

SENIOR DANIELLA SANTOS RACES TO THE GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY STATE MEET THIS WEEKEND.

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Cross Country is a mentally and physically challenging sport. No course is exactly the same, and new obstacles to endure. Daniella Santos, a senior on the girls cross country team has taken on this challenge time and time again.

Over the years Santos has accomplished many things in the world of cross country. Some of her most notable accomplishments have been two cross country state appearances, 2nd and 8th in regionals, two district championships and two OCC championships; Daniella is ready to race to her last postseason. So far in the tournament, Daniella won the Ohio Capital Conference championship with a record time of 17:40.5, the Division 1 Central District championship with a time of 18:04 and the Regional meet with a time of 17:48.

After winning Districts and Regionals she is now ready to take on the State meet. Girls Cross Country States will be held this weekend at the National Trail Raceway in Hebron, Ohio.

Now that the postseason is up and running, any meet could be her last. Daniella feels prepared to run at states.

"I am following my training schedule, just doing the same things I have always done and make sure I am well rested for the postseason," Santos said.

With all of her accomplishments, Daniella reflected on everything she has achieved,

"I'm most proud of the work I have put in throughout the years and how much it has paid off and how much I have been able to test myself," Santos said.

With Cross Country starting in the summer they spend more time together than a winter and spring team usually would. As a result, a tight bond is built between the runners. In addition, the team practiced Monday through Thursday after school until 5 and Friday 5:30 am to 6:45 am. Overall, that is a good amount of time spent as a team. Daniella says she will miss the family that has been built with her coaches and teammates.

"I will miss my coaches probably the most. I will also miss my teammates and being able to hang out with them every day," Santos states.

As said, cross country takes a lot of time and with school, a job, a KAP class, and friends, it can be a lot, Daniella manages it all by taking time after practice to make sure homework is completed, "I go to practice and then I go to the library or Starbucks with teammates and do homework," Santos said.

With all the time that she has put into cross country, it has been a huge part of her life and she plans to continue her career.

"I plan to run in college I am looking at a few schools but I am not sure where I am going yet," she said.

Darby Girls Cross Country Assistant Coach Joe Jackson has coached Daniella for most of her high school career. He as a coach has implemented routines, and practice workouts to help her succeed for the final meets of her career.

"We really tailor her training to challenge her and to grow her strengths as well. Training wise at this point in the season we aren't really challenging her too much. We still are pushing her in longer intervals like 1000m and longer repeats as well as 9+ mile long runs" Jackson said.

He also believes Daniella can go past the regular postseason "We have hopes that Daniella will run the state meet as well as two other postseason races to attempt to qualify for nationals," Jackson said.

As Daniella wraps up her final races as a Darby cross country runner she gave advice to other runners.

"Follow the coach's training schedule that will benefit the most if you aren't fully doing the training you aren't going to get the full benefits of it," Santos said. "When going into races don't be so overworked or think people are faster than you. You work hard to push yourself to complete."

With the state meet only days away Daniella will be making sure she is well-rested and ready to race. She will complete on Saturday at 12:30 pm with 44 other runners at the National Trail Raceway in Hebron, Ohio.

