

ALL FOR ONE and one for all



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November 4, 2022



"I'm never taking a break. I'm always on the go."
Melania Korenovsky

The lone runner for East Haven High has Ukrainian commitments throughout each week, resulting in her overcoming pressure and a busy schedule.

ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL.

That might as well be the mantra for the East Haven Yellow Jackets cross country team, having just one runner in the entire school – Melania Korenovsky.

Korenovsky, a junior at East Haven High, was one of four girls on the cross country team last year. There was also one boy who ran for the school.

A couple girls choosing volleyball for this year and a couple others not wanting to continue with cross country left Korenovsky as the lone member of the team for 2022.

When finding out that she was going to be the only name on the roster, Korenovsky wasn't fazed in the slightest.

"I was just kind of like, I can't quit. It's up to me now to keep up the program in the school," Korenovsky said.

Korenovsky is running for coach Ricky Narracci, who is in his second year as cross country coach at East Haven. As the only runner for her coach, Korenovsky feels a bit of weight on her shoulders.

"Last year, there was other people (so) in a way, he couldn't just focus on me," Korenovsky said. "But now, he's always just watching me. So it's like a lot of pressure on me."



Narracci respects the pressure that Korenovsky faces.

"It's always nice to have other people to push you – she doesn't have that," Narracci said. "So I give her credit because it's tough to do that by yourself."

Although she feels pressure as the only runner at school, Korenovsky praises Narracci for helping her manage that pressure.

"He's like a support system kind of, like after my meets he's always encouraging and he always makes me challenge myself," Korenovsky said.



She also gets encouragement from her Spanish teacher, Mrs. Spadacenta. The two have a good relationship, and Korenovsky's teacher knows the pressure she deals with being a one-person team.

"(Spadacenta has) always been like, 'You got this, just keep on going. Even though you're the only person, you love the sport, it's ok, you can do it on your own.' She instills that strength in me, which kind of helps me out, having that other support system outside of the sport telling me (to) keep going," Korenovsky said.

In addition to the pressure she faces running alone, Korenovsky has other responsibilities as well throughout each week.



Korenovsky's family is from Ukraine, and she is proud of her heritage. Her weeks are filled with commitments to Ukrainian activities.

Tuesdays: Korenovsky attends a Ukrainian youth organization that she calls "CYM."

Thursdays: She has Ukrainian dancing.

Saturdays: Korenovsky goes to Ukrainian school, where she also has homework and tests just like at East Haven.

Although these activities are important to her, Korenovsky said she feels overwhelmed with everything she does each week.

"It's a lot to balance, having two schools and cramming in homework from this school and the other school," Korenovsky said. "A lot of times I feel jealous of my friends that they could sleep in and I can't on Saturdays. I'm never taking a break. I'm always on the go. I have a lot of stuff going on always."



CIAC video on YouTube



Narracci commended Korenovsky's ability to manage all her responsibilities.

"Her time management is really impressive because I think that's a skill that a lot of high school kids don't have, especially with the amount of things that she's involved in, in school and outside of school," Narracci said.

Korenovsky is committed to her Ukrainian practices now more than ever because of the Russia-Ukraine war.

She said she had a tough day at school the first day of the war, feeling helpless because her family was in the nation of Ukraine that was under attack.

While she felt helpless, she realized that continuing to participate in her Ukrainian studies and activities was important.

"I've been going to rallies and stuff for Ukraine and just going to Ukrainian school, continuing Ukrainian dancing and going to this organization (CYM). Just participating in all this Ukrainian stuff – that's what's going to help them," Korenovsky said.

The war also motivates Korenovsky even more to keep working hard despite the pressure and responsibilities she has.

"You're strong, you're Ukrainian, you got this," Korenovsky told herself. "It's that mentality that keeps me going."

That mentality is used every day when she runs. Her best time is 24 minutes, 15 seconds in three miles and she is looking to beat that time in her next meet.

Korenovsky is judicious about her nutrition. She plans on eating things that aren't greasy, as greasy foods give her cramps and aren't healthy. She eats lots of fruits, vegetables and protein, such as chicken.

Korenovsky does whatever it takes to compete at her best, and her motivation all stems from wanting to be like her sister, Stephania.

Stephania goes to the University of Connecticut.

"(Stephania is) my inspiration, she's my motivation," Korenovsky said. "I always wanted to be like her."

Korenovsky said that she wants to go to a good college just like Stephania, and working hard and doing well in high school will lead to that. She doesn't exactly have a college in mind right now, but knows that she wants to stay somewhere near Connecticut.

"Not too far because I am really close with my family," Korenovsky said.



She said she would love to do cross country in college, but it depends on the university and what it offers. As for next year, her senior year at East Haven, her answer was a resounding yes for running it back after this year.

There also isn't a doubt in Narracci's mind about Korenovsky's commitment to the school's program.

"She would never give it up," Narracci said.

Even with everything else on her plate, Korenovsky would never give up running for East Haven.

After all, Melania's running solo for the Yellow Jackets.

All for one – Korenovsky – and one for all... the other 878 students at East Haven High.