

It's hard to believe, but the high school cross country season begins on Thursday. The Watauga High boy's and girl's teams are currently ranked 25th by NCRunners.com in their respective polls.

The WHS girls have one of the longest and deepest traditions in our sport, but they face several obstacles this fall. The graduation of their top three runners (and four of their top 7) from last fall will hurt, as will the loss of Coach David Honea (although he was only a part of the very strong staff at Watauga). The culture of hard work will remain long after them, though, and that is what always gives this team the hope of making the state meet. Depth appears to be a bit of a problem, although a good summer can help counteract that. The rising junior class appears to be strong, and that means it may not be long before we see the two-tone blue and white in the top 10 again.

It is almost the exact same story for the Pioneer boys. The graduation of a very strong senior class, coupled with a shake-up in the coaching staff, could make this a bit of a rebuilding year. There is young talent, however, as only two of the top 7 returners are seniors this fall, and Watauga has a potential individual star developing in Michael Holland. This team ranks third in the 4A West coming into the season, and taking this many returners to the state meet would be an excellent step back toward the top 10 in 2014.

T.C. Roberson is ranked fourth in the girl's preseason poll; the top two teams in girl's cross country and the top three teams in boy's cross country will be announced on August 1, the first official day of practice. The Pioneers will host the Clash of the Classes Meet on Saturday, August 17.

**2013 Watauga girls:**

1) Kathleen Mansure	19:25.00	61
2) Lynde Wangler	19:50.00	95
3) Celia Jackson	20:25.00	192
4) Shelby Hickernell	20:48.00	265
5) Lily Weeks	21:06.00	315
Average Time: 20:18.80 -- Total Time: 1:41:34.00 -- 1-5 Split: 1:41.00		
6) Taylor Woolridge	21:34.90	441
7) Sidney Wiswell	22:43.00	729

**2013 Watauga boys:**

1) Michael Holland	16:26.00	51
2) Matt Osborne	17:08.18	174

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3) Drew Boyette 17:11.00 186

4) Will Vandenberg 17:15.00 199

5) Jacob Soule 17:50.00 400

Average Time: 17:10.04 -- Total Time: 1:25:50.18 -- 1-5 Split: 1:24.00

6) Zack Styron 18:01.00 464

7) Joe Wiswell 18:26.00 634