

History Three-peats Itself

'It's been an unbelievable ride, This is historic. This doesn't happen.' - Coach Adam Gilbert

Blues Win State Title For Third Consecutive Year

BY JONATHAN SCHWAB

The nine seniors on the Parry McCluer High School basketball team put forth an amazing last hurrah on Saturday. The Fighting Blues won their third consecutive state championship, defeating Surry County 58-45 in the Class 1 finals at Virginia Commonwealth University's Siegel Center in Richmond.

With the championship, the Blues (26-4) became just the fifth Virginia High School League girls' team – and the first from Timesland – to win at least three consecutive titles.

"It's been an unbelievable ride," said ninth-year PM head coach Adam Gilbert. "This is historic. This doesn't happen."

Reflecting on what it was like for his players to go for the last two state titles with targets on their backs, Gilbert said, "When they won it as sophomores, everybody thought we had a chance to do it the following year and the year after. It's not that easy, and this year has proven that. We played some really good teams throughout the season."

In last year's finals, the Blues defeated Surry 51-42. The year before, PM eliminated the Cougars in the semifinals 51-48.

In the rematch on Saturday with the Region 1A champions, the Blues trailed late in the first quarter before

going on a 6-0 run into the second quarter, leading by as many as 15 (30-15) in the period before the Cougars (26-5) cut the lead to 30-19 by halftime. PM used its defensive press, going from full-court to half-court man-to-man defense to fend off a second-half comeback by the Cougars. The Blues' pressure defense forced 20 Surry turnovers.

"We wanted to get turnovers, but, more or less, get to their legs," Gilbert said. "Everything that I'd seen, film-wise, game-wise, they didn't have a deep bench. ... The game was tight late. Hopefully our endurance, our depth would prevail. The turnovers were a benefit. ... Great defensive effort on our part." Indeed, Surry dressed just seven players, while the Blues got all 11 players into the game.

Gilbert said the Cougars "fought hard the whole ball game, but these kids are resilient, and I've learned not to bet against them. It doesn't matter how tight the game gets. They're cool, calm and collected, no matter the situation. They were able to hold off those runs and finish the game the way it should've been finished from our end, so I'm really proud of them."

Madison Dunlap led all players with 25 points, scoring 16 in the first half, and she made two 3-pointers and grabbed six rebounds. From the floor, she shot 50 percent (9-of-18). Dunlap found her shot early, helping the Blues go on that second-quarter run.

Dunlap said she stepped up because she had the end goal in mind of winning the championship. "We're focused more on a team effort than individual," she said. "Of course, I wanted to play well, but I would prefer us to just win overall."

Dunlap and nearly all of her senior teammates have been playing sports together since they were in fifth grade, and it became apparent when they began winning basketball tournaments as seventh-graders that this group was destined for more success at the high school level. "Going for the three-peat, I couldn't

'We've been together so long. Just to end it this way was the right way to go out.' - Madison Dunlap



ABOVE, Raising their trophy, the Blues' players celebrate winning their third state title in a row. AT RIGHT, PM senior forward Madison Dunlap puts up a shot. Dunlap led all players with 25 points. BELOW, PM's seniors are overcome by emotion, as Tristen Clark (left) receives a hug from Maggie Patterson, who has Jayla Baker on her shoulder. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photos)



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PM SENIOR guard Emma Camden tries to steal the ball from a Surry County player while PM's Tristen Clark helps out. Camden had five steals to go along with 17 points. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photo)



IN THE press conference after the game, PM senior guard Maggie Patterson answers a question. Members of the Blues' dynasty joining her are (from left) senior Peyton Mohler, head coach Adam Gilbert and seniors Madison Dunlap and Emma Camden. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photo)



BATTLING for a loose ball are PM senior guard Peyton Mohler and Surry County's Jasmyn Pierce. Mohler scored 10 points and grabbed eight rebounds. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photo)

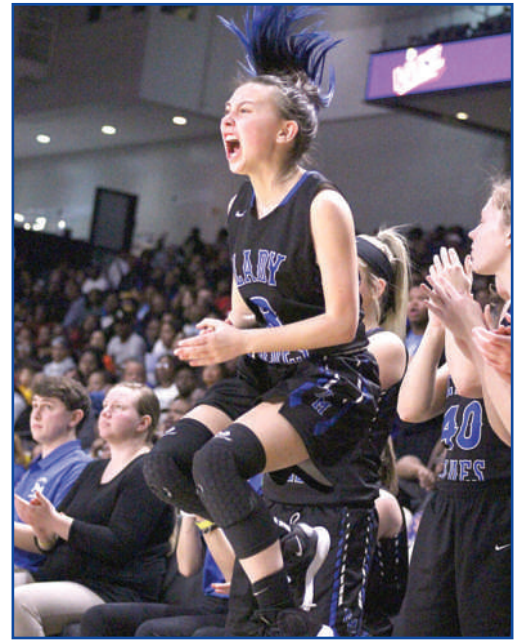


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HONAKER'S LEEANNA McNulty goes to the floor to hold onto the ball while PM senior guard Emma Camden defends her. Other Blues guarding Honaker players are Hailey Huffman (second from left) and Madison Dunlap (far right). (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photo)

FIGHTING BLUES Tristen Clark (left) and Madison Dunlap trap a Honaker player. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photo)

PM Girls Handle Honaker

Strong Third Quarter Allows Blues To Pull Away

BY JONATHAN SCHWAB

The Parry McCluer High School girls basketball team used a strong third quarter to pull away from a close game, defeating Honaker 48-31 in the Class 1 state semifinals on Tuesday of last week at Roanoke College's Cregger Center in Salem.

Only trailing briefly early on, the Fighting Blues led 12-6 after the first quarter before taking a 21-15 lead into halftime. PM started the second half on a 10-2 run, applying its defensive press and outscoring the Tigers 18-8 in the third period to take a 16-point lead into the fourth quarter. The Blues led by as many as 18 in the fourth quarter, and Region 1D champion Honaker (26-3) never threatened a comeback. With their press and man-to-man defense, the Blues forced 15 Honaker turnovers.

Addressing what allowed the Blues to build up the big lead in the third quarter, PM head coach Adam Gilbert said, "The ball bounced our way a little bit. We got some steals, got some layups. The shots started falling. It was a good quarter for us."

Madison Dunlap led PM with 15 points and nine rebounds, sinking two 3-pointers. Prior to Dunlap's 25 points and six rebounds in the state finals, Gilbert said, "This was her best performance of the postseason. Our seniors stepped up big for us. Emma Camden has been the star for us off the bench, and I thought she continued to do that tonight, but it was nice to see Madison have a big game. No better time to have it."

