

# Women's XC takes on Brooks Invitational

**April Wanagas**  
TECHNEWS WRITER

The Scarlet Hawks Cross Country Team took their first multi-day trip this season last weekend on their travel up to the Brooks Invitational hosted by UW- Oshkosh in Winneconne, Wisconsin. In the biggest race of the season, the lady hawks arrived to the 2.5 loop course Saturday morning; to be greeted with nearly perfect racing weather conditions again, and even better -an all flat course. Racing only their second 6k of the season, and having four weeks of training since their first one, there was a lot of room to make great Personal Records (PRs).

Getting off the bus, the lady hawks saw just how big the field of competition was. They would be competing in a field of just over

40 teams, placing exactly 509 girls at the starting line. With only six of these girls wearing the Illinois Tech Uniforms, they knew it was a leave-it-all-on-the-course kind of day. With that many girls at the starting line, the girls knew everyone would be trying to get out fast to avoid getting stuck in a slower pack of runners.

When the gun went off, everyone did just that. Runners took off faster than any other race of the season, and being in a middle box, the lady hawks saw themselves surrounded on both sides by jerseys of all colors and schools. The girls took off and each settled into a fast pack, hearing a first mile split of at least 20 seconds faster than their normal pace.

Without panicking, they knew their legs would be getting tired faster with this out of the gate pace, but there were also more runners to chase and tuck in behind so they could still

reach astounding PRs. With just over two miles down, their legs became heavier, and the large packs of runners started thinning out, meaning it was time to start picking off people rather than maintaining speed, and to begin passing girls to earn every point possible. The lady hawks used the remaining 1.7 miles and the large stretches of flat course to pick up momentum.

With even more fans than runners, the entire course was filled with lines of parents, coaches, and loved ones, yelling splits and motivation to reach the very last point of the finish line with an empty tank. Therefore, with all this energy built up before and during the race, and after sprinting across the finish line, five of the six lady hawks saw new PRs flash beside them on the clock.

Anne Crotteau finished first for the team, a new spot for her this season, with a time

of 23:13 in 66th place. Courtney Rouse was only four seconds behind her, finishing in 75th place. Sara Glade was the third lady hawk to cross, in 24:58 and 169th place, followed by Greta Zola in 201st, April Wanagas in 205th, and Ellen Ween in 210th, finishing in 26:04, 26:23, and 26:37 respectively. This gave them a 25th place team scoring, beating other Chicagoland schools such as Benedictine, Lake Forest, and Concordia University. First place was captured by Calvin College, followed by the University of Chicago, and Washington University of St. Louis.

The cross country team looks forward to having three weeks off for only training and recovery, before they look to race again. Their next and final race will be at Valparaiso in Indiana for the Conference Championship on November 9th.



Photos by April Wanagas