



## No matter the opponent, Reimer is unstoppable



Kyndell Harkness, Star Tribune

Mounds View senior Noah Reimer

### Mounds View's Noah Reimer won't let diabetes or epilepsy keep him from running.

By **DAVID La VAQUE**, Star Tribune

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Hustling through 1-mile intervals at practice last week, Noah Reimer looked at home among the sweaty, shirtless, flabless brood of Mounds View cross-country runners.

When the running stopped, however, Reimer started a unique routine. Teammates went for water. Reimer drank a juice box. Some stretched or adjusted braces. He pricked his finger. Still

others pondered their times. He checked a blood sugar monitor.

It has all become commonplace for Reimer, found at age 5 to have Type I diabetes. And if that were not enough, doctors later determined he also has epilepsy.

Reimer's pace is too slow to challenge his most talented teammates. But they voted him one of the team's four senior captains because he does not stop.

"I think most of the votes came from me demonstrating how far dedication and not giving up can get you," he said. "I'm not in it to be a star. I'm here for the team."

Type I diabetics receive little or no insulin production from the pancreas, and insulin is the key to letting sugar (glucose) into the cells for energy. Reimer receives all of his insulin through a pump that drips it through a catheter stuck into his body.

When his blood sugar is too high or too low, a lethargic feeling overtakes him. As a child, low blood sugar levels would sometimes result in seizures. By the time Reimer reached the seventh grade, doctors said his diabetes and seizures were not necessary linked, and they diagnosed his epilepsy.

Epilepsy is a neurological disorder that causes recurring seizures that can range from mild to convulsions. Noah's father, Jim, said his son

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suffers "midrange epileptic seizures" that can leave him unresponsive for a few moments.

The epilepsy, Jim said, could go away. The diabetes will not. Among the challenges Reimer will face later is the deterioration of his retinas as well as kidney and circulatory problems. He already knows well the rigors of managing diabetes while trying to enjoy a normal life.

"As a runner, epilepsy hasn't held me back quite as much as diabetes," Reimer said.

But even diabetes has struggled to keep pace. In three full seasons of cross-country and track and field, Reimer has finished all but one race. Low blood sugar forced him to sit out just two races in that same span -- and Reimer hates to watch.

"My band teacher says there's no one on the sideline in band," said Reimer, who plays alto saxophone. "Cross-country is the same thing. We all run. We all suffer. We are a team. You want to be suffering, too. If not, you feel left out."

Reimer said three things motivated him to join Mounds View's cross-country program: staying in shape, fattening his college résumé and the chance to broaden his social circles.

Jim and mother Julie, meanwhile, were forced to turn over management of Noah's diabetes to their son.

"He was a male teenager," Jim said. "How responsible and accountable would he be? He

can't check one minute before a race and go. He must plan for a 5-mile run up to an hour and a half ahead of time."

Reimer's management of diabetes and the race course has improved through the years. As a junior, he cut more than 4 minutes off his previous personal best and was voted the team's most improved runner. He plans to better his new best (19 minutes, 18 seconds) early this season and will attempt to get under the 18-minute mark. And just maybe, he will earn the right to compete in his first varsity race. Teams can run 12 athletes -- versus the normal seven to 10 -- in the Suburban East Conference meet on Oct. 20.

Whether he runs a varsity race, Reimer takes pride in his role as captain. The Mustangs' three graduating captains presented bars (a gold "CC" with an arrow through the letters) to three of the team's current captains at last season's year-end banquet. Coach Ross Fleming then called Reimer to the front of the room and personally bestowed bars on him.

"Coach told the team, 'He ran hundreds of miles over the summer, smashed his personal best by 4 minutes and beat more natural athletes than I can count,'" Reimer said. "'I'm sorry to have to break this to you guys, but if he beats you, you were quite simply outworked.'"

Sitting on the floor in his family's Shoreview home, Reimer recalls the triumphant team bus rides home from the section meets in 2006 and

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2007, when the Mustangs reveled in qualifying for the Class 2A state meet.

The Mustangs missed state last season and Reimer wants more for his team this fall.

"I want to finish the way it started," he said. "But it'll be a different kind of finish because of the way I've had to work.

"Coach says it's not about talent; it's all about character. I haven't brought any talent to the team. I brought commitment, dedication and work ethic."

Reimer wipes the tears from his eyes.

"I want that to be my legacy."

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