

WHS Produces Three State Qualifiers

Written by Mike Kelly
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Watauga High track coach Randy McDonough said it best, "It was a tough day." And he wasn't kidding, either. The Pioneers had 18 qualifiers (ten for the girls, eight for the boys) competing in 14 events at the North Carolina High School Athletic Association Class 4A Western Regional on Saturday at A.C. Reynolds High in Asheville, N.C. The girls finished ninth and scored 31 points. They also produced three state qualifiers in four events. The boys were 20th with 11 points and failed to produce a state qualifier.

Taylor Drummonds paced WHS as the senior qualified for state in two events, the girl's pole vault, where she posted a second-place finish and cleared the bar with a personal-best effort of ten-feet, six-inches; she finished third in the girl's 100-meter hurdles, crossing the finish line in 16.09 seconds. Savannah Drummonds qualified for state thanks to a third place finish in the girl's pole vault (9-6); Alison Seramur finished fourth in the girl's pole vault (9-6) and qualified for state.

And that was about it for WHS on Saturday afternoon. Some of the old reliables struggled against a competitive field. Senior Doria Kosmala finished 14th in the girl's 800 (2:34.79) and eighth in the 1,600 (5:28.86); fellow senior, Darby Middlebrook, who suffered a serious leg injury in cross country last fall (at the Class 4A Western Regional in Charlotte last October) skipped the 1,600 and turned in a seventh-place finish in the 3,200 (12:01.06). Madison Harman finished ninth in the 3,200 (12:14.62), Kathleen Mansure was 14th (13:02.24) in the 3,200.

WHS finished 14th in the girl's 4x400 (Kennedy Kavanaugh, Lily Weeks, Kosmala, Grace Plyler), finishing that race in 4:28.20; the Pioneers were sixth in the 4x800 relay (Kosmala, Harman, Weeks, and Kathleen Mansure) as they crossed the finish line in 10:16.94.

Michael Holland and the 4x800 relay (Bryan Brackney, Josh Anderson, Ryan Hellenbrand, and Luke Johnson) had WHS' best showings of the day. Holland turned in a fifth-place finish in the boy's 3,200 (10:19.60); Drew Boyette was sixth (10:39.44). The 4x800 relay finished fifth in 8:12.22.

Hellenbrand finished 12th in the boy's 800 (2:10.51); Brackney did not finish the race. Anderson was tenth in the 1,600 (4:46.88); Zack Styron finished 13th in the boy's 300 hurdles (43.73); Justin Hall was 11th in the triple jump (38-03); Justin Hall and Matthew Hall finished in a two-way tie for ninth in the boy's pole vault (10-6).

Asheville-Roberson won the girl's regional title with 92 points. Charlotte-Mallard Creek finished a close second with 88 points. Mallard Creek won the boy's regional championship with 90 points; Charlotte-Vance finished a distant second with 76 points.

The state finals will be on Saturday, May 18 at North Carolina A&T University in Greensboro, N.C. In Class 3A, the Hickory boys finished fifth at the state championships with 31 points. Cameron Stinson of the Red Tornadoes put on an outstanding performance.

He turned in three second-place finishes in the boy's 100-meter dash (10.71), the boy's 200 (21.65), and the boy's long jump (22-09). Hibriten finished in a tie for 35th place with six points. The Hickory girls finished 12th with 20 points. The 4x100 relay team finished third in 49.20; Rochelle Gaither finished fourth in the high jump with an effort of five feet.

Berry Academy won the girl's title with 51 points; West Carteret finished second with 46 points. Northern Guilford won the boy's championship with 57 points; Northeast Guilford finished second with 45.50 points. T.J. Logan of Northern Guilford, who is headed to the University of North Carolina on a football scholarship, last week had been named the winner of the Pat Best Memorial Award as the 2013 NCHSAA Male Athlete of the Year, and he certainly lived up to his

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billing. He captured the 100 in a winning time of 10.65 seconds, won the 200 in 21.61, and then anchored the winning four by 100 relay team which broke the tape in 41.99 seconds. He was named the Most Valuable Performer of the men's championships.

West Carteret's Blake Dodge earned the women's MVP award as she led her team to a second-place finish and set some records as well. She established new 3-A marks in both the 800 (2:13.23) and the 1600 (4:59.35) and also ran a leg on the record-setting four by 800 relay team. Dodge was also the MVP in the state indoor championships earlier this year.