

MILES MADE MEMORIES

JV RUNNER RALLIES AFTER ACCIDENT

In the fall of 2024, current senior **Charlie Culjat** was involved in a car accident. A drunk driver T-boned her vehicle on Highway 77 while she was driving with her two brothers.

The impact was severe leaving Culjat with a broken vertebrae in her spine, sprained ankles, a concussion, a broken nose, and several lacerations. This lead her to spend a lot of time in the hospital recovering.

During this time, Culjat had to learn even the simplest of movements. She moved into Madonna rehab.

"It started with short walks from the bed to the chair. Then I would walk from the bed to the door and slowly build strength," said Culjat.

But the hardest part wasn't just the physical recovery; the concussion meant that Culjat also had to engage in speech therapy to recover cognitive function, testing the mind as much as the body.

With three hours of therapy each day — physical, speech, and occupational — Culjat pushed through, step by step, to regain independence

Returning to cross country was a goal that seemed impossible during the early days of recovery. But as the season progressed, Culjat found strength to push to her first meet back.

"It was hard to watch my team but not be able to run. But I was happy to support them and watch them succeed," Culjat recalled.

Coach **Todd Leutzinger** states, "I am so proud of Charlie and the commitment she had to our team. Even though she couldn't run herself, she still showed up everyday and was unbelievably selfless. Words cannot describe how proud I am of her as both a runner and person."

Teammate of four years, senior **Eva Pflaum** recalls, "It was amazing to watch Charlie work so hard to run a meet for the first time again. We were all full of excitement for her, and it was truly inspiring to see how far she came in one year."

Coming back to cross country was a physical and mental victory. Her team and loved ones finished the out the race with her and she ended on a high note.



FIRST MEET BACK

Senior **Charlie Culjat** first meet back with her team who helps her finish it out

THE RUNNERS IN FOCUS

Freshman Gavin Schonhoff

FAVORITE COURSE:
South Sioux City
PRE-RACE SONG:
Headlights
GO-TO SNACK:
Cheezits
GOAL FOR NEXT SEASON:
Consistently run sub 18 minutes



Junior Caroline Kollars

FAVORITE COURSE:
Platte River Rumble
PRE-RACE SONG:
All I Do is Win
GO-TO SNACK:
pickles
GOAL FOR NEXT SEASON:
Enjoy last season and be a leader



Freshman Noah Lopezrojas

FAVORITE COURSE:
Norfolk
PRE-RACE SONG:
Thanks for memories
GO-TO SNACK:
Granola bar
GOAL FOR NEXT SEASON:
Get on varsity for every race and PR 18 minutes



Sophomore Sarah Scott

FAVORITE COURSE:
Walnut Grove
PRE-RACE SONG:
Frozen Heart
GO-TO SNACK:
Granola bar
GOAL FOR NEXT SEASON:
Be grateful even for the hardest workouts



By: Annick Allen