

## UPDATED: Middlebrook, Pioneers Run Strong In Virginia Meet

Written by Mike Kelly

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Watauga High junior Darby Middlebrook lost her first race of the season on Saturday.

But she still turned in a solid performance against a very talented field and finished fourth in the Girls Varsity "A" Race at the MileStat.Com Invitational in Chesterfield, Va. Middlebrook finished the race in the personal-best time of 17:58, which ranks her fourth in the National Elite Standings.

Hannah Barbour was 21st in the field, completing the course in 19::13 and Madison Harman was 23rd in 19:14. Hailey Middlebrook was 50th. Team-wise, WHS finished fifth.

Peter Vandenberg led the WHS boys cross country team running a splendid race in the Boys Varsity "A" Race. He finished sixth, completing the course in the personal-best time of 15:49. Andrew Vandenberg was 72nd; and Josh Anderson, who lost his shoe during the course of the race, finished 118th. The Pioneers finished 19th as a team.

"It was tough field, very similiar to what we will see at the state meet," said WHS coach Randy McDonough. "I was pleased, and this will get us ready for our (Northwestern 3A/4A) conference championships later this week (Wednesday). We're running real well right now, espeically our girls. But we're still looking for a fifth runner."

Anna Shultz-Coulon led the way for the JV girls as she finished 12th in the Girls JV Race #1. She completed the race in 21:36; Shelby Hickernell cracked the top 20 by finishing 18th in 22:04. Kathleen Mansure was 20th (22:08) and Lily Weeks was 36th. WHS finished second as a team.

Mitch Howell was 43rd in the Boys JV Race #1. The Northwestern 3A/4A Conference Championships will be held Wednesday in Lenior. Both the WHS boys and girls swept the championships last season.

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