Peyton Mohler added 11 points, five assists and four rebounds for the Blues, while Makenna Smith chipped in eight points and held Honaker's leading scorer, LeeAnna McNulty, to 16 points. McNulty was averaging 24 points per game this season. No other Tiger scored in double figures, as Morgan Duty was Honaker's second highest scorer with seven points. Camden chipped in six points on two 3-pointers for PM. Showing their unselfishness, the Blues dished out 11 assists, while Honaker had five.

On the assignment of defending McNulty, Smith said, "She is one of the tougher players I've had to guard, and I give her credit, but I just tried to deny her the ball, tried to stay in front her, because I know she's a big part of her team. I just tried to limit her touches."

Praising his team's defense, Gilbert said the Tigers "are great shooters. We can't give them too much space, but I thought we did a really good job covering [McNulty]. She got a lot of buckets there in transition, some putbacks, but I thought we did a good job on the boards tonight. A good effort all the way around defensively."

The Blues shot 5-of-13 (38.5 percent) from three-point range, with Camden making two treys, while holding Honaker to 0-8 shooting from beyond the arc. Of her own two 3-pointers, Dunlap said, "I normally play an inside game, but today I stepped out, and I wasn't pressured as much, so I just shot."

The game was quite physical, with the Blues grabbing 27 rebounds to Honaker's 22. "You've got to be willing to take it," Gilbert said. "I think that's a credit to our strength and conditioning coach that we have." Gilbert was referring to PM athletic director Ron Loy, who Gilbert said "does a tremendous job with our players."

The Blues and Tigers met two years ago in the Region 1C semifinals, when the Blues won 61-52 en route to claiming their first state title.

Gilbert said he believes Honaker will continue to be a force to be reckoned with in the future. "This is a completely different team," he said. "They're young and athletic, and they're going to be good the next two years."

Addressing the difference in experience, Honaker head coach Misty Miller said, "Nine seniors compared to my one junior and sophomores and freshmen, the maturity and the experience that they have in the game definitely is a factor."

"We're a young team," Miller continued. "I think the pressure that they put on us was hard for us. ... We turned the ball over, and they got a little bit of a lead."

Gilbert also acknowledged how the Blues' experience helped. He compared the PM team of three years ago to Honaker. Back then, the Blues were mostly freshmen who lost in the state semifinals 49-33 to eventual champion Northwood. "That experience, you can't make that up," he said. "You can't explain it to anybody unless you've been there and done it. I remember when these guys were freshmen and we were on Cloud Nine, and we thought we were the big dogs. We walked into VCU, and Northwood showed us what a big dog was."



THE BLUES' players happily celebrate their victory as they jog off the court. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photo)



PM SENIOR guard Peyton Mohler puts up a shot, on her way to 11 points. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photo)



FIGHTING BLUE senior guard Hailey Huffman drives to the basket. Huffman scored five points. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photo)



SURROUNDED BY Tigers Autumn Miller (11) and LeeAnna McNulty (32), PM senior forward Tristen Clark looks for a teammate to pass to. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photo)



IN A physical game, PM senior guards Allison Coleman (left) and Emma Camden go to the floor to battle Honaker's LeeAnna McNulty for the ball while PM's Tristen Clark watches. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photo)



PM SENIOR forward Makenna Smith boxes out Surry's Alexis Nelson, with PM's Peyton Mohler behind them. Smith grabbed six rebounds. (Ronnie Coffey photo)



FIGHTING BLUES Maggie Patterson (left) and Hailey Huffman put pressure on a Surry County player. (Ronnie Coffey photo)



PM SENIOR forward Tristen Clark boxes out Surry County's NeOndra Kelly. (Ronnie Coffey photo)

Championship

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imagine any other group of girls," Dunlap said. "We've been together so long. Just to end it this way was the right way to go out."

The Blues scored most of their points from the free throw line in the closing minutes. As their lead grew to double digits, their many fans, dressed in blue, chanted, "Three-peat."

Dunlap's senior teammates stepped up, as Emma Camden added 17 points and five steals, and Peyton Mohler had 10 points and a team-high eight rebounds. Allison Coleman chipped in three points, Hailey Huffman grabbed seven rebounds to go along with two points, and Makenna Smith had six rebounds and one point.

Bre'cha Byrd led the Cougars with 17 points and had nine rebounds, helping fuel Surry's second-half comeback, and Alexis Nelson chipped in eight points, a game-high 10 boards and four blocks. Jasmyn Pierce added seven points for Surry.

Surry head coach Chris Brown, in his second year with the Cougars, offered several reasons why the Blues were such a tough team to beat. "They know each other," he said. When teammates have played together for so long, he said, "The continuity of that is something that you can't buy, you can't trade out. They battle. They're tough defensively. They work well together. They run their sets, and they're a good team."

He said PM's press was difficult to handle, but, in the second half, the Cougars "found a seam in their press, getting the ball to the middle, to [Byrd], and to come down and duplicate that, that's what I was looking for. But Parry McCluer, they make adjustments. They would change the way that they would approach it, from a full-court to a half-court [press], going man, and it'll keep you off-balance."

Praising his team, which loses three seniors and should contend for the state title again next year, Brown said, "At the end of the day, it didn't go quite the way I wanted it to, but I'm just very proud of these girls and their effort."

"We lost to a very good team," Brown added. "They're not three-time state champions for nothing."

Gilbert noted that, while the Blues coasted throughout much of the regular season, they played and lost to Class 3 state champion Spotswood twice, playing the Blazers close the second time. The Blues' other losses were against Class 3 state semifinalist Lord Botetourt and Class 5 state quarterfinalist William Fleming, but they beat Class 2 state champion Wise County Central. "It's been a challenging year for them, to say the least, but they were able to use those games and propel them to the point that we're at," Gilbert said.

While showing his appreciation and pride for his players and assistant coaches Katelin Gilbert, Conrad Patterson and Katy Patterson, Gilbert also thanked the fans from the Buena Vista community for showing their support. "From the state tournament on, we get escorted out of town with fire trucks and the police department, and we get escorted back into town," he said. "It's pretty special. The community really gets around these kids, their athletics, and they'll come out and support. I thought today, for a Saturday, at 11 o'clock in the morning, we had a really good crowd."

Over the last four years, the Blues won over 100 games, four Pioneer District championships, two Region 1C championships, and three state titles. They made the state semifinals when the current seniors were freshmen, losing to eventual state champion Northwood. For the senior class, all but Camden were there for the three state titles. Camden transferred from Rockbridge County High School for her junior and senior seasons.

Mohler is the one PM player who has committed to playing college basketball. She signed with Division II school Davis & Elkins College in December. Gilbert noted that Dunlap received several Division II offers but chose to go to Virginia Tech. Mohler and Dunlap both passed the 1,000-point mark this season, and Mohler is the Blues' all-time leader for assists. All nine seniors had offers from at least the Division III level.

