



Shelton High School senior cross country runner Aiden Gregg, shown here during a 2019 race in DuPont, is the captain of the Highclimber girls team this year. *Journal file photo by Justin Johnson*

Ready to run

Climber senior preps for races that almost didn't happen

By Justin Johnson
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Aiden Gregg put in a lot of work for something that wasn't a sure thing. Like most high school athletes in Washington, the Shelton High School senior's sports career was put on hold in March with the spread of the novel coronavirus.

A combination of restrictions related to the pandemic by Gov. Jay Inslee and the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association canceled Gregg's junior track and field season in the spring and left her senior cross country season in doubt.

"Truthfully, for a while most of the team and I really didn't expect a season," Gregg wrote in an email interview. "That doesn't mean we aren't ready for it. We've been training in case we have a season ... plus in the middle of a pandemic a bunch of runners don't really have much to do but run anyways. All of us have just been trying to personally improve and that's what already makes us so prepared."

If all goes as planned, Gregg and the Highclimbers will get that opportunity Saturday in Chehalis as part of a scheduled tri-meet with Black Hills and W.F. West high schools.

It will be the first official high school

sporting event for Shelton since a girl's golf duel last March.

"After almost a year and a half of no races it's extremely exciting to know that we finally have them," Gregg wrote. "For a little it felt like all the work wasn't really for much, but to be back competing makes it all worth it already. The whole team hopes to really stand out."

This will be Gregg's fourth year running cross country for Shelton, where she's been a 3A state meet qualifier in each of her first three seasons.

"I have been running for years, and it was always a sport I was decently good at that I could really compete hard in," she said. "I love the team and individual aspects of running. It's one of the few sports where you can see exactly where you stand in the competition, but also have a team to work for too. Running teams are also smaller than most sports so you can form really close relationships with your teammates."

According to Shelton cross country coach John Johnson, Gregg has been one of the most consistently good racers in the Highclimber program. Johnson said her strength and mobility have allowed her to avoid injury and train consistently through her high school career.

"What really separates Aiden from most young runners is her psychological approach to competition and her ability to keep sports in perspective," Johnson wrote in an email. "I fondly recall Aiden saying last season as we stood on the line at our

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Shelton board approves plan to reopen schools

By Gordon Weeks
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The Shelton School District will bring students in preschool and first grade, fifth grade and seventh grade back to the classrooms in a blended model of in-person and online learning Feb. 22.

The remaining students through grade 12 will return March 15.

The Shelton School Board unanimously passed the reopening plan Tuesday evening at its board meeting.

Currently, all 4,200-plus students are learning from home online, except for a handful of students with special needs at each building.

Under the plan, students will be divided into two groups and use either Schedule A or Schedule B. The Schedule A students will attend class in-person on Mondays and Tuesdays, and online Wednesdays through Fridays; students on Schedule B will be online Mondays through Wednesdays, and in the classrooms Thursdays and Fridays. The school buildings will be cleaned on Wednesdays.

"I feel confident in this plan," Superintendent Alex Apostle said.

"I know a lot of work was put into this," School Board President Sally Karr said.

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Coronavirus claims school leader

By Gordon Weeks
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Shelton resident Ricardo Del Bosque, a leader in Mason County's Spanish-speaking and educational communities, died Monday from complications related to the coronavirus.

Del Bosque, an immigrant from Mexico, was the bilingual family and student support coordinator for the Shelton School District.

When Del Bosque was named the state Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's 2010-2011 Regional Classified Employee of the Year, the award noted, "His colleagues describe Ricardo as the person the entire Spanish-speaking community turns to with their questions about health care, schooling, housing, employment, immigration, guidance for errant teenagers and so much more."

After the coronavirus forced the Shelton School District to close its doors last March, Del Bosque continued to deliver food to the Spanish-speaking families in need in Mason County. His son, Ricardo Del Bosque Jr., in October told the



Ricardo Del Bosque, the bilingual family and student support coordinator for the Shelton School District, died Monday from the coronavirus, possibly caught while delivering food to Spanish-speaking families in need. *Courtesy photo*

Shelton-Mason County Journal he believes that's how his father contracted the coronavirus.

"Ricardo brought forward the best of humanity every day," Shelton School District Superintendent Alex Apostle wrote in an email to the *Journal*. "He was

giving beyond self every day of his life. He was a true champion of the people. There will never be another Ricardo. He was my friend and I will never forget his goodness."

Barb Weza, the executive director of Community Lifeline, wrote that Del Bosque "was a selfless leader, teacher and advocate who served families and students, especially immigrants and homeless families in the community. He was a teacher to staff and community members of the needs of the families he served. His leadership and compassion was an inspiration and he will be greatly missed."

Answering a query for thoughts from the *Journal* on the Shelton Community Bulletin Board, Diane Garner wrote, "I worked with Ricardo most directly when he served as a translator during conference week. He was booked solid with back-to-back conferences, but he always took the time to make sure the kids and their families understood what was going on. Student success was very important to him, and his

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our state qualifier that 'it's just another race.' Then she went out raced her way into the state championships for a third consecutive year.

