

COACHING A NATIONAL CHAMPION

Sophomore Anna Rohrer, Mishawaka HS

Coach Chris Kowalewski "Kov"

2012 SEASON ACCOMPLISHMENTS – all in her first FULL season of XC!

- Footlocker National Champion, 17:34 (3rd in Indiana history, 2nd female)
- Midwest Champion, CR 16:54
- State Champion, CR 17:13
- Indiana record fastest 5K Footlocker Midwest
- First Indiana runner to break 17:00 5K

PRE-EXISTING "it" FACTORS

- Amazing cardio system, former swimmer. Loves to bike and NEVER goes easy when biking (lots of crashes). Ran state 3200 with huge road rash on her quad from bike crash 4 days before.
- Pain tolerance very high (see crashes, ran on broken foot freshman year)
- LOVES to compete, WANTS to run against the best and looks forward to it. "Bring it on!"
- Great student and willing to work hard (4.5 GPA)
- Coachable – trusts me and the training.
- Humble – last season taught her to love EVERYDAY she can run. "I'm just a girl who loves running"
- Well-rounded: plays piccolo in marching band, flute in symphonic and jazz band, photography in 4-H, cake decorating, and scrapbooking. Member of Youth Leadership Council in South/Mishawaka. Heavily involved in church and youth group.
- Amazing, supportive family: two older brothers (non-runners). Mom works MHS, communication several times a week if issues.

PRE-SEASON

- Knew great season ahead, but how good?
- Forced herself to run with the boys in June
- Summer: 5 x week, 260miles, 8wks = 32.5 avg
- Won two 10Ks: Rob Melton Memorial 1st overall/44:06 on VERY hilly course ("She had to cheat" from the men)
- Steve's Run 10K 39:04 "she can be top 10 at state"
- My plan entering season: **DON'T SCREW IT UP!!!!!!**
- Winning does NOT happen within a vacuum: parents, teammates, assistant coaches, fellow coaches (Fletcher, Chastain, Beres, Wetzel, Miller). **If you don't know or doubt - ASK!! THERE ARE NO SECRETS!!!**

BONUS FACTORS FOR 2012

- Injury & not being able to run from 4+ months = lit a fire of desire and motivation to run again...and to be GREAT!!
- Coach: Success of boys team 'we have something that is working' belief and trust in the system.
- Ferritin/iron levels. Anna not anemic, but very low in 2011
- Wonderful, supportive team that's full of Anna's best friends. Girls' team just missed going to state for first time in school history. Not all about Anna. **Team first.**
- Boys' team accepted and encouraged Anna on runs. Not a 'threat' but a training partner all working together toward state.

GENERAL WEEKLY PLAN: AUG - OCT

- Running limited 5 x week running to help prevent injuries
- Bike 30 mins Mon & Wed AM. After school Fridays 30min (AM run Fridays)
- 60-90 min ride on Sundays.
 - Mondays: long run 8 – 9m. Kept all season long “Tiger Mondays”
 - Tuesdays: Thresholds 4-8x 1K, 150s after
 - Wednesdays: pool 60 min swim or aqua jog
 - Thursday: Tempo 8K (2x4K) 200s or 100s after
 - Friday: AM Easy 4m/PM team visualization “Focus Fridays”
 - Saturday: Race or hills
- **NEVER just go for a run** – core/strength/flex 10-20 min *before/after*. Tabatas 1-2 x week

WEEKLY MILES – plan was 35-40 all season.

Week 1 = 45.5 dunes camp

Week 2 = 36

Week 3 = 37.5 Viking Stampede, MI 17:46

Week 4 = 36.5 Penn Hokum Karem 16:48 3m

Week 5 = 34

Week 6 = 37.5

Week 7 = 39 New Prairie 17:14

Week 8 = 39 Culver 17:32

Week 9 = 41 NIC 17:38

Week 10 = 41.5

Week 11 = 40.5 Sectional/Regional 17:33/17:24

Week 12 = 44 Semi-State 17:03

Week 13 = 47.5 State 17:13, ran on Sunday “b/c she could”

Week 14 = 43

Week 15 = 49 “too much”

Week 16 = 43.5 almost dropped FL

Week 17 = 42.5 Midwest 16:54

Week 18 = 40

Week 19 = 38 17:34 FL Nationals

FRESHMAN YEAR

- LAST RACE NEW PRAIRIE 19:14 ran with 4 stress fractures and one break in foot.
- Weak core: big torso rotation, weak hips/glutes, straighten knee
- Forefoot strike out in front & cross body, massive overstride “how does she do that?”
- **low ferritin levels
- Gait analysis with Dr. Stephen Simons. Focus on ‘working on the little things’ to get stronger.

FIRST RACE OF THE SEASON, VIKING STAMPEDE 17:46

- We have something special here” ***DON’T SCREW IT UP!!!***
- Pre-race expectation was 18:30s
- Favorite memory of the season. Start of a wonderful journey and expectations were so open.
- Mom: “Is that a good time?”
- Stay on the plan, don’t panic = 5xweek, limit miles & VO2 workouts
- **Train Anna as a 15yr old sophomore in her first full season of XC first, NOT as a 17:00 5K runner.** Had footlocker talk with mom. “dream big but focus on the present”

New Prairie 17:14

- “See what you can do”
- Her plan, her race, Anna deserves all the credit. I told her to hang back first K because I was afraid of her blowing up at 3-4K. (Padgett vs Fout 2007, blew up, took rest of season to recover)
- “Be ready to be talked about, *a lot*”
- Was excited but acted just like it was another race = very grounded. “Record? Really?”

