

## Cook Scores Big At Nationals

Written by Mike Kelly  
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Sydney Cook, who will attend Appalachian State University this fall, closed out her high school career on a solid note Friday night.

Cook, who graduated from Watauga High last week, competed in two events---the high jump and the pole vault---at the New Balance Nationals at North Carolina A&T University in Greensboro.

She finished in a four-way tie for second place in the Emerging Elite Division high jump event with an effort of 5-feet, 4 1/2 inches. Brianna Hayes of Chesterfield, Va., won the event with a jump of 5-7.

Cook did not place in the Championship Segment of the pole vault (no height); Morgann LeLeux of Louisiana won the event, clearing the bar at 13-8 1/4. Sydney White of East Forsyth finished a solid second with a personal-best effort of 12-11 (which is also a new North Carolina high school record in the women's pole vault).

White won the Class 4A state championship in the pole vault at North Carolina A&T on May 15. She cleared the bar with a new state record at the time of 12-7. That broke the old mark of 12-6 set by Cassie Crawford of ASU (and Panther Creek High School), who set the record in 2010. Unfortunately, the news wasn't so good for the Watauga 4x800-meter relay team. That unit, which turned in a third-place finish at the Class 4A state track meet at this facility in May, finished in 16th place on Friday night. But they had an excellent time.

The unit of Darby Middlebrook, Hailey Middlebrook, Julia Roberts and Hannah Barbour, finished the race in 9:27.28, which is only a little more than six seconds slower than their time of 9:21.27 in the state finals. That effort at the state meet is the fifth fastest time in state history.

But Watauga found itself going up against a loaded field Friday at Nationals. The Bronxville Track Club of New York won the race and set a new meet record in the process by burning up the track in 8:49.85. The old record was 8:51.60 for both men and women set in 2001. The effort was also six seconds shy of the national record (8:43.12) set by Eleanor Roosevelt High School of Maryland in 2008.

Barbour will be Watauga's final competitor in the field Saturday morning at 9:30 am in the 2,000-meter steeplechase.