

THEY GO WAY BACK

Let us tell you...

"Abigayle and I do our handshake before every race. We made it in 8th grade and have done it ever since." - **Ady Hannon ('27)**

Photo by Allison Dressler.



ONE MORE TO GO

Ending the first lap of the STMA Invitational, **Reese Cleveland ('28)** continues to use her momentum. Cleveland ran a solid race, running a 20:48. She said, "A good race to me is when I feel great and determined. When I am having an off day, I still show up to support my teammates and continue to push through." She placed 28th out of 80 girls.

Photo by Maddie Stern.



THROUGH IT ALL

Finishing up the race on the home course at the STMA Invitational, **Annabelle Vossen ('29)** pushes on. Vossen placed 17th out of 80 girls, and the team took home 1st. The team improved greatly from last year, where they took 3rd at the Invitational. Vossen said, "I think we have improved because we practice a lot harder this year. We are taking it a lot more seriously and it has made us so much better." Photo by Maddie Stern.



MORE THAN MILES

After the Roy Griak Invitational Meet, Senior Captains **Hailey Steffensmeier ('26)** and **Alice Harmoning ('26)** share a tight hug. Harmoning said, "I felt really happy because our hardest race was over, and I knew I could not have done it without her there to push me."

Steffensmeier added, "I told Alice that morning that we are running sub 22 (minutes) and she crushed it! She made her last year's time look like a joke, and I was so proud of her for doing it." As the only two seniors on this varsity team, they made great contributions to the second place victory at Griak. Harmoning placed 183rd and Steffensmeier placed 215th.

Photo by Maiya Slusarczyk.



Bedazzled spikes bring on personal bests

LET US TELL YOU

5 Personal Bests

2 Out of 18 Teams

5 Runners in the top 30

8 Pairs of Bedazzled Spikes

SPEED WITH SPARKLES

Days before the Lake Conference Championships, the team got together to bedazzle their spikes with rhinestones. The girls had a fantastic race, taking home second place.



TEAM EFFORT

At the Roy Griak Invitational, **Delanie Brand ('28)** and **Sophie Miller ('29)** run side by side. This meet was significant to the team as it was a preview for the state meet. Brand shared, "We prepared and trained way harder for this year. Coach Strait kept telling us that it was a team race." The team placed 4th overall out of 43 teams. Miller took home 66th and Brand placed 76th out of 396 girls.

Photo by Maiya Slusarczyk.



UNMATCHED ENERGY

At the beginning of the STMA Invitational, **Abigayle Vossen ('27)** is all smiles. Vossen kept her strong pace and finished 4th out of 80 girls. Vossen said, "My legs felt great and I knew it was going to be a great race. I was happy to see so many familiar faces cheering me on at our home course." Photo by Maddie Stern.

EVERY MILE COUNTS

Girls varsity cross country earns it all

Tension filled the air as the team's whole season leads up to this moment.

Hundreds of girls lined up at the start line ready to run their last meet. With the strongest team they have had in years, the girls' hard work and resilience were going to be put to the test at the MSHSL Class AAA State Championships. Every first place, every personal best, and every medal didn't matter to them anymore. What did matter were the hours they put in to earn their way to the top. The team started training in June, and ran about 150 miles before the season even started. They got up 5 days a week and ran an average of 5 miles a day. The team had high expectations for this season, and they needed to train to the best of their ability to reach their goal of placing in the top 3 at state. Captain **Alice Harmoning ('26)** said,

"Summer training is definitely one of the most important parts of cross country. This past summer we upped our mileage and did more workouts than we've done in the past. Summer training can feel repetitive but it makes everyone very excited to race come fall." The season came, and the team delivered. Their diligence earned them a podium victory at almost every meet. Each girl earned several personal bests throughout the season, and the team as a whole continued to improve. But most importantly, they didn't let the success get to their head. They continued to train and push each other every day until the day they had been focused on all year. The thousands of miles the team had run came down to only 3.1 miles. They were more focused than ever. **Abigayle**

Vossen ('27) said, "Before the race we were all super nervous, but very excited and motivated knowing that we had a great opportunity to finish in the top 3." When the starting gun fired, the girls took off. Each girl gave it their all against the best competition in Minnesota.

Adelyn Hannon ('27) explained, "During the race, I was focusing on not letting Forest Lake and Edina runners pass me. I was thinking about all my teammates and not letting them down." The final stretch had finally arrived, and it came down to the wire. First place had already been claimed, and the next 3 teams were battling for second. For all 3 teams, 4 out of their 5 runners had finished and were anxiously waiting for their 5th runner to cross the finish line in order to earn second place. STMA's 5th runner, **Annabelle Vossen ('29)**, passed numerous girls and charged through the finish line. Vossen said, "All I was thinking was that I had to do this for my team. I thought about how it was for the team and not me individually." Her grit was enough for the girls to win second place overall out of the top 16 teams in the state. Cheering on this cross country team has been nothing short of easy for the fans. Even though they were awarded medals, they don't get credit for the blood, sweat, and tears they put in behind the scenes. The girls have proved themselves meet after meet and that is no coincidence. This talented group pushed each other to their limits, and it paid off.

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