



Ben Flowers' dedication pays off with 13th-place state cross country finish

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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PEORIA – It's doubtful there is a teenager throughout the state that has the adoration for running that **Jersey junior Ben Flowers** has developed in his high school years.

Flowers trains and works harder than almost any other athlete **coach Harold Landon** has ever had in cross country and track and that diligence paid off Saturday at the state cross country meet in Peoria.

Jersey's Ben Flowers came home with IHSA Class 2A All State Cross Country honors on Saturday in Peoria, capturing 13th place overall with a time of 14:57 over the three-mile course. The top 25 at the state meet earn all-state status.

Flowers said he was satisfied about his performance at the cross country state meet.

"I feel good about my finish," Flowers said after the race. "I am now looking forward to track. I am going to work and train hard for next year's cross country season and try to finish even higher."

Coach Landon said he was "very proud" of Flowers for his state finish.

"Ben had a phenomenal year," Landon said. "There were only two races he didn't win this year, this race and the First To Finish Race in Peoria. He is the third all-state cross country runner I have had here at Jersey. Ryan Todd and Sam Welbourne were the other two."

Junior Jake Aho of Grayslake won the Class 2A individual race with a time of 14:25. There were eight sophomores and juniors who finished ahead of Flowers, which gives him an outstanding chance of finishing in the top 10 next year. Senior rival Heath Warren of Springfield was 19th with a time of 15:06.

Landon said last year as a sophomore, Ben Flowers was 62nd in state with a time of 15:38, so he improved dramatically this year.

"Ben is just a great kid," Landon said. "I am glad I have him here at Jersey for another year."