

Pioneers have bittersweet day at state meet

Written by Mike Kelly
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The Watauga High men's and women's track teams had a tough day on Saturday at the Class 4A State Track Meet at North Carolina A&T University in Greensboro.

The WHS women, who had eight state qualifiers and two regional champions in the field, finished 14th and scored 12.50 points; the men, who had four qualifiers in the field, finished in 27th place and produced nine points.

Jordan Pineda, Sidney Cook and the women's 4x800 relay team posted the best efforts of the day.

Pineda, who qualified in two events: the shot put and the discus, finished fourth in the discus with a throw of 147 feet, 02-inches. He was sixth in the shot put with a throw of 49-10.75.

"The key is consistency," said Pineda, who finished in second place in both events at regionals last week. "The shot put is more power, and the discus is more finesse. But the key is being consistent on every throw. And that isn't easy to master."

Sidney Cook, who qualified in two events: the pole vault and the high jump, had a fourth-place finish in the pole vault (10-6) and a fifth-place finish in the high jump (5-2).

But the 4x800 relay team (Kayla Schneider, Hannah Barbour, Julia Roberts and Hailey Middlebrook), despite its sixth-place finish, did set a new school record in the event as they completed the race in 9:33.52. It broke the old mark of 9:34.9 set by Marina Chase, Whitney Woods, Donna Bealer and Megan Keefe way back in 1998.

"We've been shooting for this record all year." said Julia Roberts. "And we wanted to shatter it. We have a very close group, and two great leaders in Kayla and Hannah. We've been running with a lot of confidence all year."

It was especially fitting for Schneider, who will continue her running career at Appalachian State University next season.

"We've had a strong season," Schneider said. "We have the confidence and the endurance to break the record. It's a special group. We've worked very hard to attain this goal."

Tara Trivette finished ninth in the high jump (5-0); Laura Gulliver was eighth in the pole vault (10-6); Barbour was 12th in the 3200-meter-run (11:28.62); Kasey Jones was 13th (15.61 seconds) in the preliminary round of the 100-meter-hurdles and didn't make the finals.

On the men's side, Gab Romano was eighth in the discus (137-03); Reid Harris was 12th in the pole vault (12-06); Daniel Osborne was 15th in the 3200-meter-run (10:08.03).

Wakefield won the women's title with 49 points. T.C. Roberson finished fourth with 37. Charlotte Vance won the men's title with 60 points. There were also six North Carolina records set on Saturday.

Samantha George of Millbrook posted a time of 4:55.67 in the 1600, which ranks her fifth all-time in the state of North Carolina; Sanura Eley-O'Reilly of Jack Britt won the 400-meter-run in 53.43, which ranks her second all-time in the state and currently ranks her fourth in the USA; Keni Harrison of Clayton ran a 42.53 in the 300-meter-hurdles, which ranks her third all-time in the state and currently ranks her 12th in the nation; Jocelyn Keen of Fuquay-Varina ran the 800-meter-run in 2:12.79, which ranks her 12th all-time in the state; the Wakefield women's 4x400-meter-relay team won their race in 3:49.83, which gives them a No.1 ranking on the state's all-time list; and the Southeast Raleigh men's 4x400-meter-relay team posted a state

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record as they nosed out Wakefield to win their event in 3:16.29.