The Blues will also graduate Smith, Coleman, Huffman, Maggie Patterson, Jayla Baker and Tristen Clark. PM's only freshman, Katie Claytor, showed great potential this season, and got into the state finals late in the fourth quarter, as did the Blues' Lithuanian exchange student, junior Ugne Pelikyte, who will have some exciting basketball stories to tell back home.

Before the game, Gilbert said, his message to his players was "not to be emotional. You have your senior nights, and senior nights are awful. I don't like senior nights. Everybody's snorting and sneezing all over each other, and it's kind of hard to play with that mindset. Parents are going to be parents. Family's going to be family. You see posts on Facebook: 'This is the last time we're going to do this. ... I love my baby.'" Gilbert said that support is great, but he told his players, "We've got to block that stuff out. You can be emotional after the game's over with, and give these kids credit. They did that. They understood the task at hand, and they went out and did it. I couldn't be prouder of them."

Dunlap said the emotions hit her and the other Blues' leaders when they were taken out of the game with about a minute left, as Gilbert allowed the fans to recognize them. "When we were sitting on the bench, we couldn't help but just cry because it was our last time doing it and the last buzzer we'll ever hear, playing together, but we just tried to take it all in," Dunlap said.

"Winning the other two was really special, too," Mohler added. "We've been thinking about it since we were very young, but just to go out on top is a really big accomplishment."



AT LEFT, PM's cheerleaders show their support. (Ronnie Coffey photo) ABOVE, PM head coach Adam Gilbert and his players cheer from the bench. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photo)



PM HEAD coach Adam Gilbert receives a congratulatory handshake from a Virginia High School League official handing him the trophy, as PM principal Melissa Cobb watches. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photo)



EXPRESSING THEIR emotions as the game concludes are (from left) PM seniors Hailey Huffman, Peyton Mohler and Madison Dunlap, consoling Emma Camden. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photo)



YOUNG FANS hold up a sign for PM senior Jayla Baker. (Ronnie Coffey photo)



PM'S HAILEY Huffman guards Surry's Bre'cha Byrd, who led the Cougars with 17 points. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photo)

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Crawford 14th At Nationals

BY JONATHAN SCHWAB

Facing the top competition in the country, Rockbridge County High School senior female thrower Danielle Crawford placed 14th of 44 individuals in the shot put at the New Balance Nationals Indoor track and field meet on Friday.



CRAWFORD

Competing at the Amory Track and Field Facility in New York City, Crawford had a personal-record throw of 38 feet, 10.5 inches, which broke her own school record by half an inch. She'd set the previous school record in early December at the first indoor meet of the winter season, the Commonwealth Games Invitational at Liberty University, where she'd qualified for the national meet.

Each individual not advancing to the finals got three throws at the national meet, and Crawford's best throw was her last one. Her throw was about 5.5 feet shy of the winning mark of 44-4, recorded by Megan Mann of Lee-Davis.

Summing up the meet, Crawford said, "The national meet was an amazing experience. It was exciting to compete against girls that were from all around the U.S."

Joining Crawford for the trip were her father and throwing coach, Chris; her mother, Lucinda; and RC head track and field coach Jennifer Showalter. While in New York, they visited The Today Show.

Crawford won the indoor state shot put championship on Feb. 23, becoming RC's first athlete to win a state throwing title. Her mark at the Class 3 state meet was 38-7. For the spring, Crawford will throw shot put and discus for her final high school outdoor track and field season.



New Coaches Around

Familiar Faces Leading Lacrosse, Girls Soccer, Boys And Girls Tennis

BY JEREMY S. FRANKLIN
AND JONATHAN SCHWAB

With the start of the 2019 sports season, our local high schools welcome six new head coaches, four for Rockbridge County and two for Parry McCluer. All six are familiar faces to those in the sports community.

RC welcomes Susan Nye as its new girls lacrosse coach, Robert Hull as the new boys lacrosse coach, Sean Harrington for girls soccer and Andy Coffey for girls tennis. The new head girls tennis coach for PM is Rad Patterson, and the Blues' new boys tennis coach is Garrett Turner.

Nye is returning for a second stint as the Rockbridge County High School girls lacrosse coach. Nye, who teaches in the Department of Kinesiology at James Madison University, takes over for Chris Bowring.

Nye was the program's first-ever varsity mentor. Fresh off of finishing up an All-American playing career at Roanoke College – where she also competed in volleyball and basketball – she helped the Wildcats' lacrosse program transition to the varsity level and served as head coach from 1996-1998.

RC went 9-8 last year, finishing as the National Conference runner-up and falling to Salem in the Region 4D semifinals. Nye believes that her familiarity with the players – she coached the Wildcats' undefeated junior varsity squad in 2018 and has also been involved with the Lex Lax Lightning youth program – will be a big benefit this spring.

"These players are amazing young women who happen to be fabulous lacrosse players," Nye said. "I have been coaching the eighth, ninth and 10th graders since they were in elementary school. Therefore, I have very high expectations."

Hull will take over the Wildcats' boys lacrosse team. No stranger to local lacrosse, Hull – who runs his own dentistry office in town – started play-



NYE

ing in fifth grade, going on to compete at Lexington High School and Washington and Lee University. He was also a three-time football All-American for the Generals, earning induction into the W&L Athletics Hall of Fame.

On the lacrosse side, Hull coached at the high school level in Cleveland shortly after graduating from W&L in 1996. More recently, he got involved with the Lex Lax youth program several years ago, working with the current RC sophomore class.

The Wildcats went 9-7 last year under Jake Adams, falling to E.C. Glass in the National Conference semifinals. Hull, who will bring in Ryan Larsen and Sean Capps as assistant coaches, hopes to see RC make some big strides on the field this year.

"This 2019 season is one of transition," Hull said. "We hope to surprise some teams that take us for granted, make the playoffs, and get the community excited to come out and watch our young men who've been working hard."

There will also be a new, but familiar, face on the sideline for RC girls soccer. Now in his fourth season with the program, Harrington replaces Ray Ellington, who resigned in the fall after a successful 10-year stint with the Wildcats.

RC finished 9-7-4 last season, defeating Turner Ashby in the Valley District consolation match to qualify for regional play for the first time in program history. The 'Cats fell to eventual Class 3 state champion Western Albemarle in the Region 3C quarterfinals.

Harrington brings a wealth of coaching experience to his new position. He played for VMI from 1990-1992, and since then he's coached a number of high school, club and travel programs, ranging from the VMI women's club team to the boys varsity squad at Spotsylvania High School.

Harrington, who works as the executive assistant to the superintendent at VMI, was the Wildcats' junior varsity coach in 2016, and he spent the past two seasons as the varsity assistant. He expects RC to continue its

upward trajectory on the pitch – and he also hopes that his team can help grow the game among young players in the area.

