



South Pasadena Tiger Run 12/7/25

By Coach Payne

On Saturday, the Barnhart Cross-Country team met for the first time this year at the South Pasadena High School Tiger Run. The Tiger Run is a 5k or 10k run that supports their school community but for our squad, it was a chance to test ourselves over the 5k distance.

It was a brisk morning but one by one our team arrived to the sounds of pre-race music and the wafting smells of the pancake breakfast that was put on for all in attendance. With timing bibs attached and final nutrition taken onboard, the crew took to the athletics track for a group warm-up. I have been delighted with the responsibility taken on by members of our team so it was no surprise to see **Sagan Eaker** and **Will Gunn** lead the warm-up so well.

Suddenly it was time to head to the start/finish line where the customary national anthem echoed through the neighbourhoods. Final messages of encouragement were passed on from the huddled support team of parents and Dr Spurrier before they were off. Once I had seen them go, I cut through the neighborhoods to try and see them at the 1k mark. To my surprise, all six runners had already shot through the first checkpoint. The adrenaline of your first race can often be your downfall if you start too quickly so I hoped they could maintain their early pace.

I cut back through the neighborhoods again to the 3.5k mark where I saw our lead runner, **Arav Golla**, cruising through the field. Not far behind was fellow 5th grader, **Evan Gould**, who was determined to close the gap to his teammate. It wasn't long before **Griffin Ray** came storming around the corner with **Claire Kao** hot on his heels. Following on were our two middle schoolers, Will and Sagan, who were pacing the race beautifully and working in tandem to support each other through the final stretch.

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At the finish line, there was a thrill as the first Barhart jersey, Arav, crossed the line in a remarkable time of 25:16 good enough for 2nd place in his age group. Evan and Griffin were soon to follow and both earned a 5th and 7th place respectively. 4th grade Claire is our youngest member of the team but her extraordinary endeavour also meant she crossed the finish line 2nd in her age group. Shortly after, Sagan and Will who had paced the race together put the hammer down and showed real determination to sprint up the hill and over the line.

And so, just after half an hour of racing, we were done. Our team sat together in the South Pasadena sun recovering from their efforts with steely smiles across their faces. The majority were running the 5k for the first time and to get over that hurdle is a huge accomplishment. To then run it in such good time is a testament to the hard work they have put in over the quarter; they did us all proud.

Another senior member of the team, **Caden Chwang**, was sadly unable to participate in this meet but, in solidarity with his teammates, found time over the weekend to run his own race setting a new personal record of 20:10. Congratulations Caden!