"Emotional control is a huge part of championship racing and Aiden is very skilled at that."

Johnson wrote that the team feels fortunate to have Gregg back for her senior year as the team's captain.

"Besides her talent and skill as a competitor we just really like Aiden," Johnson wrote. "She is fun to be around. She is the leader of a very good team this year and we are excited that they will get an opportunity to race in the coming weeks."

Gregg, whose grandfather is former Shelton High School boys basketball coach Terry Gregg, wrote that she genuinely loved to be active while growing up.

"My family was really supportive and really motivated me to try as many activities as possible," Gregg wrote. "For a while in elementary and middle school I played basketball and volleyball. I even did ballet for multiple years. I've always enjoyed living a semi-busy lifestyle, and I'm lucky I've always had the opportunities to try many sports throughout the years."

Gregg, an only child, credited her grandfather for teaching her a lot about sports early in her life.

"He taught me so much information on competing and being part of a team and I'm forever grateful for all of it," Gregg wrote. "One of my favorite phrases I learned from him that I always think about is 'never say can't.' You can do anything you put your mind to with work and determination."

Gregg wrote that her parents are daily runners, and that her mother competed in college in cross country and track and field.

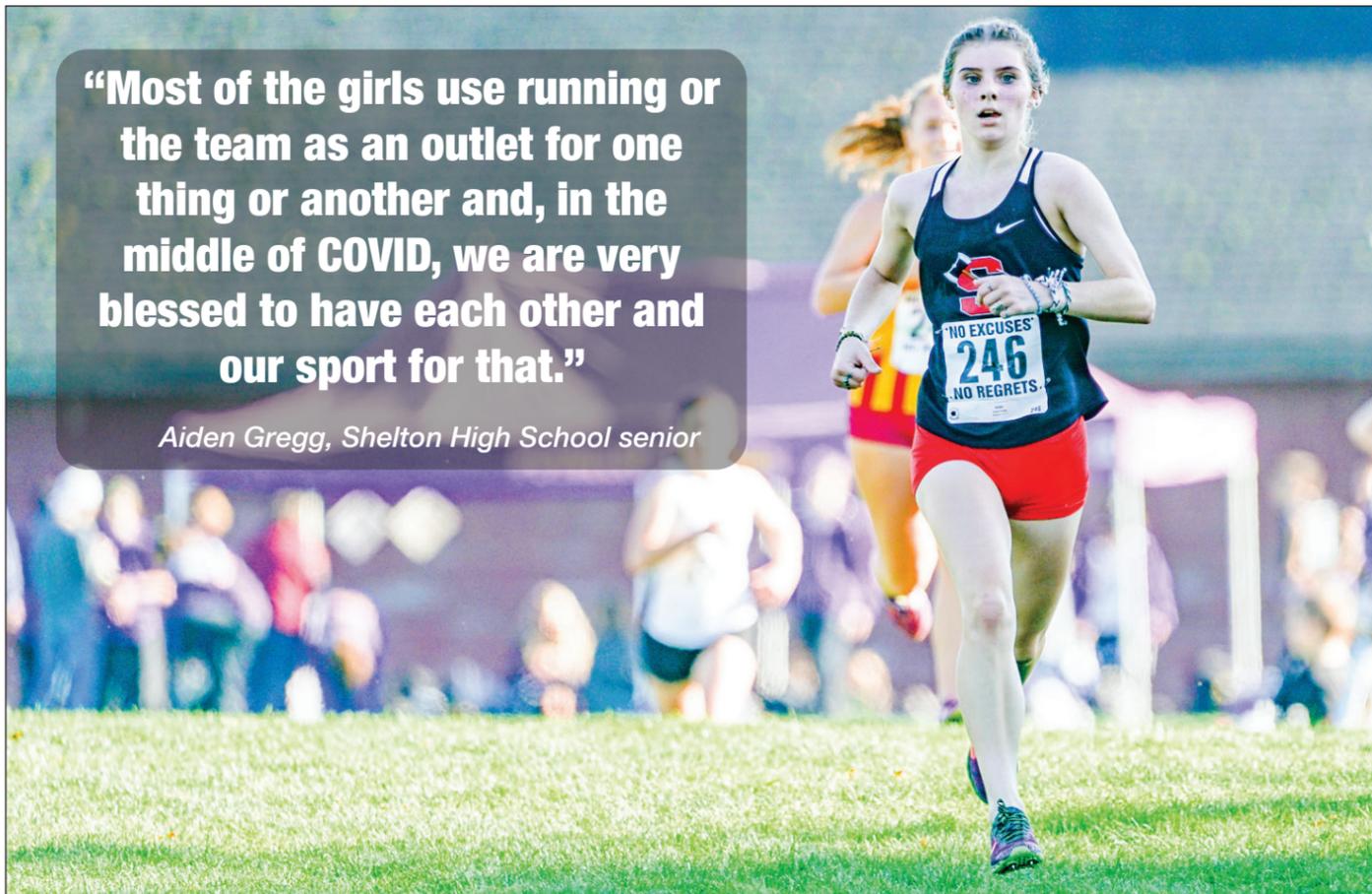
"I'm beyond grateful for all the support they've given me," Gregg wrote. "My dad has always boosted my confidence with running. I am the only child in my family so truthfully my impact comes from the adults in my life 100%."

