"IT'S JUST LIKE A LITTLE ADVENTURE EVERY TIME YOU RUN!" -Madeline Wilson
Calvary
CALVARY LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL

MADELINE WILSON

DRIVEN BY AN INCREDIBLE BOND

By Lisa Kaitlyn | Photos by Kati Gill

WHAT DRIVES SOMEONE TO RUN STRENUOUS COURSES THROUGH THE WOODS, UP STEEP HILLS IN THE RAIN AND MUD, AND IN HUNDRED-DEGREE WEATHER? FOR MADELINE WILSON, IT IS THE UNIQUE BOND THAT DEVELOPS BETWEEN ATHLETES IN CROSS COUNTRY UNLIKE IN ANY OTHER SPORT.

Madeline Wilson is a senior this year at Calvary Lutheran High School. When Madeline sat down with SLM she shared about her athletic and academic careers so far: "I've run cross country for three years, played basketball for four years, and ran track for four years. I'm really involved in different clubs. I do Key Club, FBLA, NHS. . ." Madeline added, "And I like to do photography and read and [I'm] starting a little bit of videography."

SO WHAT DREW MADELINE TO RUN CROSS COUNTRY on top of all of her other sports and activities? Madeline started running cross country her sophomore year. She said she liked the coach and had experience running relatively long distances in track. Madeline reflected, "I had a lot of fun and got a lot of medals and placed really well, surprisingly, at districts. I didn't make it to state, but I was one spot off from that. For my first year, I was like, 'Oh, wow. That's really cool.'"

Although sometimes it is painful and she might on occasion claim that she hates running, Madeline keeps going back to cross country. She shared, "It's crazy, but it's a lot of fun." The different courses keep her on her toes. "There's one that you have to run straight up a hill and you have to go through a mud pit and stuff. It's just like a little adventure every time you run!"

ANOTHER DRAWING POINT: THE PEOPLE. "The people are the nicest people I've ever met," Madeline exclaimed. "Even your opponents that you're running against come up and they'll give you water once you're done or they tell you 'good luck.'" Madeline described how athletes come alongside each other to help one another through the arduous courses, whether they are on the same team or not. "It's really cool that everyone's suffering together while they're running--you bond with people that you've never met before." Madeline chalks up the remarkable bond between runners to that mutual suffering. She said, "No one really enjoys running in one hundred degree weather for five miles and everyone is just like 'we're gonna do this.' I guess that might be part of it." Whatever it is, the unique bond keeps bringing her back.

WHAT IS GREATER THAN THE BOND DEVELOPED ON THE FIELD IS THE BOND THAT MADELINE HAS AT HOME. Madeline is clearly blessed with a tight-knit family. "We're all really close. We do a lot of stuff together and we love each other. Even if we don't get along, we're still really close. My parents are the best and they support me in all of my million different activities."

Madeline's family bond, interestingly enough, stretches onto the field, as well. Her brother ran cross country in high school. Madeline explained, "He ran it before I did so we ran together and that's kind of fun because it's a little competition.

Madeline stated that her dad is one of her biggest role models. "He does everything and I guess that might be where I get the drive to do everything," she shared. Madeline's father served in the Air Force and currently serves in the National Guard. Because of him, Madeline has a huge respect for the United States and its military. In fact, she stated that military service may even be in her future someday. Watching her father give his all and succeed in everything he does inspires Madeline. She said, "He's my biggest role model because I just want to push myself and be like him if I can."

What comes next for the girl who does it all? Madeline is keeping her options open. Beyond serving her country like her father, she is considering pursuing a career in journalism or photojournalism at Mizzou (she currently works as a district editor for her Key Club's magazine and newsletter). However, Madeline is also interested in medicine, such as sports medicine or physical therapy. Backed by the support system of her family and fellow athletes, paired with her driven spirit, there is no limit to what she will accomplish next.

See pg. 29 for Calvary's cross country schedule