

Elena Rybak Continues To Emerge As Distance Standout, Is A Byron, Carlson, Petri and Kalb Female Athlete Of Month

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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MARYVILLE - Father McGivney Catholic cross country and track runner Elena Rybak has captivated observers in her three years in a Griffins' uniform. She has won two 1,600-meter state outdoor track and field titles as a freshman and sophomore.

Her most recent triumph was in the Madison County Small Schools Championship with a blazing time of 18:10.4 at Granite City on Oct. 3. On Tuesday, she will run for the conference championship at Father McGivney Catholic. On Sept. 9, Elena flew to a time

of 17:28.3 for second place in the First To the Finish Invite. Her other efforts were 17:35.4 in the Mascoutah Kickoff, 17:48.5 in the Massac County Patriot Invite and 18:17.7 in the Freeburg Invite.

Elena is a Byron, Carlson, Petri and Kalb Female Athlete of the Month for Father McGivney Catholic.

She won the 1,600 this past spring at Charleston in 5:03.07, three seconds ahead of the next finisher.

This cross country season, Elena has shown her strength mentally and physically, her head coach Jim Helton said. Helton believes the sky is the limit for Elena and all of the Griffins' female and male runners. The coach said Elena works exceptionally hard in practice and always pushes herself in meets.

Elena and another McGivney star Kaitlyn Hatley run together not only in practice but also in meets. The two ran near each other for some of the Madison County Invite at Granite City. Each girl constantly pushes the other and both have said they would not be as good as they are without the other.

Elena seems to be in top form as the conference championship is here and the post-season is right around the corner.

For anyone who loves cross country and track and field and hasn't witnessed Rybak in a race, they should. She is definitely one of the best overall female distance runners to come around this region in many years. Elena Rybak will leave a lasting impact in both cross country and indoor track and field.

Elena has said her parents helped her get into running and have always been supportive along with her teammates, coaches, and trainers.

Congratulations on Elena as a Byron, Carlson, Petri and Kalb, Female Athlete of the Month for the Griffins.