When it comes to cross country, the smaller size of high school teams allowed some members to continue to run together during the pandemic.

"We've really trained safely for most of the pandemic," Gregg wrote. "We have our small groups that we go

"Most of the girls use running or the team as an outlet for one thing or another and, in the middle of COVID, we are very blessed to have each other and our sport for that."

Aiden Gregg, Shelton High School senior



Shelton High School senior Aiden Gregg approaches the finish line during a 2019 meet in DuPont. The Highclimbers are scheduled to begin their cross country season Saturday at W.F. West High School in Chehalis. Journal file photo by Justin Johnson

out on trail runs with, as well as small workout groups. This is all normal and how we train on an average year anyway. COVID definitely has affected our season, but not necessarily our training."

As a leader, Gregg wrote that her goal is to ensure that her teammates are out running as often as possible, whether it's a workout or just a jog by themselves. She also said that she wants her team to enjoy training and improving.

"If we can stay motivated to run, we are already going to have an advantage," Gregg wrote. "I love the support that comes with a team. Everyone is so positive, and the environment of cross country is overall just so good."

Gregg wrote that some of her favorite times have been long van rides early in the season that act as an icebreaker and allow the team to get to know each other better.

While the culminating events of the cross country season have yet to be decided, Gregg wrote that she hopes she

gets the opportunity to run again at a state championship.

She also wrote that she is looking forward to competing in the Evergreen League, which Shelton joined beginning this year, and the opportunity to run against new people.

With Shelton High School classes being online since March, Gregg wrote that it was a challenge at the beginning.

"I didn't have anyone to regulate my time spent on school for me like I would actually being in a classroom, and I didn't have motivation to do work," she wrote. "Soon I realized that everyone was having their own struggles with it and all I could do was try and get things done so I can graduate. Once that was through my head, it wasn't and hasn't been too bad. There's definitely perks to online school and way more free time."

After high school, Gregg plans to go to a local community college and eventually hopes to work with animals, something she called her "true passion." She added that she plans to

continue running after graduation, but not competitively.

"I do know that I'll always be a 'runner,'" Gregg wrote. "There's so many benefits to running and I've made so many friends through it. I want to keep this lifestyle, just without the competition."

As far as the end of her high school athletic career and upcoming graduation, Gregg wrote that it's important for people to be understanding.

"Everyone is being impacted in different ways, everyone is going through it differently so just don't judge," Gregg wrote. "I think many seniors are working with what they have and people need to see that. We've missed out on a lot of social aspects that come with senior year and we are all feeling it. Everything is so new and different than normal life. Most of us are just trying to finish up."

"Most of the girls use running or the team as an outlet for one thing or another and, in the middle of COVID, we are very blessed to have each other and our sport for that."

Shelton board members back naming Mini-Dome for Gregg

By Gordon Weeks

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Members of the Shelton School Board say they support naming the Shelton High School Mini-Dome court after Terry Gregg, who coached the Highclimber boys basketball team for 19 years.

In 32 years as a high school head coach, Gregg's teams compiled a record of 681 wins and 217 losses. He was named the Washington prep coach of the year in 1976, and led Shelton to the Class 3A state title that year. The next year, the Highclimbers finished second in the state tournament.

The board members discussed the possible honor Feb. 4 during a study session.

The board will talk about it again at its March 10 meeting.

In the summer of 2018, the district named the Shelton High School football field Jack Stark Field, after the school's head football coach for 25 years. The district's naming committee was talking about the honor for Gregg when the pandemic struck, and the conversation was put on hold, said Katie Diamond, a district spokesperson.

Board member Keri Davidson, a Shelton High School graduate, said she and her

husband support the honor for Gregg. She played as a fourth-grader at one of Gregg's elementary school basketball camps in the Mini-Dome.

"I felt like we needed to give enough time for (Stark's) honor to be recognized and I think we have," she said. "Terry Gregg is a wonderful person. I learned to play basketball from him, as did many students in the Shelton School District."

Davidson added, "It was more than just learning how to play the game. It was about sportsmanship and it was about confidence and it was about respecting the other players."

School Board member Lynn Eaton, another Shelton native, said she supports the honor, as did Sandy Tarzwell.

School board member Sally Brownfield said she has no stance on it, but "I know there's a lot of support for it in the community."

Superintendent Alex Apostle said he and Diamond will take the board comments to the district's naming committee.

"I believe any decision by the school board would weigh heavily with the committee," he said.

The naming committee will present its proposal to the board for approval.



In 32 years as a high school head coach, Terry Gregg's teams compiled a record of 681 wins and 217 losses. He was named the Washington prep coach of the year in 1976, and led Shelton to the Class 3A state title that year. Courtesy photo