

RUNNING TOGETHER



IT WAS ALL WORTH IT. On Nov. 1, some of the girls on the team gather around to show their medals with pride as they have just finished what was their first and last meet for the season at Valley High School.
PC: North High Cross Country Team

A GOOD LEADER



With the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing, it seemed that the cross country season would be a lost cause, or so we thought. Vital Nyabashi, a senior at North and captain of the team, started running cross country his freshman year after being recruited by Phillip Ferguson, the cross country coach, and quickly was able to do nothing but impress by standing out as one of the best runners at North, which would show later on his passion for running. "It was a way of escaping reality, my head would clear and it was just me and the sound of my tempo breathing," Nyabashi said.

Unfortunately, during the summer, he suffered a stress fracture on the foot caused by too much pressure and a pair of worn out shoes. "It bummed me out when I got the diagnosis. All that work I built up over the summer was for nothing," expressed Vital. Despite this setback, he would become the assistant coach for the summer training, portraying his role as a leader while being inspired by his teammates.

When the school year began, it was announced that the school would start virtually and fall sports would be canceled. "It looked like I would recover just in time to run at the state qualifying meet too... We were getting ready for the possibility of just having one meeting, but then it was just canceled... I was frustrated," Nyabashi said.

But that wouldn't stop the team from keeping up with their daily practices. Now with the coaches unable to attend due to school policies, Vital took on the role of assistant coach again, running the usual meetings where they practiced adequate social distancing while breaking personal records and getting better on their performances, motivated by the strong bond that the teammates had and the optimism that the season would be back on. All of their hard work would pay off when the team was able to attend an independent meet at the end of the season.

In Nyabashi's words, as a senior leaving North: "It has been an adventure filled with up and downs... I'll miss the hill workouts, the threshold runs and long runs on the trails through the woods." He also has a bit of advice to those who might be going through the same circumstances. "Things won't always go the way you imagine them to go. Stay optimistic and your hard work will pay off in some form. Mine was building great relationships with my teammates."

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Job# 2969 School North High School 7/1/21 12:46 PM

Page submitted with acknowledged preflight check issue(s): Embedded Image, Image Resolution, Embedded Image, Text Across Gutter, Image Resolution

Black Ink

Includes Spot Color(s)

Process 4 Color (CMYK)

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TEAMMATES. (Left to Right) Juniors, Angela Wittrock and Jhoanna Hernandez, along with seniors, Ikilas Hasan and Vital Nyabashi, and Freshman, Brody Teer gather for a group hug before they start their practice. PC: Said Perez Diaz



ACT COOL. Juniors , Angela Wittrock and Jhoanna Hernandez, along with senior, Vital Nyabashi squat down and pose for the camera. PC: Said Perez Diaz

“Stay optimistic and your hard work will pay off in some form.”
~Vital Nyabashi



GOOFING AROUND. Seniors, Ikilas Hasan and Said Perez Diaz, and junior, Jhoanna Hernandez, get caught in 4k fooling around during a meeting and so they smile innocently at the camera. PC: Charlene Beattie



MAKING MEMORIES. During their last practice, the group decides to take a selfie to remember the last official meeting they will have together as a team. Brody Teer, Ikilas Hasan, Vital Nyabashi, Jhoanna Hernandez, Angela Wittrock, Said Perez Diaz. PC: Said Perez Diaz



HEADING OUT. All of the runners walk out together from what would be their last official practice of the season. PC: Said Perez Diaz