"Our goal is to continue to improve and build upon the successes from last season, while returning to the regional tournament once again this year," Harrington said. "We are also focused on doing more within the community this season to promote girls soccer."

Coffey replaces Susan Amonette as RC's girls tennis coach. Amonette coached the Wildcats for eight years, leading the team to a 9-9 record and the Region 3C quarterfinals last year. The Wildcats won the Conference 31 title as a team in 2017, and Amonette also coached Katie Driscoll and Sullivan Ray to conference doubles crown in 2016.

"I'm just trying to keep what Susan had going," Coffey said.

Previously, Coffey was the PM girls' head coach for five years, from 2012-16, leading the Blues to the Pioneer District title in 2016 and the then-freshman doubles team of Sophie Dryden and Maggie Patterson to the state semifinals.

Coffey said that, after hearing that Amonette was stepping down, a couple of the RC players asked him if he would be interested, and he contacted the athletic department about it. Coffey also enjoys playing tennis and is in his third year as a special education teacher at RC. In addition to tennis, he also has coached girls basketball, as an assistant and a junior varsity head coach for PM before serving as RC's head coach from 2016-18.

PM's new girls tennis coach, Rad Patterson, replaces Melissa Cobb, who coached the last two years before becoming the principal at PMHS. Last year, Cobb led the Blues to a 13-2 record, the Pioneer District championship and the first regional title in school history before they lost to Class 1 state champion Auburn in the state semifinals. Under Cobb, Maggie Patterson and Ashlen Hazelwood won the state doubles title for the first state tennis title



COFFEY



HARRINGTON



PATTERSON



TURNER

in school history for the Blues. Hazelwood is a freshman tennis player at Shenandoah University, while Maggie, daughter of Rad, will start her senior season for PM.

Rad, who works as a physical education and health teacher at PM, played tennis for the Blues in the early 1980s, teaming up with Chip Lawhorne to finish third in the state in doubles. He last coached girls tennis at PM about three decades ago, and he's been an assistant basketball and football coach for about 30 years.

Looking forward to coaching the Blues, Rad said, "I've been up there watching them for the last three or four years. It's an opportunity to coach my daughter, an opportunity to give back."

Turner replaces Liza Mackey as the PM boys' tennis coach. Mackey coached for one year and led the Blues to a 2-11 record and the Region 1C/2C quarterfinals.

Turner works for the Buena Vista school district as a digital media teacher and a media specialist. He was previously a sports director at WFXR, after earning a Bachelor's degree in business journalism from Baylor University in 2009 and a master's degree from Emerson College in 2012.

Originally from Missouri, after Turner and his wife moved to Virginia, they "fell in love with Buena Vista and Parry McCluer during my time working in local television in Roanoke," he said. "Their fan base and the people I've gotten to know are really what drew me here."

While Turner has not played tennis for a team or coached tennis before, he coached middle school boys and girls basketball this winter. He said PM athletic director Ron Loy asked him to coach, and Turner agreed. "For me, being prepared is a big thing and to coach a sport you have never played is a challenge. I especially don't want to let the kids down, but Mr. Loy had faith in me," he said. "I have five seniors on this team and they know how to play, so my job is to make sure every day at practice they're taking every minute of it seriously so they can succeed in their matches."

COLLEGE ROUND-UP

W&L Wrestler In NCAA

Rexx Hallyburton capped off a breakthrough season for the Washington and Lee University wrestling team with an appearance at the NCAA Division III Championship at the Berglund Center in Roanoke on Friday.

Hallyburton fell by decision in both of his matches in the 184-pound weight class, losing 3-1 to fourth-ranked Dan Boyle of Western New England and 11-5 to North Central's Cody Baldrige. The junior, who had qualified for the national meet by winning the NCAA Southeast Regional title in Williamsport, Pa. on Feb. 23, wrapped up the season with an 18-8 record.

As a team, the Generals made several huge strides in 2018-19. W&L recorded its most dual meet wins since 1985, finishing 12-4 overall and going on to place second at the Centennial Conference Championship – the program's highest-ever finish at the league meet – and sixth at the regional tournament. Senior Zach Bylykbashi, who competed at the NCAA championship in 2017 and 2018, also established a new W&L record with 100 career victories.

VMI Wrestling Title Won

VMI's Neal Richards was named Most Outstanding Wrestler after winning the 174-pound individual

championship at the Southern Conference tournament on Sunday at Appalachian State University in Boone, N.C. Richards, a redshirt junior from South Chesterfield, became the first Keydet to win a SoCon title in eight years.

In the semifinals, Richards won by technical fall (23-8) over Gardner-Webb's Kyle Homet. He then defeated Campbell University's Andrew Morgan in a 16-6 major decision in the finals to win his first SoCon title. Richards has won 21 consecutive matches and has a record of 28-3 this season.

As a team, VMI placed seventh with 17 points. Campbell won with 95

points, Appalachian State finished second with 92.5, and Chattanooga (62) came in third.

Richards will compete in the NCAA Division I tournament March 21-23 in Pittsburgh, Pa. for a chance to become VMI's first All-American in 20 years.

Hoops Season Ends

After winning a season-best four consecutive games, the VMI basketball team saw its season come to an end with a 99-72 loss to Wofford in the Southern Conference quarterfinals on Saturday at the U.S. Cellular Center in Asheville, N.C.

Eighth-seeded VMI (11-21 overall, 4-14 SoCon) had

been on a roll since late February, but top seed Wofford (28-4, 18-0), ranked 22nd in the nation, had six players score in double figures and shot 56.3 percent (40-of-71) from the field in the noon game. Nathan Hoover led the Terriers with 17 points, and Chevez Goodwin added 14 points.

VMI's leaders were Bubba Parham with 22 points, six rebounds and four assists; and Garrett Gilkeson with 11 points. No other Keydet scored in double digits.

Wofford advanced to the SoCon finals by defeating fourth-seeded Eastern Tennessee State University 81-72 on Sunday. In the finals, the Terriers were scheduled to face the second-seeded University of North Carolina at Greensboro on Monday.

The Keydets had advanced to the quarterfinals by defeating ninth-seeded Western Carolina 96-83 in the first round the night before. Parham scored 41 points, and Sarju Patel added 21, both career highs. Parham made six 3-pointers and went 17-of-18 from the free throw line. Gilkeson chipped in 12 points and pulled down six rebounds.

Carlos Dotson led the Catamounts with 27 points and 13 rebounds, and Cameron Gibson added 23 points.

It was a back-and-forth game until Parham hit a jump shot to start a 10-0 run in the second half.

VMI graduates just one player this spring, guard Austin Vereen.



