Race Thoughts-Conference

Hi Coach,

In the past week leading up to this race, my legs were feeling pretty sluggish and heavy at practice. I thought that it was probably because of the pain in my hip and how it was making me run differently than normal, but it was making me feel really frustrated and almost defeated even before the race started. I just kept trying to keep my head up and be as positive as possible though because I knew that this could be my last cross country race ever. Also going into the race, I knew that I really just wanted to enjoy racing and take advantage of what could be my last opportunity. I didn’t want to stress or be nervous and so instead I thought about all of the years of running that I had done and about all of the memories I had made and lessons I had learned from this sport that I love. On Friday night, I was not too nervous and was able to fall asleep quickly and have a good night’s rest. Saturday morning, I felt nervous, but ready to race. I knew that it would be painful but then I would remember that one day, I would miss doing this and the privilege that I have to call myself a cross country racer. When the gun went off, I got a slower start than everyone else on our team and this made me a little nervous. But, it also helped motivate me to move up early on in the race and pass people. I worked to pass Jocelyn and then Hannah. I could see Mackenzie for a majority of the remainder of the race, but I had a really hard time catching up to her. Obviously, course conditions were less than ideal, which made my legs feel heavier than if the course had been nice and flat; however, I did not let this bother me too much because I knew that every other girl in the race was facing the same obstacles as me. Also, the sluggishness that I had been feeling all week didn’t really even bother me because I was so focused on the course and the race. My hip did not bother me at all either and I was really glad about that. I remember thinking during the race about last year’s conference race and I really didn’t want what happened there to happen to me again. I didn’t think that it would, but a small, irrational part of me was worried about it still. I was worried that I would just mentally give up and let the race bulldoze over me; I was determined to not let this happen though. I just kept thinking to myself as I was passing people during the race, “Why *can’t* I have a good race today?”. And I knew that I could! I pushed myself mentally and physically yesterday even when times came where all I wanted to do was stop on the side of the course and take a breather for a few minutes. I passed people slowly throughout the whole race and I found a good pack of girls to run with who helped push me and not let me give up mentally. In my mind during the race as well was my desire to be in the top 8 so that I could continue on with the team to regionals and nationals. To remind myself to enjoy the race, I would smile during the race even though I felt really awful; doing this helped me to feel more positive as I was running. I was overall happy with how the race went yesterday. I knew that I gave really good effort because I felt dead after the race was over. I think that this was a good capstone to my running career. It was a very reflective and meaningful race for me and I am just so happy to have had all of the opportunities that cross country has given me. I don’t think that I would be the same person today without it. Thank you coach, for your constant support and encouragement and for always pushing me to do my best. I am so blessed to be on this team! Thank you for another great trip! See you tomorrow!

-Hayley