

Featured Runner – May, 2009

Patrick Smith

Editor's note: Patrick ran his first road race at the 2003 Frostbite 5K. Since that time he has become a familiar face at WCC races, competing in a total of 28 races over the past six seasons. He was the WCC 12 & Under Age Group winner in 2004. In 2005, he set the current WCC record for the most points earned by a 13-15 Age Group winner. He ran every race in 2005 and earned the WCC Most Improved Runner award. He repeated as the 13-15 Age Group winner in 2007.

Our featured runner this month is Northeastern High School athlete Patrick Smith. Pat spends his time on the track team these days. He also fills a strong position on the NHS cross-country team in the fall. Pat recently took some time out of his busy schedule to provide his thoughts & insights as a young runner.

When did you decide to take up running? Did anyone offer their encouragement or inspire you to get started?

I started running in 2003. It was the beginning of my 6th grade year. I showed up to cross country practice and ever since it's been a passion of mine. Once I started running I was shocked by how supportive people were, especially at the WCC races. It made it a lot more fun getting started as a runner and made me want to come back.

How many miles do you try to run each week? Do you have a favorite place to run?

Currently I am running 25-30 miles a week and it varies a lot depending on when meets are. I really like running the trails at Whitewater State Park when I have cross country meets against Union County. I also enjoy running the Cardinal Greenway Trail and occasionally at Glen Miller Park.

Besides athletics, what motivates you to run?

I like staying in shape. Running is also a good way to kill some time and relax.

As a high school athlete, you are prohibited from running area road races by your coaches and the IHSAA during track & cross country seasons. Do you have a favorite track or cross country course that you really enjoy? Why?

I really like Randolph Southern's cross country course. I like it because it's flat, fast, and way short. Of course there is also Hagerstown, which depending on what kind of shape you are in can be great or awful, and Richmond's course at Earlham is a good course as well.

Do you have a favorite road race overall? What's your favorite WCC race & why?

I like the Frostbite. There is always a lot of competition there and that makes it a fun experience.

What's the best & worst thing about running for you? Any really memorable running experiences that you wish to share?

My favorite thing about running is the people. The running community in Wayne County is second to none. I have met hundreds of people and they have all been supportive from the start.

The most memorable moment was when I was in 7th grade. I was in 7th place at the Tri High Cross Country Invitational and I was trying to out sprint a kid that was at least a foot and half taller than me and we were neck and neck to the end. Unfortunately the chute was very narrow and we both got there at the same time and I bent the steel pipe holding the chute with my hip and went flying onto the cinders. Besides the fact that I was in extreme pain, the thing I was most upset about was that I didn't get the spot. (I think I beat him.) But it was still a lot of fun because we won the invitational anyway.

What are your long & short term goals as a high school athlete/runner?

I want to be an all conference cross country runner. Last year I had a bad race at conference, but I feel like I have the talent and desire to do it.

I would also like to run a sub 5 minute mile in track.

Someday I would like to run a marathon and once I'm out of high school I hope to achieve this goal.

What advice might you offer to another young, beginning runner?

Don't give up. Running is a sport that if you put in the miles you will see results . . . and it's going to hurt . . . but with time you'll meet a lot of people who can help you along and give you tips that will help you improve.

Congratulations, Pat, on a successful high school career thus far. We look forward to having you join us in the WCC events whenever possible. Stay Healthy!!!

This interview was conducted by Dale Bolser for the WCC.