

Sports

See the Sports Section at nghanews.com

Track: Union wins six events, sets four school records at region UCHS qualifies 25 athletes for State Sectionals in 20 events

By Todd Forrest
Sports Editor
sports@nghanews.com

Nicholson - Union County track and field set four school records en route to six region championships during last week's two-day 8-AA Championship meet at East Jackson High School.

Sophomore Ava Lloyd took home the 8-AA title in the 100M race, setting a school-record time of 12.77 seconds. Senior Reagan Covington broke a Union County record during her gold-medal performance in the 400M, clocking in at 1:03.10.

Lloyd, alongside Giovanna Salazar, Ariel McCarter and Nomi Nelson, was a member of the girls' 4x200 relay team that finished first with a time of 1:51.95.

Nelson also won the region in the triple jump with a distance of 30 feet, 10 inches.

Senior Benton Gregory placed first in the 400M race at 51.17. The boys' 4x100 team of JT Neal, Jonah Kluth, Cade Dockrey and Tyler Parker won gold, crossing the line at 43.50.

Senior Taylor Whitehead finished second in the 1000M and 200M events, setting school records in both races with times of 10.78 and 21.63, respectively.

Senior Nolan Thompson placed fourth in the 300M hurdles with a UCHS record time of 43.33.

Other Union County runner-up finishes included Lloyd in the 200M at 27.00; Lola Hunter in the 800M with a time



With a school-record time of 12.77, sophomore Ava Lloyd (lane 4) pulls away from Providence Christian's Zoie Cameron (5), as well as freshmen teammates Nomi Nelson (6) and Izzy Anthros (8). Photo/Todd Forrest

of 2:27.31, and the 1600M at 5:28.92; the girls' 4x100 relay team of Izzy Anthros, Lloyd, McCarter and Salazar clocked in at 53:01; the girls' 4x800 relay team of Ellie Adams, Covington, Kazmierzak and Noel Hyatt crossed the line in 10:19.11.

Anthros placed second in the triple jump at 30-5; the boys' 4x400 relay team of Tyler

Grasty, Benton Gregory, Zander Rotko and Whitehead won silver with a time of 3:31.35; Grasty was second in the triple jump at 40-1.5.

Bronze medals went to Hannah Kazmierzak in the 400M at 1:04.58; Katie Byers in the 100 hurdles with a time of 17.57, the high jump at 4-6 and the long jump with a distance of 14-7.75; the girls' 4x400 relay

team of Adams, Covington, Kazmierzak and Sarah Patterson placed third at 4:24.70.

Neal was third in the 100M at 10.92; Jacob Turner earned bronze in the 110 hurdles with a time of 17.18, the boys' 4x200 relay team of Grasty, Kluth, Neal and Rotko finished third at 1:32.20; Jaxon Totherow took home third in the shot put at 45-5.5.



Senior Benton Gregory wins the 400M with a time of 51.17 over Banks' Jordan Herron and Fellowship's Evan Haynes. Photo/Todd Forrest

Additional athletes qualifying for Sectionals by way of a top-four finish included Jack Wilson in the discus (122-2); Neal in the 200M (22.15); Sofia Foster in the shot put (31-5); Abby Barrett in the triple jump (13-6); Byers in the 300 hurdles (51.85); Hunter in the 3200M (12:35.34); Nelson in the 100M (13.50).

The field events during

Saturday's Class AA State Sectionals get underway at 10:30 a.m. The racing events start at 10:45 a.m. Region 8-AA will be joined by regions 1-AA, 3-AA and 4-AA.

Regions 2-AA, 5-AA, 6-AA and 7-AA will travel to Rockmart for Sectionals.

The Class AA State Championship meet is May 9-11 at East Jackson.

Soccer: No. 1 Model's overtime goal sinks No. 4 Union County in Sweet 16

By Todd Forrest
Sports Editor
sports@nghanews.com

Rome - No. 4 Union County's postseason journey wrapped up in Rome on Thursday, April 25, following a 1-0 overtime loss at No. 1 Model (19-0-1) in the Class AA Sweet 16.

Model delivered the game's only goal less than 2 minutes into the second overtime session, finding the net from 10 yards out. Moments later, senior defender Seth Rutan picked up his second yellow card (the team's fifth), prompting an ejection and forcing Union (9-3-3) to play a man down over the final 6+ minutes.

Despite playing short-handed, the Panthers' went on the attack, nearly scoring the equalizer during the 94th minute, but Benton Gregory's shot was turned away by the Model keeper following an Evan Bohms feed into the box.

Union County got off one more look but Zurriel Mancillas' shot sailed over the crossbar in the 99th.

While the Panthers controlled possession after the break, Model was the aggressor in the first half. The Blue Devils attempted the first three shots of the night before Mancillas was turned away in the 9th minute.

Following a Model corner kick in the 12th, Union keeper Ethan McBride stopped free kicks in the 14th and 19th.

Mancillas and Rutan were each unsuccessful in the 29th, while Model failed to convert five free kicks between the 34th and 40th -- one free kick resulting from a Joel Mendoza yellow.

