

Jersey's Ben Flowers off to sensational start in cross country

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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JERSEYVILLE – Jersey junior **Ben Flowers** has one of the strongest starts of any runner in the IHSA Class 2A qualification with three race championships and Saturday a fifth-place finish at Peoria out of 900 runners.

Flowers smashed the Jersey school record of Sam Welbourne set in 2012 of 14:59 with a time of 14:53 at Springfield for three miles.

Flowers led the Jersey boys to a 22nd place finish out of 60-plus teams in the Peoria Meet.

Jersey coach Harold Landson couldn't be happier for the start of his champion runner. Already, Flowers has broken nearly every goal set for the season, so the two will likely have to come up with some new thresholds for him to cross.

"Ben is a lot stronger this season," Landon said. "His goal was to break 15 minutes and he has already done that. We will have to reassess his goals. I think the 2A state race is up in the air. There are a handful of guys who will have a shot at placing high in that race and he will be one of those guys."

Flowers is a polite, respectful young man, who takes school and his love of running seriously. This summer, Flowers often ran twice a day with 6-mile runs in the morning and 4-mile jogs in the evening for 10 miles. He attributes some of the early season success to his expanded training regimen.

The Jersey boy said his hope is to at least place in the top 25 in Class 2A at state, but he would like a top 10 finish. He shares the goal of his coach to win the Mississippi Valley Conference team title in boys' cross country.

In the Granite City Meet with some of the best runners in Southern Illinois, Flowers literally ran away from the field, winning by at least 50 meters. Landon said Flowers' success is capturing the eyes of Division I cross country and track recruiters. He thinks Flowers is a legitimate Division I candidate. The Jersey runner was also the champion in an invitational cross-country meet at Carlinville early in the season.

He said winning the Granite City Invitational individual race was one of the biggest accomplishments in his cross-country career.

"I always wanted to win that race (the Granite City Invitational)," he said. "I am big rivals with Will O'Keefe of Granite City and it meant a lot to beat him."

Soccer H 4:15 vs. Triad, VB H 5pm v. Waterloo, Golf H v. CM & Highland 4pm. Great article on Ben Flowers on [@RiverBenderNews](#)

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