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Tristan Miller, a 2017 Rockbridge County High School graduate, and the Averett University Cheerleading team won their second consecutive competitive cheerleading national championship on Saturday at Crown Coliseum in Fayetteville, N.C. The Cougars were named Christian Cheerleaders of America National Champions and Collegiate Grand Champions.

Miller, a sophomore, is a backspot for the team.

Averett's title defense began in the morning with a strong first round that saw the Cougars receive zero deductions. The Cougars only received a small deduction in the second round. Averett was the only all-female team competing, going up against four coed teams.

Miller, daughter of Chad and Jammie Bouchard, is majoring in sports medicine.



MILLER

Love Games
At W&L

The Washington and Lee University men's and women's lacrosse teams played host for the One Love games on Saturday to benefit the One Love Foundation, which was created in 2010 to honor the memory of Yeardley Love. She was a University of Vir-

See College, page A12

Rowsey's
Team
Wins Cup

Lexington's Andrew Rowsey and his Hungarian team Szolnoki Olaj won the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) Europe Cup championship on Feb. 16. Rowsey, 23, scored 19 points in the finals as his team defeated Falco KC-Szombathely 92-83. For the season, he averaged 12.2 points per game.



ROWSEY

The 2013 Rockbridge County High School graduate signed with the Hungarian team last summer. A 5-foot-11-inch guard, Rowsey holds RC's career scoring record with 2,637 points and the school's single-game scoring record of 60 points. He led the Wildcats to the state semifinals as a junior and was named co-state player of the year after his senior season.

Rowsey went on to play two years at the University of North Carolina at Asheville before playing his junior and senior college seasons at Marquette University. He was named Big East Sixth Man of the Year as a junior. As a senior last year, he set Marquette's single-season record for 3-pointers with 122 and received All-Big East Honorable Mention honors.

Bench Fuels
Blues' Win

*PM Girls
Take Down
PH-Glade
Spring, 62-44*

BY JEREMY S. FRANKLIN

The starting five for the Parry McCluer High School girls basketball team would be enough to overwhelm most of the Fighting Blues' opponents. Add in the Blues' depth, and you've got a lethal combination.

The power of the PM bench was on full display in Friday's Class 1 state quarterfinal game in Christiansburg, as Emma Camden and Allison Coleman propelled the Blues to a 62-44 victory over Patrick Henry-Glade Spring.

Camden scored 19 points, while Coleman totaled 12 points and four assists to help Region 1C champion PM (24-4) reach the state semifinals for the fourth straight season. The Blues' pursuit of a third consecutive state title was slated to continue with a semifinal matchup against Honaker in Salem yesterday. For a summary of that game and state tournament updates, visit www.thenews-gazette.com.

Breanna Yarber posted a double-double for the Rebels (24-4), tallying game-highs of 21 points and 10 rebounds to go along with four blocks. But no other PH player came close to double figures – and the runners-up for Region 1D only dressed out eight for the game.

"I think [our bench] really played an effect, that people can come off the bench and score," said Coleman, who knocked down a pair of 3-pointers and also finished 4-of-4 at the free throw line.

While the Blues' bench play was undoubtedly effective, that aspect of PM's game wouldn't surprise anyone who has seen the team play this sea-

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AT TOP, PM head coach Adam Gilbert calls a play while the his bench players cheer during PM's 62-44 win over Patrick Henry-Glade Spring in the Class 1 state quarterfinals on Friday in Christiansburg. ABOVE, Fighting Blue senior guard Emma Camden puts up a shot, on her way to 19 points. BELOW, PM senior guard Allison Coleman shoots a free throw while Blues and Rebels box out. Coleman stepped up with 12 points and four assists, sinking two 3-pointers and going 4-of-4 from the free throw line. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photos)





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Blues

continued from page A10
son. Camden has averaged double figures in scoring as a substitute, while Coleman, Tristen Clark, Jayla Baker and Katie Claytor have all provided a spark at different points throughout the year.

Camden was instant offense on Friday, scoring seven points during an early 11-0 run that put PM ahead 16-4 with 2:46 to go in the first quarter. Coming off the bench may even be an advantage for the senior guard.

“As I watch the game, I just watch everyone, and see how they’re playing their defense,” Camden said. “I just go in the game and shoot when I’m open – even when I miss, keep shooting.”

The Blues may have needed their reserves to step up more than usual against PH. On the offensive end, the Rebels’ active half-court zone defense constantly disrupted PM’s rhythm. And PH had a simple, but effective, scheme to deal with the Blues’ tenacious defensive pressure: namely, use the entire court.

While the Rebels still turned the ball over 32 times, only a handful of those miscues led to the transition looks that PM thrives on. The biggest impact of the press, then, may have been to wear down an opponent that couldn’t match the Blues’ depth.

“I thought they did a really good job of getting the ball to the middle of the floor,” PM head coach Adam Gilbert said. “In the same breath, I think we were able to get to their legs a little bit. They don’t have a deep bench; that was to our favor.”

And the Blues’ starting lineup was hardly invisible on Friday. Madison Dunlap scored 10 points and pulled down a team-best six rebounds, while Peyton Mohler added eight points and four assists. Two other starters, Hailey Huffman and Makenna Smith, chipped in five points apiece, and Huffman also notched three assists.

With so many players contributing, the Blues were able to keep the Rebels at arm’s length after their big first-quarter spurt. PM led 21-8 at the end of the opening frame; the two teams



ABOVE, PM senior guard Hailey Huffman dribbles in the paint while Patrick Henry-Glade Springs’ Kaycee Deskins (14) defends her and Blues’ teammates Jayla Baker (42) and Katie Claytor (33) move to get open. Huffman scored five points and dished out three assists. BELOW LEFT, PM senior guard Peyton Mohler drives to the basket. Mohler scored eight points and had eight assists. BELOW RIGHT, PH’s Breanna Yarber holds onto the ball while PM senior forward Madison Dunlap guards her. Yarber, a 6-foot-1-inch sophomore, led all players with 21 points and 10 rebounds, scoring her 1,000th career point during the fourth quarter. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photos)



then traded scores in the second quarter, with the Blues taking a 31-18 advantage into the break.

The Rebels made their move early in the second half, beginning the third quarter with a 6-1 spurt that trimmed the margin down to 32-24 on Payton Monahan’s jumper with 6:11 to go.

Yarber hit one bucket during that run, but she was integral to everything that PH looked to do on the offensive end. Even for a veteran team like the Blues, the lanky 6-foot-1-inch sophomore – who scored her 1,000th career point during the fourth quarter of Friday’s quarterfinal – posed a matchup problem, shooting over shorter

defenders and outmaneuvering PM’s post players.

“She’s a very good ball player,” Gilbert said of Yarber. “She had a good game tonight. I think she’s going to be a load to handle the next few years. I think the future’s very bright for her.”

