

Published December 21st, 2011

Verdon Repeats at State

By Nina Mohan



Carrie Verdon Photo Tim Fong

In the four years that Campolindo's Carrie Verdon has been running, she's emerged as a top talent and scored some impressive wins. Most recently, Verdon won the 2011 CIF State cross country championship.

This was her second straight win at state and, like last year, it was tough race. At the 2.5 mile mark, Verdon was in second place, eight seconds behind Karlie Garcia of Oakmont-Roseville. But she picked up her pace to beat Garcia by one second, finishing the 3.1 mile race in 17 minutes and 19 seconds.

She clocked the fastest Northern California girls' time and the second fastest time for all the girls' divisions at the CIF meet.

Verdon had given no thought to running until her brother suggested that she try out for Campolindo's cross-country team. He told her that it was a "fun thing to do."

Running comes naturally to Verdon, but great talent is not a without practice for Verdon, and she's constantly working to improve.

"You have to get in good weeks and months of training to keep getting better, you have to stay consistent," said Verdon.

"Right now I'm building endurance. We're in our off-season and we're working on our mechanics, and drills to warm up and cool down. We're working on our abs and legs. The strength training works with the mechanics to make you better and faster," she continued.

Focus and attitude are also essential to Verdon's success: "Going into a race you really have to prepare mentally," she said.

"I always think that half is physical and half is mental. Going in, I think about myself, not the other competitors. I think 'what can I control to make this the best?' and focus on myself and on my team."

Verdon worked to mentally prepare for this year's CIF championship.

In 2010, Verdon also came from behind to win, that time after a fall. The pressure for a repeat win, plus the fear of another fall might faze some, but Verdon was focused on the tough competition.

"I wasn't worried about a second fall. This year, we had a lot of new competition going in, a lot of really good competition, and that was really exciting because you knew you had to push yourself harder to get a better time."

This fall Verdon will run for the University of Colorado at Boulder. Her decision to go Boulder was based on a gut instinct.

"Boulder is a really awesome town. I landed in the airport and I just knew, I just had this feeling. I visited a lot of other schools and I didn't have that same feeling, so I think it was a really good choice."

The coach and the team confirmed her feeling. "[They were] really amazing, everyone was really nice and welcoming, and they have a really good program," she said.

Verdon is also looking forward to how running at a high altitude will help her improve.

"Actually, altitude training is proven to be really good for you, but definitely the first couple of months are going to be tough," she said.

"I went up for my recruiting visit and did a long run and it was pretty rough. But there have been a lot of girls from California who've gone up there and dealt with the altitude change and they've been fine so I'm not nervous, it'll just take some getting used to."

Along with competing at the college level Verdon also plans to train for the 2016 Olympics and hopes to make a career of running.

"I want to become a professional runner, and compete in the Olympics in 2016. Things could change in college, things could happen, but it's definitely a goal to be a professional runner, and to go the Olympics."

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