

One in a *Ver* Million

Meet Madisen Lavin

By David Lias

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Madisen Lavin placed second in a weekend of firsts for her, and for the Vermillion community.

Running in her first ever State "A" cross country meet in Huron last Saturday, she came oh-so-close to claiming the championship among the female participants.

Madisen, the 12-year-old daughter of Carol and Matt Lavin of Vermillion, placed second, with a time of 15:23. The champion, Emily Hawkes, a sophomore from Madison, claimed the title by crossing the finish line just a bit over two seconds ahead of the Vermillion seventh-grader.

"This is my first year running it (cross country)," she said. "My best time was a 15:04, so, it wasn't my best time. I have run faster, but I was really happy with my time, considering there were more hills and it was windier than I thought it would be."

Madisen decided to become involved in Vermillion Tanager cross country this year because she enjoys competing in long races.

"I've always like doing 5Ks, like the Susan G. Komen and the Megan O'Connor (Memorial Scholarship Run)," she said. "I thought, 'well, heck, if that's 3 miles, then I can do 2.5,' and hopefully see if I could get good times in doing that."

"I really didn't expect what I had done ... I didn't think I would be

this fast, and I really didn't think I would make it to state," Madisen said.

Her cross-country training regimen includes a running Monday thru Friday. VHS Cross Country Coach Kelly Fischbach also had team members run one day during the weekends this season.

"I would do hill workouts during the weekends," she said. "We started training before school started."

The discipline and hard work involved in distance training may seem like drudgery to most people. Madisen has discovered she loves the sport.

"Football players have passion for football, and I have passion for running and swimming," she said. "It just feels good to be able to run. You have an adrenaline rush before they fire the gun, and you have a mental image of what you want your time to be, and how you are going to run it."

"Even though it was

my first year, I knew how my breathing should be - if I should be able to breathe through my nose or not while I'm running, if my lungs were hurting. You could hear your footsteps," Madisen said.

She likes being part of the Tanager cross country team. She also likes the individual responsibility inherent in the sport.

"It's nice, because you kind of have to depend on how your team does, but for the most part, it depends upon you ... how well you do affects how well your team does, so you really want to do well for your team and for your town," Madisen said.

The most nerve-racking time of Saturday's state meet for Madisen came after she crossed the finish line.

"I kept thinking to myself, 'what if I get disqualified for this, or what if I get disqualified for that? What if I didn't end up getting the place that I did because they disqualified me?' I was

really nervous," she said, laughing softly. "And then, they announced my name at the awards, and I was 'oh, I actually did get second,' and it was a relief."

Madisen is also a member of the Vermillion Area Swim Team. She's managed to make it to the pool a few times this fall.

Now that this year's cross country season has ended, she'll plunge fully into swimming, while still focusing on running for just a bit longer this fall.

"I'll be going hard at swimming now, and hopefully will be able to compete in the Nike meet in two weeks in Sioux Falls for cross country," Madisen said. "I might not be running as much, so I might not be having as good of a time as I would like, but I would just like to do something (in running) afterwards - something bigger to compete against more people, so it's not just South Dakota."



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