Still, for a team that’s grown accustomed to competing in high-pressure situations over the past four seasons, Yarber’s performance and PH’s early second-half run were just the latest hurdles to leap over.

“We’ve just got to calm down and do what we know how to do,” Camden said. “Everyone plays their roles.”

The Blues countered PH’s spurt with a 15-5 stretch, essentially putting the game out of reach when Huffman buried a 3-pointer to make it 47-29 with 1:12 left in the third period. PH would not get any closer than a 13-point margin in the final stanza.

Monahan finished with six points for the Rebels, while Natalie Strait scored five points and Ella Maiden collected six rebounds for a PH team that reached the state quarterfinals without a senior on its roster.

Meanwhile, the remarkable run for PM’s phenomenal senior class is heading for its series finale this week. Outside of Clay-

tor, a freshman, and Lithuanian exchange student Ugne Pelikyte, everyone else on the team will graduate this spring.

While the Blues hope that conclusion comes with another championship celebration in Richmond this weekend – the Class 1 title game is scheduled to tip off at 11 a.m. Saturday at Virginia Commonwealth University’s Siegel Center – they’re doing their best to savor these final moments.

“We’re enjoying each other’s company a lot – even if it’s just on the bus rides, or [going out to eat], or shoot-around,” Coleman said. “I think we do enjoy all that time together.”

Postseason Awards Handed Out

Pioneer Honors Claytor, Cartolaro

Parry McCluer High School senior guard Zach Claytor was named Pioneer District player of the year and was one of six PM boys basketball players to receive all-district honors. Claytor was also named to the all-region first team. In addition, third-year PM head coach Mike Cartolaro was named district coach of the year after leading the Blues to a 10-0 district record and the team’s first district tournament championship in five years.

Claytor hit key free throws to lead the Blues to a 45-39 overtime win over Covington in the district finals. Joining Claytor on the all-district first team was senior forward Josh Chapman, who was also selected to the all-region second team. Blues making the all-district second team were senior guard Isaac Armstrong and senior forward Brant Adams, and Armstrong was named to the all-region second team. Receiving all-district honorable mention honors were sophomore guards Will Dunlap and Talen Roberts.

PM went 19-6 overall and finished just short of advancing to the Class 1 state tournament.

Two Rockbridge County High School guards received all-region honors after leading the Wildcats to a 14-11 record and the Region 3C semifinals, just shy of advancing to the Class 3 state tournament. Sophomore Aaron Plogger was named to the all-region second team after leading the Wildcats with 22 points in the regional semifinals, and junior Jaielik Lynch received all-region honorable mention honors.

The all-region honors for the PM girls will be announced after all teams in Region 1C have concluded the season.

College

continued from page A12

ginia senior women’s lacrosse player whose life ended tragically after being a victim of domestic violence just weeks before graduation. Love’s mother founded the organization to call attention to the warning signs of abuse and to encourage bystanders to feel comfortable intervening when they see dangerous behavior taking place.

One Love’s ambitious goal is to end relationship violence by educating, empowering and activating young people in a movement for social change. To achieve this, One Love develops creative technology-based tools and resources that meet young people where they are and inspire them to action.

The eighth-ranked W&L women defeated fourth-ranked Salisbury 14-13, and the 11th-ranked W&L men fell to 20th-ranked Franklin & Marshall 13-10. For more on these games and to see the lacrosse schedules and results, visit www.generalssports.com.

VMI Edges Rival

Sophomore guard Greg Parham hit two huge three-pointers in the closing minute to lift the VMI men’s basketball team to an 81-78 win over Southern Conference rival The Citadel in the regular-season finale on Saturday at Cameron Hall in Lexington.

VMI (10-20 overall, 4-14 Southern Conference) took a 73-70 lead with 2:06 left in the game on a corner 3-pointer from freshman Jake Stephens. The Citadel (12-17, 4-14), coached by former VMI head coach Dugger Baucom, answered when Lew Stallworth knocked down a three to tie the game. Greg Parham hit a trey at the 1:01 mark on a feed from Stephens, and The Citadel to cut the advantage to one on a Zane Najdawi layup. Greg Parham hit his second late 3-pointer with 15 seconds left to make it a four-point game, but Stallworth again nailed a trey with nine seconds left to cut the lead to

79-78. Junior guard Garrett Gilkeson converted a pair of free throws and The Citadel could not convert a 30-foot shot to try to force overtime.

The Citadel led 46-34 at the half, but the Keydets gradually chipped away at the deficit.

Gilkeson finished with 19 points and a team-high eight rebounds while teammate Sarju Patel tied his career-high with 19 points, fueled by five three-pointers. Bubba Parham dealt out a career-best nine assists and added 15 points while Greg Parham finished with 12 points on 4-of-7 shooting from behind the three-point arc. Stephens posted seven points and five boards and Myles Lewis added six points and five rebounds.

Najdawi netted a game-high 25 points for The Citadel and grabbed seven rebounds. Stallworth scored 21 points along with a game-high 10 rebounds and five assists, and Conner Kern tallied 12 points and nine cars. Matt Friereson scored 13.

“This game was not good for my blood pressure or gray hair, and it wasn’t exactly the way we drew it up,” noted VMI head coach Dan Earl said. “I was so super proud of our guys. We kept fighting. In the first half, certainly credit The Citadel. It seems like everything comes down to the wire between the two teams. Early on, we did not make shots at all, but I thought we were doing some good things. For our guys to stick with it and continue to compete, again, a total team win.”

The two teams’ last head-to-head battle was decided at the buzzer as well, as The Citadel scored as time expired to defeat VMI 84-82 in Charleston, S.C. on Jan. 26.

VMI, which won its final three regular-season games against conference opponents, will enter the Southern Conference tournament as the eighth seed and will face ninth-seeded Western Carolina in the first round on Friday at 5 p.m. at the U.S. Cellular Center in Asheville, N.C. For updates, visit www.vmikeydets.com.



VMI JUNIOR guard Garrett Gilkeson goes up for a shot while The Citadel’s Derek Webster Jr. defends him and VMI freshman center Jake Stephens (34) watches. Gilkeson scored 19 points, sinking three 3-pointers, and led the Keydets with eight rebounds. (Randall Wolf Photography)



PM JUNIOR Dylan May (369) runs near the front during the boys' 4 X 800-meter relay at the Class 1 state meet on Monday of last week at Roanoke College's Cregger Center. The Blues placed third in 8:44.32. (Monica Staton photo)

Blues' Relays Both All-State

PM Boys Place 12th At Indoor Meet

BY JONATHAN SCHWAB

The Parry McCluer High School boys' relay teams both finished in the top three to lead several strong performances by the Blues at the Class 1 and 2 state indoor track and field meet on Monday and Tuesday of last week at Roanoke College's Cregger Center.

