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CMHS freshman prepares for busy weekend

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HUNTINGTON -- Jordan Thornton likes track. She likes soccer. She likes music. Those passions are going to make for one hectic itinerary this weekend for the Cabell Midland High School freshman.

Thornton's schedule features the West Virginia High School Track and Field Championships on Friday and Saturday at Laidley Field in Charleston. After track Saturday, she must hustle to Beckley to join her WVSC Rowdies 94 teammates for an afternoon match in the West Virginia Soccer Association state tournament. Once that match ends, Thornton has to motor back to Huntington to play violin in the Tri State Youth Orchestra's final concert of the season.

Come Sunday, providing the Rowdies win on Saturday, Thornton, who starts at center back on defense, jumps back on I-64 for the drive to Beckley and the U-15 girls championship game at 2 p.m. A win puts the Rowdies in the US Youth Soccer Region I Championships in July in Barboursville.

"I'm ready," Thornton said Monday night after returning home from track practice at Cabell Midland and soccer practice at Hurricane Middle School.

Thornton's track events Friday are the 4x800 relay at 2:30 p.m. and 3200-meter run at 6:55 p.m. Her teammates on the relay team are Alex Ellis, Clara Stephens and Sara Scarberry. They made it by finishing third in the Region IV meet. They've been helped by Diane Riley, a volunteer coach for the Knights who works with distance runners on the girls team.

"It's fantastic being in the state," Thornton said. "I'm even happier to be in the 4x800. It's fun to be in a team event. The 3200 is my main event. The 1600's not terrible, I'm just better at longer distances."

When the 3200 ends, Thornton, her teammates and family head home for some much-needed sleep.

"I want to go home," she said. "It's close enough. We're used to it."

It's rise and shine early Saturday as track action resumes at 10 a.m. Thornton goes out for the 1600 at 10:50 a.m. She has a plan for when she crosses the finish line.

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In addition to track and soccer, Jordan Thornton plays violin for the Tri State Youth Orchestra.

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"Turn in my place and head on out," she said. "I hope to PR (personal record)."

Thornton can only hope there are no traffic snarls on I-64/West Virginia Turnpike between Charleston and Beckley. Her Saturday soccer match is supposed to begin at 4 p.m.

"You get there when you get there," said Thornton, who's had similar conflicts in the past. "My coaches are understanding."

Thornton is the only Cabell Midland soccer player on the Rowdies 94 team. The Rowdies, top seeded in their group, are coached by Kevin Long -- the women's soccer coach at Marshall University -- and Kat Shields.

The Rowdies are going for their fourth state title and berth in the Region 1 tournament. The first two years, the team had to travel to Maine. Last year, the event's home shifted to Barboursville.

"Hopefully we can get through and go back," Thornton said. "We didn't do well last year. We didn't play up to our standards. We're all more experienced now. The coaches have prepared us for this."

Thornton runs cross country and plays soccer for the Midland Knights in the fall and still makes time for music.

The Tri-State Youth Orchestra concert is 8 p.m., Saturday, at New Baptist Church. Ron Caviana is the conductor.

"It's something anybody can do," she said. "We all have a little musical talent. I enjoy it. We play a lot of interesting music."

She has been playing the violin since second grade.