CROCKETT CROSS-COUNTRY GIRLS PLACE 14TH AT TSSAA STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS



Above: Before they got all sweaty, Coach Julie Nass took a team picture of Crockett's Lady Cavalier cross-country team at the State Championships at Shelby Farms Park in Memphis. From left: Catherine Scruggs (out with a foot injury), Claire Evans, Marley Thornton, Avery Thornton, Alivia Hale, Hannah Wede, and Caroline Scruggs. (Photo by Julie Nass)

Across the state of Tennessee, there are 91 schools classified as Division 1-AA for the sport of cross-country.

After Thursday's 5K race at Shelby Farms Park in Memphis for the TSSAA State Championships, Crockett County registered a highly respectable 14th place in the final girls standings.

Coach Julie Nass – very familiar with the historical struggles that West Tennessee teams have had gaining any traction against the schools from the more mountainous areas of the state – was thrilled that her squad continues to inch its way upward in the cross-country pecking order.

"These East Tennessee teams are used to running steep hills and in thin air," Nass said. "I bet they think this course is flat as a pancake. So I knew it would be hard for us to compete for the top spots. But we beat some schools from East and Middle Tennessee this time, so I'm excited for what we can do in the future. We're still so young (only one senior), and this provided good experience for us. The girls are already talking about what events they can run when track season comes in the spring."

Crockett's top individual finisher was sophomore Alivia Hale, who placed 78th in the field of 176 runners. Hale only started running cross-country last year to get in better shape for her freshman soccer season, but is quickly developing into one of the better racers in West Tennessee. She continues to learn how to better pace herself earlier on the course, as she often makes a big kick at the end.

Avery Thornton, a junior this season, finished 84th; freshman Caroline Scruggs, setting a personal record with a time of 24:23.86, was 99th, and admitted she had too much left in the tank at the end. "I probably could have gone faster earlier on," Scruggs said. Nass said this experience will help her do just that next time.

"These freshmen are still learning race strategies and how to manage their own bodies during a run," she said. "Caroline has come a long way in a short amount of time."

Senior Claire Evans, in her final cross-country race, placed 110th and had Nass lamenting the end of her career.

"I have coached both of Claire's older sisters and have been to the State with all of them," she said. "So I guess this is the end of the Evans era, and it makes me sad. This family has meant so much to this program."

Two more Lady Cavalier freshmen – Marley Thornton and Hannah Wede – finished 120th and 159th and also gained valuable experience.

"At our team meeting last night, I told them all that it's a wonderful experience to make it to the State, in any sport," Nass said. "And knowing we weren't going to finish in the top three, I told them to just soak up as much of the experience as they could and just have fun out there. I'm so proud of them, because I have a bunch of tough girls on this team. They run through pain, and they don't complain. They run when it's hot, they run when it's cold. They are the kind of group you can build a program on."

Nass was also proud that her crew wasn't far behind Obion County – West Tennessee's top program – in the final race standings. Obion was 11th overall.

And as a sidelight – and perhaps indicating that West Tennessee is making strides in the sport in this state – two Dresden runners, Hudson McDaniel (girls) and Vaughn Bounds (boys) captured individual state championships in the Division 1-A races.

Crockett also had its first runner in the boys race in quite a while – and he's just a sophomore. Uriel Diaz placed 171st and had an opportunity to learn how the best of the best prepare and execute their race plans. "He'll be a better racer from this point because of what he saw today," Nass said.

Now, Crockett's racers look forward to being members of the first school team to represent Crockett County on its new track in the spring. The future is bright.

TSSAA State XC Championships (5K)

Final Girls Team Scores: (1) Signal Mountain 46; (2) Heritage 100; (3) Liberty Creek 111; (4) Hume-Fogg 138; (5) Alcoa 152; (6) Cherokee 198; (7) Central Magnet 203; (8) Elizabethton 244; (9) Anderson County 270; (10) Cumberland County 295; (11) Obion County 301; (12) Fairview 381; (13) L & N STEM Academy 382; (14) Crockett County 393; (15) Sullivan East 412; (16) Marshall County 428; (17) Valor Collegiate Academy 462; (18) Chester County 470; (19) Hardin County 499; (20) Millington Central 517; (21) Lakeland Prep 538; (22) Memphis East 561; (23) Stone Memorial 563.

