

Caledon Citizen's Student-Athlete of the Week: Cross Country, Track and Field, and Half-Marathon: Kaitlyn Stevens is Hall's versatile long-distance Runner

By Jim Stewart

Kaitlyn Stevens is a versatile long distance runner ? a dynamic triple-sport athlete who also goes the distance in the classroom as her 90% Honor Roll Student status at Robert F. Hall CSS would attest.

In addition to earning three academic subject awards last year, the Grade 11 student-athlete finished Top 20 in all her races in a Hall Wolfpack singlet during the Cross Country season.

This admirable mix of academic and athletic prowess caught the eye of her coach, Linda Van, and Stevens was nominated for recognition by her teachers and coaches.

In addition to these school-based teams, Stevens has evolved into a masterful half-marathoner who competed in ?The Chilly Half-Marathon? a few weeks ago ? a huge race, with almost 3,000 participants.

According to Coach Van, Kaitlyn has run ?two half marathon races recently where she placed Top 3 in her age group.? The Wolfpack's Cross Country and Track coach is also impressed with Stevens's qualities as a student who sees her as ?hard-working, inside and outside of the classroom? as well as ?humble and kind.?

In addition to these attributes, Coach Van is most impressed by Kaitlyn's ?genuine support for her teammates in other divisions. She ensured to stay with them during the start to help their nerves, made herself visible throughout the race course to cheer for them, and then would run to the finish line to congratulate each one of them when they crossed the finish line.?

This kind of supportive leadership and academic excellence is complemented by Stevens's conspicuous and courageous performance at a cross country meet in Fall 2022.

?At one of our cross country meets, Kaitlyn had placed top 10 out of 137 athletes in her division. We noticed she had burrs and mud all over her when she had finished. We were all impressed by her grit, giving it her absolute all to finish strong regardless of taking a bad fall.?

With these demonstrations of athletic perseverance and academic excellence, The Caledon Citizen is pleased to name Kaitlyn Stevens our Student-Athlete of the Week.

Kaitlyn took time from her long-distance training regime and ?very busy? life at Hall CSS to be interviewed. Here are her responses to our questions:

Caledon Citizen: What qualities did you demonstrate in your sports seasons to earn Student-Athlete of the Week honors?

Kaitlyn Stevens: Dedication and leadership. I love my sport, and I've been putting in hours and hours of training outside of any extracurricular program in order to train in even the worst conditions. I also always encourage anyone else pursuing any sort of running because I want to share my love for it with as many people as I can. I love cheering on my teammates and sharing what I know in order to make their experience with long distance running better and create a very positive environment for everyone.

Caledon Citizen: What were your key statistics and performance moments from the 2022-23 season that you are most proud of?

Kaitlyn Stevens: This year during my cross country season, I placed ninth in the Heart Lake Invitational meet and 15th in the ROPSSAA meet. These in particular make me proud because the senior girls division that I took part in had both Grade 11 and

Grade 12 students, which made the competition a lot steeper, and I had gotten sick before the ROPSSAA meet. Regardless, I managed to place quite well and make myself proud. My most proud performance moment came from placing 3rd in my age group during the Chilly Half Marathon I ran a few weeks ago. It was a huge race, with about 3,000 people registered, and yet I managed to earn that top three spot in my age category. It was an exhausting 21.1 kilometer race, but I was so proud of myself when I finally crossed the finish line. I've learned a lot about myself and how much I am capable of during the training process, and it's led to a successful season so far.

Caledon Citizen: In addition to your high school sports team(s), what other community teams do you play for and at what level?

Kaitlyn Stevens: Currently, my training has been entirely independent outside of school.

Caledon Citizen: How would you describe yourself as a student at Robert F Hall? To which sports teams and clubs do you belong? Honor Roll?

Kaitlyn Stevens: I would describe myself as a very busy, but hardworking student. I do take my academics very seriously, and despite the amount of time that I spend on my athletic training, I spend just as much doing homework and studying to maintain my Honour Roll average. I belong to the Cross Country Running team, the Ski and Snowboard club, and am in the midst of practicing for this year's Track and Field team.

Caledon Citizen: What are your post-secondary plans regarding prospective academic/athletic destinations?

Kaitlyn Stevens: Academically, I am hoping to pursue a career in forensic psychology and am working to apply to a university program for that interest. Athletically, I want to continue to run races, especially long distance. One of my major goals is to work my way up to a full marathon. Unfortunately for my joints, I've become obsessed with these long-distance races and I'm not planning on stopping that obsession anytime soon.

Caledon Citizen: Who is your role model in terms of the person you admire the most?

Kaitlyn Stevens: My role model is my Cross Country and Track and Field Coach, Ms. Van. Ms. Van ran my first half-marathon with me last year and introduced me to how incredibly fulfilling long distance races are. She has an infectious passion for running and shares her knowledge of the sport to all of the players she coaches, and I always take her advice to heart. She is extremely encouraging and knows exactly how to push me in order to make me better. I am very glad that I've had the opportunity to be coached by her.

Caledon Citizen: How do you feel about being nominated as The Caledon Citizen's Student-Athlete of the Week?

Kaitlyn Stevens: I feel very honoured, especially because there are so many talented athletes at my school. This is an incredible opportunity that I hope will show others what is possible if you set your mind to it, even if it's really painful at times.

If you are a community or high school coach who would like to nominate a Caledon-based student-athlete for The Caledon Citizen's Student Athlete of the Week, please email me at jim@lpcmedia.ca.