Written by Mike Kelly
Thursday, 11 October 2012 15:15

The high school cross country season is winding down, and senior Darby Middlebrook of the Watauga High women's cross country team is aiming her sights on a possible state championship. Middlebrook had another strong outing

Wednesday afternoon as she paced the field by winning the women's championship race at the United Way Invitational in Newton, N.C. Middlebrook won the race in 18:09.66. Fellow senior Madison Harman finished second in 18:33.24. The Pioneers had four runners in the top 20 and won the inviational with a team score of 59.
Providence Day finished second with 66 points; North Lincoln was third with 72 points. Riley Dobbins finished 13th in 20:05.26; Celia Jackson finished 15th in 20:12.42. The WHS women also had a strong showing in the invitational race, thanks to Kathleen Mansure and Lynde Wangler, who duplicated what Middlebrook and Harman did in the championship race. Mansure won the race in 19:37.76; Wangler finished second in 19:39.45. Jesse Wangler finished 20th in 21:21.66. The Pioneers finished second with 70 points. Pisgah won the invitational race with 55 points. WHS had six finishers in the top 25 in the women's development race.
Rachel Foutz led the way finishing 17th (23:39.40), Lauren Welch was 19th (23:52.32), Savanna Randle was 20th (23:53.42), Sophia Priso was 21st (23:58.07), Addie McClure was 22nd (23:58.87), and Grace Bowling was 23rd (24:11.35). WHS finished third with 89 points. Providence Day won the meet with 17 points---two points shy of a perfect score.
On the men's side, WHS had two runners in the top 20 in the championship race. Bryan Brackney led the way finishing 14th in 16:13.04; Josh Anderson was 16th in 16:19.76. The Pioneers finished third as a team with 117 points. Asheville won the meet with 89 points; Providence Day finished second with 97 points. WHS had four runners in the top 20 in the invitational race. Carson Nguyan pace WHS by finished fourth in 17:17.72. Jacob Soule finished tenth in 17:47.02; Joe Wiswell was 18th (18:07.57) and Zack Styron was 19th (18:08.50). The Pioneers finished second with 72 points; East Lincoln won the invitational with 59 points. Matthew Hellenbrand was 21st (18:49.31) in the men's development race; Justin Reagan was 23rd (18:52.34). WHS finished fifth with 133 points; Providence Day won the meet with 24 points. Lynde Wangler was 43rd (20:53) in the 5-K Open Mixed Race; Silas Keeler was 55th (21:18.06).
The Pioneers will take the weekend off. The Northwestern 3A/4A Conference championships at the Lenior Aquatic Center next Wednesday. The Pioneers have swept the conference championships the last two years.

Photo Courtesy: Darby Middlebrook, Sheila Kelly