Girls Top 20 Individuals: (1) Ava Moody, Anderson Co 18:20.45 1; (2) Arvella Nave, Elizabethton 18:39.47; (3) Hadleih Mitchey, Heritage 18:57.39; (4) Maxine Richards, Signal Mountain 19:10.97; (5) Avery Jo Thomas, Heritage 19:15.67; (6) Eliza Albrechtsen, Signal Mtn 19:31.44; (7) Alaina Uselton, Westview 19:36.13; (Caylin Hale, Cumberland Co 19:40.66; (9) Chaiti Ainapure, Liberty Creek 19:43.32; (10) Corrie Mihalko, Millington Central 19:47.86; (11) Abby Hughes, Fayette Ware 19:59.88; (12) Lyla Hillis, Liberty Creek 20:04.16; (13) Naomi Malone, Signal Mtn 20:07.05; (14) Adelin Glover, Signal Mtn 20:15.22; (15) Lilly Paxson, Signal Mtn 20:22.94; (16) Riley Harris, Alcoa 20:24.02; (17) Rachel Benefield, Central Magnet 20:33.73; (18) Braydin Baresel, Unicoi Co 20:43.18; (19) Avilynn Green, Heritage 20:45.61; (20) Jordan Walker, Anderson Co 20:55.09.

Crockett County Runners: (78) Alivia Hale 23:20.28; (84) Avery Thornton 23:33.93; (99) Caroline Scruggs 24:23.86; (110) Claire Evans 24:53.49; (120) Marley Thornton 25:31.19; (159) Hannah Wede 30:11.19.



Above: Three girls were ahead of Alivia Hale as she came down the final stretch of Thursday's 5K State Championships; and with this last-minute sprint, ... (Photo by Ron Barry)

Other West Tennessee Runners: (33) Brylee Patrick, Obion Co 21:28.93; (42) Bella Lamb, Chester Co 21:56.62; (47) Klicey Campbell, Obion Co 22:08.46; (56) Alexis Matlock, Covington 22:41.20; (67) Allisson Catalan, Hardin Co 22:59.74; (68) Eva Lewis, Lexington 22:59.97; (72) Clara Younger, McNairy Central 23:10.47; (79) Claire Coleman, Chester Co 23:20.71; (82) Lauren Carpenter, Hardin Co 23:27.27; (90) Avery Coffey, Obion Co 23:57.38; (93) Jillian Menees, Obion Co 24:05.63; (102) Elaine Fabacher, Lakeland Prep 24:29.96; (103) Victoria Santayygo, Lakeland Prep 24:32.40; (105) Chloe Anderson, Obion Co 24:38.36; (108) Ainsley Phillips, Westview 24:43.92; (116) Amira Boatman, Memphis East 25:23.98; (119) Riley Moore, Obion Co 25:29.75; (124) Jitzy Olguin, Memphis East 25:51.19; (125) Katy Frazier, Obion Co 26:01.75; (135) Yelverton Jaylyn, Chester Co 27:07.03; (137) Ruby Roberts, Chester Co 27:13.18; (140) Emy Landa, Memphis East 27:24.58; (142) Catelyn Spencer, Hardin Co 27:41.61; (143) Zahra White-Chepkwony, Millington 27:46.84; (145) Maci Hale, Lakeland Prep 28:09.14; (146) Lisa Spagl, Lakeland Prep 28:23.84; (147) Avery Sledge, Hardin Co 28:27.69; (148) Riley Washburn, Millington 28:47.08; (151) Travisha Jackson, Hamilton 29:00.69; (152) Emily Kmet, Memphis East 29:07.14; (155) Presley Bruno, Memphis East 29:22.46; (160) Madelyn Hubbard, Millington 30:21.81; (162) Sidney Garl, Millington 30:43.88; (163) Tatum Madden, Lakeland Prep 31:24.12; (164) Cristina Fernandez Moreno, Lakeland Prep 31:25.98; (166) Michelle Olivas, Hardin Co 31:42.93; (167) Maddie Trouy, Millington 31:42.97; (168) Jasmine Storms, Hardin Co 32:48.42; (172) Piper Martin, Millington 35:08.15; (173) Honesty Jones, Memphis East 36:14.43; (174) Tremaziah Williams, Memphis East 37:17.59; (175) Alison Boblett, Chester Co 37:34.91; (176) Abigail Hill, Chester Co 38:53.53. Total Runners Finishing: 176.

Final Boys Team Scores: (1) Martin Luther King [Nashville] 67; (2) Central Magnet [Murfreesboro] 89; (3) Greeneville 97; (4) Signal Mountain 120; (5) Volunteer 189; (6) Liberty Creek 192; (7) Alcoa 237; (8) Cumberland County 255; (9) Chester County 285; (10) Anderson County 286; (11) Hume-Fogg 298; (12) Tullahoma 357; (13) Sweetwater 363; (14) L & N STEM Academy 389; (15) Westview 406; (16) Fairview 407; (17) Elizabethton 412; (18) Macon County 448; (19) South Gibson County 458; (20) Obion County 504; (21) Memphis East 520; (22) Lakeland Prep 560; (23) Millington Central 672; (24) Fayette Ware 777.