Union outshot Model 8-4 in the second half, beginning with Mancillas' attempt in the



Senior Evan Bohms (2) flicks a header toward the Model goal during the first half of last Thursday's 1-0 loss. Bohms signs with Georgia State this week. Photo/Todd Forrest

43rd. Later, Bohms' scoring opportunity in the 44th sailed just high.

The Blue Devils' denied Mancillas' free kick during the 54th; Wes Seiler missed in the 58th; Zach Depalma's shot sailed wide in the 62nd;

Gregory couldn't convert in the 66th; Bohms missed in the 72nd and 73rd.

During the 80th, Bohms attacked the penalty area, where he was sent to the turf without a whistle, sending the contest to OT.

Mendoza appeared to put Union up 1-0 in the 86th but the shot was waived off via an offside penalty. Nick Depalma collected Union's fourth yellow card in the 90th, resulting in Model's 17th free kick of the night.



Antonio Solorio is denied by the Model keeper. The collision sent Solorio to the bench for the final minutes of regulation. Photo/Todd Forrest



Senior Seth Rutan battled through injury to return for the stretch run of Union County's season. Photo/Todd Forrest

The Blue Devils turned away Mancillas' shot early in the second overtime, moments before converting the game-winner in the 92nd.

In all, Model combined for 23 free kicks and corner kicks, compared to eight for Union County.

Run Above the Clouds raises money for Woody Gap School

By Todd Forrest
Sports Editor
sports@nganews.com

Suches - During its 24 years, the annual Run Above the Clouds 10K and 5K races have supported scholarships for Woody Gap students, raising \$11,500 in 2023.

The 2024 edition brought 105 runners to Suches for a good cause on the morning of Saturday, April 27. The race, which started at 9 a.m., takes off from Woody Gap School and travels south on

Hwy. 60, past Lake Woody and onto Cooper Gap Rd. The 10K runners trek into the Mt. Airy community before turning around near Sara Springs Trail.

Overall winners of the 10K race were Kathryn O'Day with a time of 47 minutes, 3 seconds and Wyatt Lee at 47:22.

Ernie Janelle and Ava Parker took home overall gold in the 5K at 24:03 and 23:43, respectively.

In the 5K, Elise Evans won the 14U age group with a time of 45:54. The

20-29 winners were Victoria Fowler (30:43) and Timothy Gomez (25:43). In the 30-39 age group, Elizabeth Coleman (25:03) and Ryan Cross (26:40) came in first. Jennifer Sobieski's 28:36 placed first among the 40-49 group.

The 50-59 winners were CK Bellone (29:27) and Steve Ridley (24:58). The 60-69 gold medals went to Betty Janelle (26:49) and Ed Bellone (29:43). Miriam Niemira placed first in the over 70 group at 42:31.

The 10K gold med-

als went to Gunnar Ingram (59:46) in the 15-19 group and Rebekah Anderson (1:07:32) in the 20-29 division. Michele Reid (1:16:36) and Kenneth Holley (55:11) placed first among the 30-39-year-olds.

Alison Greene (58:13) and Dana D'Allessandro (1:04:44) won the 40-49 division. Sharon Arnold (53:46) and James Guy (1:00:50) earned gold for 50-59. Luanne MacIsaac (1:02:56) and Tommy Rogers (58:30) placed first in the 60+ group.

The Run Above the

Clouds would like to thank the following sponsors: United Community Bank of Blairsville, Blue Ridge Mountain EMC, Applesed Tree Service Inc., Behind Wills Lens Photography, Jim Cain, Dr. Paul Woody, Donna Minnich State Farm, Troncalli Subaru, Dixon Electrical Services, Car Crafters, Mountain Property Limited, Mansfield, Total Recovery Paint and Body Shop, Inc., Above the Clouds Hostel, Kennedy Creek Resort, Suches Dirt Daubers, Byers Well Drilling, Inc., Logan Turnpike

Mill, Wildcat BBQ and General Store, Old Toccoa Farm, Two Wheels of Suches, Adams and Logan Insurance Agency. Louise McTaggart, Realtor, Lester's Hill Water Authority, Lance Law Firm, Living Water Winery, Black Mountain Trout Ponds and Fishing Shack, Nimblewheels Bicycles, Wolf Mountain Winery, Trammell Tire Pros, Elizabeth Rice Studio, Irene and Gene Povolny, Gian and Carmen Rossi, and Scarlet and Matt Brown.



Overall 5K winners: Ernie Janelle and Ava Parker.



Overall 10K winners: Wyatt Lee and Kathryn O'Day.



Runners, two and four-legged, make the turn onto Cooper Gap Rd.



RATC participants leave the start finish-line at Woody Gap School.



Runners just beyond the Cooper Gap turnaround.



The youngest RATC participant exits Hwy. 60 for Cooper Gap Rd.



Runners near scenic Lake Woody during the final kilometer of the RATC.



Runners pass the waterfall on Hwy. 60 near Two Wheels of Suches.

RATC photos by Todd Forrest