The 4 X 400-meter relay team placed second in 3:39.77, just over a second behind winner Maggie Walker on the 200-meter track. The Blues' time was a season best by about four seconds. PM's team members were juniors Cooper Braddy and Holden Kerr, sophomore Brenden Plogger and senior Caleb Workman. PM head coach Chris Poluikis said the Blues ran well. He said that, before the relay, which was the final race of the meet, "We felt like we had an OK shot to win it."

In the 4 X 800-meter relay last Monday, junior Dylan May teamed up with Braddy, Workman and Plogger to place third in 8:44.32. Both teams earned all-state honors by finishing in the top six.

In the team standings, the Class 1 Blues finished 12th of 39 scoring teams, tallying 18 points, one place ahead of larger Class 2 school James River (12). Maggie Walker, which will move up to Class 3 next year, won the meet with 99 points. Auburn placed second with 43 points, and Brunswick (42) finished third.

The meet was postponed from the previous week due to wintry weather.

In the mile, May placed seventh in 4:46.91, and teammate Trevor Tomlin followed in 12th in 5:03.32.

Several of the Blues' middle-distance runners – Kerr, Braddy and Plogger – had qualified for the state meet in other individual races, but they focused on the 4 X 400-meter relay after the 4 X 800-



FIGHTING BLUE head coach Chris Poluikis talks to his boys' 4 X 800-meter relay team. Team members were (from left) Brenden Plogger, Caleb Workman, Dylan May and Cooper Braddy. (Monica Staton photo)

meter relay didn't go as well as expected.

Junior Colton Staton led the PM boys' throwers, placing seventh in the shot put with a toss of 46 feet, 5 inches, a personal record by about a foot and a half. Praising Staton for his performance, PM throwing coach Matthew Douglas said, "Colton set his mind to finish the season strong after being in a slump at the beginning of the season. He came out with what I call the eye of the tiger! A whole new focus, and marks showed."

Also competing for the Blues in the boys' shot put was sophomore Zavery Wallace, finishing 13th with a throw of 39-8.

For the PM girls, senior Sophie Dryden placed ninth in the mile in 5:47.46 and came in 16th in the 1,000-meter run in 3:34.06. In the 55-meter hurdles, senior Valencia Harden placed 11th in the preliminaries in 10.19 seconds.

In the shot put, Grayson Shields placed 11th with a throw of 31-0.5. "Grayson is coming along nicely," Douglas said.

The PM girls did not score any points to place in the team

standings. Maggie Walker won the girls' meet with 110 points, and East Rockingham and Glenvar each scored 40 points to tie for second place.

Reviewing the throwing season, Douglas said, "I think we had a really good indoor season. I believe that it was a nice start and a lot of progress was made that will definitely carry in to the outdoor season. ... It's going to be fun to see this young group of kids grow and get better."

Practice starts this week for outdoor track and field. Some of the Blues' distance runners will switch from shorter distances to the 2-mile. The Blues also look forward to welcoming back freshman Kensey May, who swam this winter, for distance races. May placed second at the state cross country meet last fall. From the PM girls basketball team, the Blues will add two seniors who were all-state performers from last year's outdoor season: middle-distance runner Hailey Huffman and thrower Tristen Clark. After a strong boys basketball season, senior Jason VanBrocklin returns as a thrower.

Run Of The Mill 5K April 13

The second annual Run of the Mill 5K will take place on Saturday, April 13, at 10 a.m., starting in Brownsburg and ending in Raphine. The race benefits the Brownsburg Community Association's local scholarship fund and community projects.

The 5K is a point-to-point race on a slightly hilly terrain through farmland, starting at Asbury United Methodist Church in Brownsburg crossing Hays Creek several times before finishing at Wade's Mill in Raphine. Registration will start at 8:30 a.m. A shuttle bus will return runners to Brownsburg from Wade's Mill.

Awards and activities will take place at the finish line. The top three female and male finishers receive prizes. The top three finishers in each age group receive medals.

Preregistration, which goes until March 31, is \$21 and includes an iconic "Run of the Mill" t-shirt. To register online, go to <https://www.wadesmill.com/product-category/2019-run-of-the-mill-5k>. Race day registration is \$25.

For more information, contact John Siegfried at 348-1400 or john@wadesmill.com or visit <https://brownsburgva.wordpress.com/bca/>

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RC Blasts Blue Demons

Wildcats Knock Christiansburg From Ranks Of Unbeaten

BY JONATHAN SCHWAB

Playing at a high level on both sides of the ball, the Rockbridge County High School football team earned a big 41-19 home win on Friday night, knocking Christiansburg from the ranks of the unbeaten.

After coaching the Wildcats (3-1) to their second consecutive win in front of a large crowd and then being doused with ice water by his players in celebration, RC head coach Mark Poston said, "I'm just so proud of our kids to come out and do what they did."

Of Christiansburg (3-1), Poston said, "That is a good football team. ... They're going to win some games. I saw them warming up, and I said, man, maybe we bit off more than we can chew tonight. God bless our kids. They just buckled up and went after it. This is a really good win."

RC quarterback Miller Jay threw two touchdown passes to Jailik Lynch in the first half. "Miller played fantastic tonight," Poston said.

Aside from three interceptions, Jay had an impressive night, completing 10-of-17 passes for 202 yards. For the season, he's thrown for 927 yards and nine TDs.

Lynch was Jay's most effective target, making four catches for 128 yards, despite facing double coverage on several occasions. Luke Mayr caught three passes for 49 yards.

Praising the offensive line for allowing Jay and his receivers to be successful, Poston said, "It takes a heck of an offensive line to sit it in with no running backs and

See *Wildcats*, page A12



AT LEFT, In celebration of Friday's win, RC head coach Mark Poston receives a shower of ice water, poured by lineman Dillon Higgins (68) and a teammate, while RC assistant coach Robert Rhodenizer applauds. BELOW LEFT, RC running back Bret McClung runs with the ball as Christiansburg's Andrew Lloyd tries to stop him. McClung led all players with 132 rushing yards on 10 carries, and he ran for two touchdowns. BELOW CENTER, McClung embraces RC assistant coach Heath Glass while Coach Poston joins in the celebration. BELOW RIGHT, After making a catch, RC wide receiver Luke Mayr tries to break free of Christiansburg's MJ Hunter. Mayr caught three passes for 49 yards. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photos)



Big Weekend At PMHS

Golf Tourney, Banquet, Silent Auction Among Hall Of Fame Activities

The seventh Parry McCluer High School Athletic Hall of Fame class will be formally inducted during a banquet at the PMHS gym this Saturday night.

