

Indiana High School Athletic Association, Inc.

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Blake Ress, Commissioner

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WESTFIELD GIRLS, CULVER'S BANFICH WIN THIRD CONSECUTIVE TITLES

The 2007 girls state cross country meet was run 1,000 meters further than in years past, but the state champions from the previous two years maintained their stranglehold on the top spots.

Culver Academies senior Alex Banfich won the first-ever 5,000 meter state finals race for girls finishing in 18:21.8. It was her third consecutive state title and she becomes just the second girl to accomplish that feat joining Kankakee Valley's Celeste Susnis who won in 1987, 1988 and 1989. Courtney Adams of Brebeuf also won three individual crowns in 1992, 1993 and 1995.

Banfich distanced herself from the pack in the first 2,000 meters of the LaVern Gibson Championship Cross Country Course in Terre Haute and was never threatened after that. Junior Megan Ranegar of Valparaiso took runner-up honors in 18:38.2 and Avon senior Lorna Whaley placed third in 18:46.2. Westfield senior Maggie Bingham was fourth (18:48.0) and Carroll (Fort Wayne) frosh Brianna Johnson rounded out the top five (18:48.1).

In the team competition, Westfield outdistanced Lake Central for the top spot accumulating 81 points to the Indians' 114. Carroll placed third as a team with 119 points; Carmel was fourth with 146 and Bloomington North was fifth with 205. It was the Shamrock's fourth girls cross country title to go along with their 1998 championship. Scott Lidskin has been their coach for each.

Besides Bingham's fourth place finish, others scoring points for Westfield were junior Kaitlyn Love who finished eighth overall (18:57.2); freshman Waverly Neer in 23rd (19:24.5); senior Breanne Ehrman in 40th (19:53.0) and; sophomore Alex Holland in 48th (20:00.4).

Rachel Zajac was Lake Central's top runner finishing 13th overall in 19:09.4.

BANFICH NAMED MENTAL ATTITUDE AWARD WINNER

Following the state finals, Culver Academies' Alexandra Banfich was named the winner of the Mental Attitude Award in Girls Cross Country by members of the IHSAA Executive Committee.

The award is presented annually to a senior participant in the state finals who was nominated by her principal and coach and has demonstrated excellence in mental attitude, scholarship, leadership and athletic ability.

Banfich won the girls state finals race for the third consecutive year becoming just the second girl in the 27 years of the event to do so. She has served as team captain in the last two of her four seasons in the sport. She will also compete in her fourth years of swimming and track and field later this school year.

Academically, she ranks 14th in her class of 214 senior students. She has served in numerous leadership positions within the academy and, following last school year, she was honored as the highest ranking junior female in the school by being named Senior Prefect. It is an elected position and the very highest honor you can receive as a female at the school.

Banfich is undecided on her college choice but appears interested in pursuing international studies and international business.

She is the daughter of Peter and Marilyn Banfich of Plymouth.

Indiana Farm Bureau Insurance, the IHSAA's corporate partner, presented a \$1,000 scholarship to the Culver Academies in the name of Banfich.

VSN MEANS ACTION PHOTOGRAPHY

Visit our friends at [Visual Sports Network](#), the IHSAA's official photographer for all state championship events and one of the leading action photographers in the Midwest. VSN, which was on site Saturday, has captured hundreds of images from this year's State Finals and will have them ready for viewing and purchase beginning Monday.

CHAMPIONSHIP MERCHANDISE STILL AVAILABLE

For t-shirts and other merchandise commemorating this year's tournament or for any of our events, visit our friends at [Morris, Inc.](#)

STATE FINALS PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

Couldn't be there for the state finals? You can still purchase a copy of the official souvenir program while supplies last! Programs are \$3.00 if you purchase in person at the IHSAA Office (9150 N. Meridian Street in Indianapolis) or \$5.00 by mail (postage included). To order, have your Visa or MasterCard ready and call us at 317-846-6601 during business hours (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. EST).