

Student athlete runs her way into CSM history books

Posted by [Alan Van Wormer](#) On 11/16/2018

At the season's last meet – the Region XX Cross Country Championship at West Moreland Community College – White Plains resident Sierra Walker really delivered placing sixth overall with a time of 23:36.9 and placing fourth in the Region for Division 1 and fourth overall runner for Maryland Junior Colleges (MDJUCO).

Long before she became the sole runner of the College of Southern Maryland (CSM) Women's Cross Country Team, Sierra Walker established one goal for herself: Every time she begins a distance race, she aims to beat her best time.

As the cross country season came to an end, the avid runner met her goal and earned a place in the CSM history books. In her second meet at Shenandoah University, she finished the 5k at 23:13, placing 48th out of 111 runners, running the second fastest female time for CSM. In her next race, she placed fourth in the 6k at the Goucher College Cross Country Classic, and then she went on to better her time at the Hood College Invitational, finishing with a time of 27:15.9 in the 6k, beating her previous time by almost two minutes. There she placed 46th out of 105 runners.

At the season's last meet – the Region XX Cross Country Championship at West Moreland Community College – she really delivered by placing sixth overall with a time of 23:36.9 and placing fourth in the Region for Division 1 and fourth overall runner for Maryland Junior Colleges (MDJUCO).

"Normally I am happy with my times," says Walker after finishing a race, "but then I say to myself 'I need to get a lower time,' I can't settle for mediocrity. I strive to get better each and every time I set foot in a race or a meet. To me, it's always about getting better."

The White Plains contender picked up her love of running her freshman year at North Point High School. During her four high school years, she said she developed a strong competitive nature. Today, her 'never-settle' attitude is the reason she sets out to improve her personal best every time she sets foot on the trail, whether it's at practice or during a meet.

When it was time to apply for college, she said she applied to and was accepted to four-year schools, including the University of Maryland, UMBC, Towson and Salisbury. However, Walker chose CSM because it was close to home and she would be able to set a good foundation academically and athletically before transferring for her bachelor's degree.

"The improvement that Sierra has made this year has been due to the dedication and hard work that she has put in," said CSM Women's Cross Country Coach Ken Killion. "I know that she has gotten a little frustrated this year due to the fact that one, she was the only female on the team and that she was working out a lot by herself; and two, the weather that we have had this year for our competitions has not been conducive for fast running. But I think because of this, she has mentally and emotionally grown stronger which will only help her as a runner and more importantly, as a person."

Walker agreed. She said the athletic foundation she has set for herself at CSM has taught her discipline, how to focus on goals, to be independent and how hard work leads to success. She said she hopes she has helped the cross country program and she is looking forward to recruiting more runners and assisting with coaching her peers, both on the field and in the classroom, and set a good example.

"I always tell every one of the athletes that I work with that if you can say at the end of the year that if you gave everything that you could, both during practice and your races, then hold your head up high and say that you are proud of what you have accomplished, no matter the outcome," Killion continued. "Sierra can hold her head up high."

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