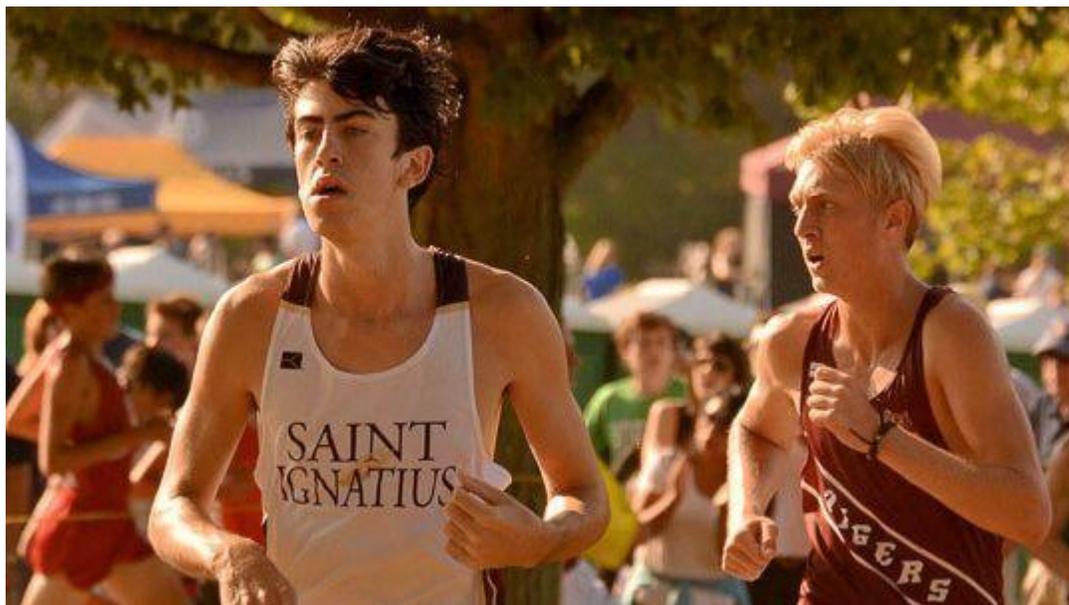


Park Ridge's Michael OBroin programmed for success in cross country, classroom



St. Ignatius senior and Park Ridge resident Michael OBroin was one of 26 student-athletes named to the IHSA's 2017-18 All-State Academic Team. (Paul Ickes/St. Ignatius)

By **Heather Rule**
Pioneer Press

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Last year, Michael OBroin wrote a computer program for St. Ignatius so students could check into school dances with their student IDs and chaperones didn't have to mark names down on paper.

"I was thinking about something useful I could do, and the really long lines at checking in for student dances kind of came to my mind," said OBroin, who is a member of the Wolfpack's cross country and track teams.

It started out as a class assignment, but OBroin said he kept working on it even after he met the class requirements. The school used the program this year.

OBroin, a senior from Park Ridge, was one of 26 student-athletes named to the IHSA's 2017-18 All-State Academic Team. OBroin was happy when he found out he was selected.

"It felt like a bit of recognition of the work that I've put in over the past couple years," OBroin said.

OBroin and the other members of the All-State Academic Team are scheduled to be honored at a banquet Monday in Bloomington.

Over 400 students were nominated. To be eligible, students needed to have at least a 3.50 GPA on a 4.0 scale and have participated in at least two IHSA sanctioned sports or activities each of the last two years.

St. Ignatius cross country and track coach Ed Ernst wrote a recommendation letter on behalf of OBroin.

"In my letter I mentioned that he's very much what you might call an old-fashioned straight arrow," Ernst said. "He's very serious."

OBroin has a 4.18 GPA and takes a variety of Advanced Placement courses. He started out playing soccer as a freshman before switching to track that spring and later joined the cross country program as well.

In the fall, OBroin placed 12th at the Class 3A cross country state meet with a personal-best time of 14 minutes, 39 seconds. It was the third-fastest time in school history. He also won the Chicago Catholic League meet and the Lawless Award, which is given to the top runner in the conference.

"That was something I was especially proud of, just because it was kind of a culmination of training for 3 1/2 years," OBroin said.

OBroin's dealt with patellar tendonitis in his left knee since late February, so he's not able to train and run in the volumes he's used to. He's hoping his injury will heal enough that he can compete by the end of the season.

Success in academics and athletics isn't always easy, according to OBroin.

"I've had to make a fair number of sacrifices to do well in school and in running just because of all the time constraints I have," OBroin said.

What types of sacrifices?

“Sometimes sleep,” OBroin said. “Usually sleep.”

OBroin’s commute also takes time. His drive can take 20 minutes, without traffic, but up to 45 or 50 minutes.

On a typical school day, he will wake up around 6 a.m. get to school by 7 a.m., then return home at 6:30 p.m. or so. His evening consists of supper, homework and a little rest and relaxation before bedtime. He shoots to be in bed by 10 p.m.

After attending Catholic grade school, OBroin said he really liked St. Ignatius when he went for a visit and just decided it would be a good fit.

OBroin is still deciding on a college for next year but knows he’ll study computer science.

Heather Rule is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.

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