

Jenks claims 7th title at Drake

Written by Jim Ecker

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DES MOINES - As it turns out, Stephanie Jenks can run in traffic. And she's developed a strong kick for the rare occasion when she's actually challenged in a race.

The Linn-Mar junior needed both skills Friday to capture the 800 meter run at the 106th Drake Relays for her seventh career victory in America's Classic.

Jenks maneuvered her way through a tight pack of runners and sprinted down the home stretch to win the 800 in 2 minutes, 9.64 seconds in a talented field.

Jasmine Staebler of Clayton Ridge (2:11.40), Erika Lewis of Waukee (2:12.38) and Joy Ripslinger of Davenport Assumption (2:12.42) gave Jenks a good race, but the Linn-Mar junior had too much speed and too much moxie for them all.

"I really don't have to kick too often, but this is one of the things we've been working on, being able to shift gears during the race," said Jenks. "I had to have it at Kansas last weekend (when she won the 1600 at the Kansas Relays).

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"I didn't realize I had a kick," she said modestly.

Jenks captured the 3000 meter run at Drake Thursday by more than 30 seconds and usually cruises to victories in the 1500 and 3000. The 800 is not her specialty, however, and she was sitting in only fifth place after 400 meters Friday.

Jenks found room to run on the second lap and made her move. "There was a lot of surging and stopping abruptly," she said. "Once they let up, I poured myself through."

Jenks is peerless in the 1500 and 3000 in Iowa, but the 800 is a different story. "I'm getting accustomed to it, but it's not my favorite," she said.

It was congested at the start of the race and Jenks failed to get out front, forcing her to bide her time and step carefully.

"I'm not a very good person getting off the line," she said. "It's something that's really going to hurt me later on, but I'm really working on it."

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~~He finished the race in 1:00.47, which was a personal best for him. He also set a new world record in the 4x100m relay, finishing in 3:00.47. The team consisted of Jenks, Drake, and two other athletes. They were competing against a strong team from the United States, who were the defending champions. Jenks' performance was a major highlight of the event, and he was praised by his teammates and coaches. The race was a closely contested affair, with Jenks' team finishing just ahead of the Americans. Jenks' victory was a significant achievement for him, as it marked his seventh title at the Drake Relays. He was also named the Most Valuable Player of the event. The Drake Relays are one of the most prestigious college track and field events in the United States, and Jenks' performance was a testament to his skill and determination. He will be looking to defend his title in the coming years, and his fans are sure to be cheering him on every step of the way.~~