

Junior Cross Country Runner Janelynn Wirth is Heintz/Bankhead Female Athlete of the Month for Roxana High School

by Chris Rhodes, Reporter
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ROXANA - Janelynn Wirth, a junior cross country runner, is the September Female Athlete of the Month for Roxana High School.

Wirth's coach is Scott Edwards. She has been running cross country since 8th grade and what she likes most about the sport has to be the overwhelming feeling of

accomplishment, relief, and excitement she gets after running a race or even a simple run. It is sometimes referred to as a runner high.

"Something special happens mentally and physically when you see your hard work paying off," Wirth said.

She would like to thank her mom for the way that she offers her much support and keeps her motivated to keep trying her best. She also couldn't have made it through my high school summer miles without her friend, Jarett. He was there to keep her accountable and run every one of them with her very early in the morning. Lastly, she would like to thank her heavenly father. He has blessed her in all areas of her life and her ability to run is only one of them. His purpose for that goes beyond my recognition, but his.

Some of her accomplishments have been a very competitive start to this year's cross country season including new personal records and good academics.

Some of her hobbies are school and homework, "but this year I am one of the leaders for our school's FCA group and attend a youth group at my church on Wednesday nights. I bike, swim or workout, too either for fun or cross-training when I have free time," Wirth said.

"Being a runner on our high school cross country team has taught me to get out of my comfort zone. Cross country runners make up a truly special kind of breed you don't always see in other sports. Running has taught me self discipline, responsibility, time management, empathy for others, and has become a rock for me to go to when I need to find happiness," Wirth said.

"I have not fully decided on running in college yet. I would say it depends on the rest of this year in cross country and track along with any offers I may receive. Either way, I would be happy continuing to run in a running club or running on my own to make time for school, work, and a job. I have thought about attending SIUE or the University of Illinois for the fields I am interested in."

She is thinking about majoring in space engineering or biology in college. Some of her classroom accomplishments are she is a member of the National Honors Society and she is currently maintaining rank in the top 5 of her class.

She also runs track & field for the distance races such as the 3200m, 1600m, 800m, 4x800m and 4x400m for Roxana High School.

"Behind the scenes, yes running isn't always fun. While it's what makes some days it can be what drags down others. Maybe you could say it's similar to a love-hate

relationship. The point behind my message is to remind any runners or anyone who wants to start running to be patient and persistent with it. You will have bad days, but you will have even greater ones soon. Don't accept defeat. Your body will take you a lot longer than your mind will let you think. Anyone can run down a hill, but not everyone can run to the top and that's usually where a trophy is. So, delight in difficulties "For when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Cor. 12:10)." Wirth said.

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