

# The 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Girls Cross Country State Finals

## November 1, 2003 / Indiana University CC Course, Bloomington

### **Valparaiso Girls, FW Concordia's McKaig Capture State Championships**

Valparaiso had two runners place in the top 12 overall and Fort Wayne Concordia Lutheran senior Alissa McKaig crossed the finish line first to capture honors at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual IHSAA Girls Cross Country State Finals Meet at the Indiana University Cross Country Course in Bloomington.

Senior Racheal Marchand finished fourth (14:14.0) and freshman Lauren Hardesty placed 12<sup>th</sup> (14:41.6) to lead Valparaiso to its second consecutive state championship and its fourth in five years under coach Karen DeVries. The Vikings totaled 78 points in the meet which was contested under overcast skies and temperatures in the mid-60s but parts of the course were muddied due to overnight rain. Also scoring for the defending state champs were senior Julie Martz in 23<sup>rd</sup> (15:02.2), freshman Amanda Hardesty in 30<sup>th</sup> (15:15.9) and junior Erica Johnson in 44<sup>th</sup> (15:26.2).

The Vikings outdistanced Duneland Conference rival Chesterton (120 points) for the top spot as the Trojans placed three runners in the top 20 overall, including senior Cassie Peller in 10<sup>th</sup> and sophomore Mary Ballinger in 11<sup>th</sup>. Chesterton had placed third in the state meet a year ago. Rounding out the top five teams were Lawrence North with 136, last year's state runner-up Northridge with 143 and DeKalb at 146.

McKaig outdueled defending state champion Katie Harrington of Carmel over the 4,000 meter course to capture the individual state championship. McKaig, who placed 15<sup>th</sup> a year ago, turned in a time of 14:06.9 this time to become her school's first cross country state champ. Harrington, also a senior, crossed the line in 14:09.4. Junior Rachel Stichter of Wawasee was third in 14:13.4 followed by Marchand and Plainfield senior Laura Geswein in fifth in 14:18.1.

---

### **Concordia Lutheran's Alissa McKaig Named Mental Attitude Award Winner**

After capturing the individual state championship, Alissa McKaig of Concordia Lutheran High School was named the recipient of the Mental Attitude Award by the IHSAA Executive Committee.

The award goes to the senior in the state finals meet who best demonstrates mental attitude, scholarship, leadership and athletic ability during the four years of high school.

Outside of athletics, McKaig is a leader in her school's Koinonia Group, a student-led, staff supported student mentoring program. She is also active in the Key Club and National Honor Society and also serves as a Sunday School teacher for four-year-olds.

Academically, she ranks at the very top of her class of 186 students with a 4.08 GPA and was selected Academic All-State earlier this year. She is undecided on her college choice.

She never lost a cross country race this season and finished All-State for the third consecutive year. She has run track and field the previous three years and also participated in soccer and swimming as a freshman and sophomore.

She is the daughter of Edward and Cynthia McKaig of New Haven.

Farm Bureau Insurance, the IHSAA's corporate partner, presented a \$1,000 scholarship to Concordia Lutheran High School in the name of McKaig.