

## Running Reflection: Carley Shannon



### Personal Bests:

1600m: 5:05

3200m: 11:01

5000m: 18:17



Exciting. Fun. Invigorating.

These are only some of the words that come to my mind when I think about my time running in middle and high school. As a kid, I participated in almost every sport *except* cross country/track & field. The only reason I started running was to stay in shape for my other sports; however, my love for running grew rapidly. There is a special feeling you get when you finish a run or a race that no other activity or sport can mimic. It's a feeling of pride and accomplishment, knowing that you just achieved something that you had never done before.

My accomplishments hinged on an extraordinary coach, Coach Tompkins, that believed in me. My confidence grew and I learned the importance of responsibility, commitment, and dedication, which are life lessons and valuable even after competition ends. I was able to make

new friends and create lasting friendships. I still talk to and run with some of my teammates!

Friendship. This is my favorite memory about distance running. Although I won the 3200m at the State Meet two times, and appeared in two National Meets, surprisingly none of those accomplishments are the things that I remember the most. The most memorable aspect of distance running to me was the relationships I built while training for those State Titles. Having my coach's and teammates' support during the training and racing meant the world to me; surrounding yourself with a positive and encouraging environment is so important.

I would not be the person I am today without Coach Tompkins, my teammates, and distance running. I am incredibly grateful for Coach Tompkins' dedication and enthusiasm towards the sport and for making my experience unforgettable.

- Carley Shannon