Boys Top 20 Individuals: (1) Trey Bailey, Greeneville 15:12.89; (2) Wyatt Boling, Martin Luther King 15:39.69; (3) Jack Mantooth, Westview 15:42.94; (4) Kevin McCurry, Volunteer 15:48.83; (5) Avery Young, Montgomery Central 15:58.50; (6) Jonathan Lewis, South Gibson County 16:06.31; (7) Simon Ally, MLK 16:14.52; (Brent Ferrell, MLK 16:20.74; (9) Baker Brooks, Alcoa 16:30.79; (10) Colter Lewis, MLK 16:33.30; (11) McCade Frye, Sweetwater 16:33.91; (12) William Edwards, Fairview 16:35.51; (13) Sam Laramore, Signal Mtn 16:44.47; (14) John Cutler, Anderson Co 16:48.63; (15) Blake Nutter, Cent Mag 16:53.82; (16) Jules Richard, Greeneville 16:54.60; (17) Mitch Simmons, Signal Mtn 16:57.61; (18) Nate Dyer, Cent Mag 16:57.67; (19) Mckinley Norris, Unicoi Co 16:59.27; (20) Carson Phillips, Cent Mag 17:03.17. Crockett County Runner: (171) Uriel Diaz 21:23.01. Total Runners Finishing: 193.

MIDDLE SCHOOL BASKETBALL: Crockett dropped a pair of games at Huntingdon Thursday night, with the girls losing 51-23 and the boys falling 52-45.

Hayden Weathers scored 21 points for Huntingdon to thwart a second-half comeback by Coach Tyler Gadlen's Cavaliers, who had trailed by 13 at the intermission and made eight three-pointers in the contest. Cade Reasons led Crockett's balanced scoring attack with 10 points. In the girls contest, Crockett was outpointed 24-6 in the second half. Addie Whitby paced the Lady Cav scoring with nine points.

Huntingdon 51, Crockett Girls 23
Crockett – Addie Whitby 9, Trinity Pankey 5, Till Holyfield 3, Anna McCoy 2, Lynlee King 2, Addison Ward 2. 2-Pt FG: 9. 3-Pt FG: 0. FT: 5-10. Record: 3-4.

Hunt – Anderson Pearson 11, LaKeitha Cason 10, Emma Smith 6, Vivian Singleton 6, J. Dillahunty 6, Kaylee Eatman 4, C. Wood 3, A. Martin 3, Ella Atkins 2. 2-Pt FG: 13. 3-Pt FG: 4 (Pearson, Smith, Dillahunty, Wood). FT: 13-20.

Huntingdon 52, Crockett Boys 45
Crockett – Cade Reasons 10, Hudson Enfinger 8, Jaylen Frye 7, Messiah McCurry 6, Roman Barker 5, Jayce Cobb 3, Kamden Lewis 3, Brendan Green 3. 2-Pt FG: 8. 3-Pt FG: 8 (Enfinger 2, Frye 2, Barker, Cobb, Green, Lewis). FT: 5-10. Record: 4-3.

Hunt – Hayden Weathers 21, Noah Webb 17, Noah Goble 5, Derius Prateher 4, Christian Cerda 3, Davey Strayhorn 2. 2-Pt FG: 12. 3-Pt FG: 3 (Weathers 2, Cerda). FT: 19-32.



Above: Between the second and third miles, Avery Thornton ended up in a long duel with Cherokee High School's Aniyah Bandy. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: By the time they reached the home stretch near the finish line, Avery Thornton had left Cherokee's Bandy well behind. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: ... she passed them all at the wire, securing her team-best 78th-place finish. She's just a sophomore. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Crockett's Avery Thornton tries to work her way through the crowded pack of runners during the first mile. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Caroline Scruggs and Marley Thornton -- both just freshmen -- ran much of the course together for the Lady Cavaliers. (photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Marley Thornton began experiencing stomach problems and dropped back, but still found a way to fight through the discomfort and put on a spirited kick at the finish. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Meanwhile -- as the determined look etched on her face indicates -- Caroline Scruggs began to accelerate and move up in the pack ... (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: ... before she roared down the home stretch to secure a Top 100 finish and establish her best personal time for the 5K distance. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Claire Evans races through one of the more scenic stretches of the Shelby Farms Park layout. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: As the afternoon temperature rises and the sun becomes an additional enemy, Claire Evans tries to fight through the pain as she nears the end of her final Lady Cav cross-country race. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Freshman Hannah Wede rounded out the starting lineup for Crockett in the TSSAA State Championships and weathered the climbing temperature to finish strong. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Not to be forgotten, Crockett sophomore Uriel Diaz became the first Cavalier runner in several years to qualify for the TSSAA State Championships. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Below: The start of the girls race was a mad scramble behind the golf cart "pace car." (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Uriel Diaz gained some valuable experience that could come in handy over his next two seasons. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: The Lady Cavaliers were anxious to watch the start of the boys race and discuss some strategy after they saw how it played out. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Left: Obion County's Klicey Campbell -- one of the top racers in West Tennessee -- celebrates her arrival at the finish line on a warm day in Memphis. (Photo by Ron Barry)