

Middlebrook Suffers Leg Injury at Regionals

Written by Mike Kelly

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The Watauga High men's and women's cross country teams have been blessed for a number of years at McAlpine Park in Charlotte. The facility can almost be considered WHS' home away from home. Every year, the Pioneers have

prospered on that course. But their fortunes soured on Saturday at the Class 4A Western Regional. Senior Darby Middlebrook, a two-time regional champion on this course and a state champion in 2010, suffered a serious leg injury and was forced to drop out of the race after she paced the field through the first two miles of the race. The end result, T.C. Roberson senior Brooke Gordon won the individual title.

"That's not the way I wanted to win this," a tearful Gordon, who won the race in 18:09. "It's hard to see a friend hurting like that."

The WHS women did not qualify as a team. They finished sixth with 124 points. Despite the loss of Middlebrook and their disappointing finish, the Pioneers did produce a pair of qualifiers for the state meet next Saturday at Beeson Park in Kernersville. Doria Kosmala finished 12th in 18:59, and Madison Harman was 13th in 19:05.

The Providence High men and women teams swept the regional meet for the first time in the school's 23-year history, and junior Wyatt Maxey added to his Southwestern 4A championship by winning the men's individual title.

The Providence men had three runners in the top 20 in the men's race. The Panthers bested the field with 55 points. T.C. Roberson finished second with 74. The WHS men finished third with 87 points; Ardrey Kell was fourth (132 points).

Josh Anderson paced the Pioneers by finishing third in 15:50. Michael Holland was 13th in 16:43. Peter Vandenburg, an all-state runner last season (he finished eighth at the state meet) who has been battling a foot injury since last spring, was 20th (16:59); Brian Brackney was 21st (17:00).

Patrick Sheenhan of Lake Norman (second place in 15:44), Dylan Mathewson of South Caldwell (fourth in 16:11) and Fisher Ramsey of East Mecklenburg (eighth in 16:16) were the individual qualifiers. In the women's race, Providence had three runners in the top 10 and bested the field with 55 points. T.C. Roberson finished a distant second with 82 points. Ardrey Kell was third (85 points) and Myers Park finished fourth (88 points) to qualify for the state meet. Anna Vess (fifth in 18:44), Larissa Wood (sixth in 18:44), and Emma Himelein-Wachowiak (1st in 18:56) of A.C. Reynolds joined Harman and Kosmala as individual qualifiers.

The men's Class 4A state championship race begins at 10:30 a.m. next Saturday, November 2; the women's championship race starts at 11:30 a.m.

Photo Courtesy: Darby Middlebrook, Sheila Kelly