

Wheelchair athlete goes for sixth straight win at 3M Half Marathon & Relay

Austin's Kristen Messer is going for her sixth consecutive victory in the 3M Half Marathon female wheelchair division. News 8's Jeff Power has the story.

One local athlete is taking her speed to new levels. "I was born in Dallas, Texas and we moved to Austin when I was two years old, so basically I am an Austinite."

Kristen Messer is racing in the wheelchair division of the 3M Half Marathon this Sunday. She has endured a lot of challenges since child birth.

"I have what is called Cerebral Palsy. It is a birth defect. When my mother was in labor the umbilical cord, there was not enough fluid for it to move it around, so everytime she had a contraction it wrapped around my neck and my heart would stop. The part of my brain that tells me how to walk got damaged."

Kristen's will to win and her support group are the keys to her success.

"My mom is number one first and foremost my biggest supporter. I have really good trainers. I workout at the high intensity training center. I get funding from the challenged athletes foundation. I do have a lot of support groups, which is really good because without support groups and other friends that race, I can't tell you where I would be."

Kristen Messer is 22 years old and has competed in five wheelchair division female races here in the 3M Half Marathon. She's won all five. Kristen how fast can you go?

"Over 40 miles per hour. Now try and keep up," Kristen adds.

"I try not to go 42 miles per hour because I prefer not to play human bowling. If I get the chance and I have room I will definitely let myself go. My best time is 1:33:02 I believe."

As for the fast course the 3M Half Marathon presents.

"It's a pretty flat and downhill course which makes it real fast. I like the fact that it's an equal opportunity race, which means that the wheel chair participants get the same prizes as the runners."

And Kristen is the one to beat. "It's kind of neat for me to be able to say that I am the one to beat."

Her message is loud and clear.

"Keep going and maybe sports is not your avenue, but everybody is meant to do something whether you are physically challenged or not we all have a purpose in the world and just keep chugging to find your purpose."

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