

PREP CROSS COUNTRY

Freshman bolsters a strong Dakota lineup

By Chuck Klonke

For MediaNews Group

Life is good for Dakota girls cross country coaches Mike Timpa and Tom Zarzycki.

Six of the Cougars' top seven runners at the Macomb County Invitational last year were underclassmen and this year they're joined by one of the top freshmen in the county in Jayden Harberts.

Harberts ran away from the rest of the four-team field on Dakota's home course Thursday to win in 19:25.30. Stevenson's Emma Bowen was second in 21:10.40.

"She's awesome," Timpa said of Harberts. "She works hard and makes the other kids work hard. It does make it nice when you have a good core group coming back and then you get a freshman who's a phenom."

Harberts said she didn't know what to expect in her first home race for the Cougars.

"I just tried to run my own race," she said. "I usually do my best when I can get out in front and just glide."

Running at Seneca Middle School, Harberts doesn't have a lot of experience with the high school 5K race.

"This is the first time I've really run 5K. This is a good challenge," she said. "I'm used to a mile or two miles."

Zarzycki isn't surprised by Harbert's success in her first varsity season.

"I've known about her since the fourth grade," he said. "I think she's right up there with the other good freshman runners we've had in the county."

Dakota took eight of the first 10 places overall to finish with

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DAVID DALTON — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

Macomb Dakota's Jayden Harberts, a freshman, approaches the finish line to win a recent meet.

Running on empty? Not this Austin senior



JIM EVANS — MEDIANEWS GROUP

Aaron Raffaelli is looking for a strong senior season to finish his Austin Catholic high school cross country career.

By Jim Evans
jevans@medianewsgroup.com
jimevanssports on Twitter

No Whitney Houston soundtrack.

Nothing even close to the lyrics of "I Will Always Love You."

Sprint to the other end of the emotional spectrum if you don't mind.

"I really hated running," said Aaron Raffaelli, a senior at Austin Catholic. "I could not stand running. That was like the worst part of playing soccer. But I did it."

It was his sophomore year when Raffaelli found himself training with the cross country team. It was a dilemma. For fitness purposes, the kids who played soccer were told to run with the cross country team.

The cross country team practiced before the soccer team, so Raffaelli did not have a choice. Early on, he was miserable. Like a vegetarian locked in a Spam fac-

tory.

Surprisingly, he started to eat it up.

"I had a couple of friends who played soccer who were also on the cross country team. They kind of guilted me into running cross country. There were only four on the team and you need five to score as a team," said Raffaelli.

Those seniors were Chris Shorkey and Benjie Brown.

Soon, not only was he training with the team, he was on the team. He showed real promise. He qualified for the state meet as a sophomore. He did the same as a junior, running a personal record of 17:23.1 at the regional meet held at Chandler Park Academy last year.

"It turned out to be fun. I was running with my friends. Just the whole environment around the team was fun. Every meet I started to get faster. Miss Brown told me that I had a chance to

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TIGERS-TWINS



JIM MONE — THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Detroit Tigers starting pitcher Tarik Skubal throws in Saturday's road game against the Minnesota Twins. Detroit was up 3-2 in the ninth inning. Check out [macombdaily.com/sports](https://www.macombdaily.com/sports) for complete coverage of the game.

HORSE RACING



DARRON CUMMINGS — AP

Jockey John Velazquez riding Authentic heads to the finish line to win the 146th running of the Kentucky Derby on Saturday.

Authentic gives Baffert record-tying 6th Derby

By Beth Harris

The Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, KY. » Bob Baffert endured the lowest of lows and highest of highs within minutes in the Kentucky Derby.

He was bummed before the horses left the paddock after Thousand Words reared up and fell on its side, getting disqualified and injuring Baffert's assistant trainer. That emotion was quickly replaced by Authentic's front-running victory that gave Baffert a record-tying sixth Derby win.

Then Baffert found himself down again, literally, getting knocked to the grass by a skittish Authentic in the winner's circle.

"This is the craziest year ever," he said.

Authentic kicked away from heavy favorite Tiz the Law in the stretch on Saturday, winning the 146th Derby by 1 ¼ lengths without the usual crowd of 150,000 on hand at Churchill Downs for the first time because of the coronavirus pandemic. The bay colt ran 1 ¼ miles in 2:00.61 under John Velazquez, who won his third Derby.

"I've had some great Derby rides, but what that guy did," Baffert said, gesturing toward Velazquez, who stood socially distanced in the infield winner's circle. "Johnny V. gave him an incredible ride."

Baffert tied Ben Jones (1938-52) for the most wins by a trainer. His other victories came in 1997, 1998, 2002, 2015 with eventual Triple Crown winner Justify and 2018.

Sent off at 3-5 as the biggest

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