which was awesome!"

Knoyle thanked her family, her coaches, and her teammates for helping her with the success she's enjoyed running for the Tigers.

"My parents, Jerry and Ann, and my brother, Carter, are my biggest cheerleaders," Knoyle said, "and I thank them for everything they do for me. They make sure I'm healthy, happy, and have my homework done. I would also like to thank my entire team. I ran mostly with the boys' team this season, and they were so helpful and looked out for me. On the days when I ran with the girls' team, it was like I was running with my sisters. I had such a fun season this year, and with the coaches allowing me to train harder with the boys, but knowing I had to bond just as much with the girls was awesome."

Knoyle has been running cross country for the past four years, since seventh grade in middle school, and being involved with the sport has helped her gain much confidence in herself.

"Running has given me confidence and mental strength," Knoyle said.

Knoyle does enjoy hanging out with her teammates as much as possible, and is also a high honor roll student. She does hope to continue running in college, but hasn't yet made a decision on where she'll go to school or what she'll major in. She has also been a multi-sport athlete but decided to give up on one of them to concentrate on cross country.

"I played softball up until August of this year," Knoyle said. "I wanted to give all of my efforts toward one sport, and as much as I love softball, I wanted to focus on running."

Knoyle was very grateful to have a complete 2020 season, given the turmoil and problems that have been created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"All of us who were able to have a season this fall feel very grateful for the opportunity to do what we love," Knoyle said. "We never took it for granted, and we were very careful to follow the guidelines set by our coaches so we could continue. Cross country is an amazing sport, and your teammates become more than just teammates, we become like family."

Riverbender.com's Athlete of the Month program is made possible by the generosity of our sponsors and the cooperation of our area high schools. This is a great accomplishment and one to be very proud of. Please join us in congratulating this young athlete. We at Riverbender.com wish you continued success in your future!