



# THEN. NOW.

## Unmatched

The cross country girls break school records twice in seven days.

Story By: Sidney Loftus

It's often said in sports that records are meant to be broken. So it was not that much of a surprise when **Gracie Suppes [10]** set the school cross country record last season. What no one could have predicted was what happened this season: in the span of seven days, Suppes' record was broken twice by two different runners.

At the Metro Conference meet at Walnut Creek on Oct. 10, **Layla Phillips [11]** ran a 19:38 for the 5K race, breaking the old record of 19:51.

Phillips was inspired to join cross country for the challenge and the relationship she already had with the head coach.

"I knew coach [Shawn] Gray from hurdling and track, and so I decided I should go out for cross country," Phillips said.

Teammate **Alexis Chadek [11]** had her own set of motivations and challenges for running cross country when she stepped to the starting line at the District meet on Oct. 17.

"The mental aspect of running fast and continuously for 3.1 miles [is the most challenging part]," Chadek said.

When Chadek finished her race as the district runner-up, she also set a new school record with a time of 19:35.

"Overall it's just proving to myself that I am tough enough mentally and physically, as well as personal pressure to improve my times," Chadek said.

The team overall finished as district runner-up, which meant that the entire team qualified for the state meet in Kearney the following week.

Chadek shattered her new record yet again at that meet on Oct. 25, running 19:17 and leading her team to a fourth place finish overall.

Both Phillips and Chadek said they had one thing in common: the person who inspired them the most in this record-breaking season.

"My coach because no matter how my races turn out, he is always positive and is working to make me better," Phillips said.



**5. Endless Drive.** As the sun glares down, **Grace Carlson [12]** challenges her body both mentally and physically while she looks ahead for the finish line. "It was my first varsity meet of the year as a senior, and I was excited to run with the rest of the girls," Carlson said. Carlson felt grateful to have ran with her teammates for her last first race of her high school career.

Photo By: Josephine Tworek.

**6. Together We Run.** Before the district meet begins, the girls walk and laugh together. **Alexis Chadek [11]** and **Layla Phillips [11]** helped to lead the team to a runner-up finish as a team. This qualified the entire team for the state meet.

Photo By: Ellery Hamilton.