- Now she BELIEVES she can win state...Me: DON'T SCREW IT UP!!

CULVER, 17:34 2ND

- Pressed a little too early
- First comments after race: "I need to be ready for that move, let's work on that."
- She didn't feel like she ran according to her instincts, but more as a reaction to Erba's move, which didn't work.
- Felt loss was good, always humble, but served as a reminder. Fired up.
- Stay on the plan, no panic...including coach.
- Still no VO2max workouts = thresholds and tempos during the week.

STATE, 17:13 CR

- "I FELT GREAT!"
- ~ 3k, well this is where I lose...wait, not today!" "was like a prize fight, surges back and forth...it was awesome!"
- 17:03 CR/SR week before came her tremendous confidence.
- All business, didn't see/talk to Anna 20+ mins after race b/c she went straight on cooldown.
- Key workout: Combo = fast 400, 2xK threshold, 2x VO2, 2X threshold with all out last 300 meters on last K = mimic state race how we think it will go.

ROAD TO FOOTLOCKER MIDWEST

- **LONG** 4 WEEKS after State.
- Chose not to do NXN due to concerns of back to back weekends on west coast. SCHOOL is still #1 concern. One step at a time, remember only a sophomore. Plus we HATE the drive to Terre Haute and race is on Sunday = late night with school next day. Footlocker = individuals, NXN = teams.
- It WAS a lot harder to train for FL Midwest than we thought. Lack of TEAM and racing to break up the weekends.
- Serious talk about ending season 2 weeks out. Pressure, school, not 'loving' running...the grind.
- Decided to run but serious talk of ending season after Midwest no matter what happens.

FOOTLOCKER MIDWEST 16:54 CR

- As soon as Anna saw the course and jogged it... 'fire' is back. "If I make it to nationals, might as well go, made it this far." Plus it's San Diego in December!!!
- Excited to be in a 'pack' for a race.
- Went no under armor, hat, gloves at last min = made her "feel tough".
- Made move at 2m (10:50) because no one was going, so might as well. It was the plan, but still surprised no one came along her.
- Felt "easy", "fresh" did not 'strain' herself.

ROAD TO NATIONALS – TWO WEEKS OUT (week after Midwest)

- A LOT of attention at school, could feel the pressure, Anna handles it very well.
- Monday: 9.3 mile long run on hilly roads, solo (did not like); 6:45-7:05 pace
- Tuesday: 6x1K threshold starting every 4:45. Goal of 3:35, actual 3:31-34.
 - Bit of emotional breakdown b/c no-one showing up to run. It's NOT easy at the top and can be lonely. Misses the TEAM part of training.
- Wednesday: X-Train day, 30 min swim/jog without vest, 30 min stationary bike.
- Thursday: (last VO2max workout, 9 days out) Fartleks 6x2:30on/2:00off on grass. She turned toward hill on every 'on'. 8.5m. Her favorite workout.
 - Ran barefoot, risky, but she loves it and BELIEVES it makes her faster.

- Ran with top varsity boy, 4 girls showed to cheer, run = felt like a regular TEAM practice
- Friday: 6am at home. 5m easy (dad on bike) After school: 3 x Tabata: pushups, V-ups, Mt. climbers, 1 min max burpees to start = toughness
- Saturday: 9 miles at Potato Creek hilly nature trail. “Kenyan Tempo” faster every mile after 3m. Finished last 2 miles sub 6:00

FOOTLOCKER, 17:34 NATIONAL CHAMPION

- VERY little contact with Anna after arrival at hotel. Out of your control – it’s Footlocker’s show, don’t get in the way. But they are VERY supportive
- View, jog course on Friday. Surprised at # of road crossings. For all the hype of Balboa, I think NP, State, Oxbow better courses, more XC.
- Quick talk about strategy Friday on the beach. Stay in lead pack. Move before 2nd time up big hill ~ 3200. Do what feels right, trust your talent, and be ready for anything. My job is DONE – don’t over coach!
- Felt confident night before after seeing course. Believed she could win. Biggest competition from her own teammates (Midwest) who she beat 2 weeks before.
- **Fell at 1:48 mark** = mad at fall, got her fired up. NEVER doubted herself. (was ready for “anything”) Wasted a bit of energy getting back to pack. Skinned, bruised knee.
- 1 mile = 5:18, her PR! Made move at 10:40 “felt right” 2 mile = 11:10 PR coming into season was 11:11@state. Her Midwest teammates most of lead pack. Felt like a “TEAM” made her comfortable.
- Gator died b/c they forgot to charge it the night before...really?!

WHERE FROM HERE?

- Limit indoors. Don’t get caught up in Invites/National Races pre-season or during.
- **Want to be talking about Anna’s CAREER, not just a season.**
- 5-10 miles per week increase next couple years. Cap at 60. Some girls at FL were at 100!
- Realize there will be ‘bumps’ in the training. Can’t be perfect all the time.

ADJUSTMENTS – suggestions from Anna

- Less exercise on Sundays.
- Mix up workouts: timed fartleks vs set distance.
- Recovery food right after practice or at practice.
- Have more runners to train with during post-season after team is done.
- Less stress on diet restrictions (sweets)

KEEP SAME

- Foam roll after every practice.
- Cross-train in the morning.
- Core x 2 + week.