Hall of Fame weekend activities will begin with a reception at Bobby Williams Field on Friday at 5:30 p.m. The 2019 inductees, along with current Hall of Fame members and the 1979 Group A state championship football team and cheerleaders, will also be recognized on the field at halftime of Friday's 7 p.m. football game between PM and Fort Chiswell.

Saturday morning will be busy with the Hall of Fame golf tournament at The Vista Links Golf Course at 9 a.m. The entry fee for a four-person team will be \$260. That evening at 5 p.m., the Hall of Fame banquet will commence with the formal induction of the 2019 inductees: the late Horace "Plug" Henson (Class of 1937), Leon "Cute" Coleman (1953), Milton M. "Ted" Vest (1953), Thomas A. "Tommy Cash (1964) and Neal Scott Mohler (1981). The 1979 football team and cheerleaders will also be honored.

Tickets for the banquet will be sold until noon this Friday at CornerStone Bank at 2275 Beech Ave. in Buena Vista and at the Buena Vista schools administration office at 2329 Chestnut Ave. Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$10 for students.

The Hall of Fame Committee will hold a silent auction consisting of the following: golf for four at the Omni Homestead Resort in Bath County, NFL tickets to the Washington Redskins' home game against the New York Jets on Nov. 17, tickets to the University of Virginia football team's home game against Georgia Tech on Nov. 9, tickets to the West Virginia University football team's home game against Oklahoma State on Nov. 23, tickets to a Virginia Tech basketball game, a baseball autographed by six-time National League All-Star Bryce Harper, the 2012 National League rookie of the year, the 2015 National League most valuable player and the 2018 Home Run Derby champion; and a baseball autographed by J.T. Realmuto, a current Philadelphia Phillies catcher who was a 2018 and 2019 National League All-Star and won the 2018 Silver Slugger Award.

Blues Sweep Highland

PM Earns First Volleyball Wins Of Season

BY JEREMY S. FRANKLIN

The Parry McCluer High School volleyball team earned its first two victories of the season on Tuesday of last week last week, sweeping a varsity doubleheader at Pioneer District foe Highland County on Tuesday.

The Fighting Blues (2-9 overall, 2-2 district) took the first of two best-of-three matches by a 2-1 scoreline, winning 25-12, 20-25, 15-6, before defeating the Rams in the nightcap 25-8, 25-10.

Chloe Persinger tallied 17 kills and nine service aces across the two contests for PM. Kennedy Burton notched

three aces and one block, and Grayson Shields added three kills and six assists.

"We played well up there," PM head coach Shannon Stiltner said. "Chloe and Kennedy led us up there. ... It was a good time for us, because I thought winning two up there would help us out."

Yet a lengthy win streak unfortunately wasn't in the cards for the Fighting Blues. Just two nights later, PM fell 3-0 at home to district rival Craig County on Thursday evening.

Autumn Hutchison tallied a match-high 11 kills as the Rockets (6-3, 4-1) downed the Blues by a 25-17, 25-13,

25-12 count. Kaylee Stroop amassed 33 assists for Craig, while Nicole Austin tallied 10 kills, Jaci McAlwee notched eight kills and Haleigh Smith totaled seven kills and six service aces.

Haley Coleman served up three aces for the Blues. Persinger tallied three kills for PM, while Jordan Dawson recorded a pair of kills and Burton finished with one block and one ace.

The Blues weren't able to transfer the momentum from Tuesday's wins into Thursday's match against a Craig team that knocked PM out of the Pioneer District tournament in 2018.

See *Blues*, page A12

New Dabney Athletic Leaders

Dabney S. Lancaster Community College's new athletic director Carl "Shorty" Wolfe III (left) and men's basketball coach Brandon Garrett, posing with DSLCC's mascot, the Roadrunner, were introduced during "Bubbles, Bands and Brunch - Tailgate Edition," hosted Sept. 15 by the DSLCC Educational Foundation. The biennial "Bubbles" fundraiser supports DSLCC students through scholarships, classroom equipment, student support services and other initiatives, has awarded more than \$70,000 in student scholarships to more than 100 students since its inception in 2003. Part of the proceeds from the Tailgate Edition will go toward launching the new DSLCC athletic program. DSLCC's basketball season begins Nov. 2 against Mid-Atlantic Christian University's jayvee team, and the first home game is Nov. 15 at 8 p.m. against Bryant and Straton College from Ohio. Home games will be held in the DSLCC Armory on the Clifton Forge campus. The entire 2019-20 season schedule is posted on the DSLCC website www.dslcc.edu/athletics.



Rockbridge Wins League Opener

Wildcat Netters Defeat Waynesboro At Home

BY JONATHAN SCHWAB

In the Valley District opener, the Rockbridge County High School volleyball team earned a 3-0 win over Waynesboro on Thursday night in Lexington.

After a tight first set in their only match last week, the Wildcats (10-1) jumped out to a 6-0 lead and quickly took the second set. Waynesboro (1-7 overall, 0-1 district) briefly led early in the third set before it was tied 5-5, but the Wildcats then went on a 7-0 run and didn't trail again, capturing the 25-21, 25-10, 25-16 victory.

Graceon Armstrong led RC with 21 kills and 10 digs, Jaydyn Clemmer added 15 kills, 14 digs and two aces; and freshman McKenzie Hines adapted well to her new role as libero, collecting 13 digs. Krissy Whitesell had 32 assists and 11 digs, and Jaden McCoy served up five aces.

Hines, who had played a bit as libero in the Endless Summer Classic tournament in Virginia Beach the previous weekend, was stepping in for Emma Lawson, who started in the defensive position earlier this season but was out for an undisclosed injury. RC head coach Amanda McCoy said she was proud of how Hines adjusted. "With that newness comes some errors," McCoy said. She's getting used to some things, but she did a really good job of really adapting to the position and stepping into a pretty big role."

Waynesboro's leaders were Jada Keene with nine kills and nine digs, Cierra Bruce with 14 assists and nine digs, and Paige Smith with nine digs.

McCoy said the Lady Giants, whom the Wildcats had beaten handily last season, "definitely have improved, and I think that they were able to get us out of system a little bit more than we would've liked tonight. That's definitely something we'll be alert to."

Reviewing the first set, which was tied 7-7 before the Wildcats took a small lead and stayed ahead, McCoy said, We're working on starting strong. It's a work in progress. We've got some youths in



ABOVE, RC junior outside hitter Jaydyn Clemmer leaps to hit the ball over the net while teammates (from left) Graceon Armstrong, Rachel Ferris and Krissy Whitesell watch. Clemmer had 15 kills, 14 digs and two aces. BELOW LEFT, Wildcat senior hitter Graceon Armstrong collects one of her 10 digs while teammates McKenzie Hines (7) and Ashley Hostetter (14) watch. Armstrong led RC with 21 kills. BELOW RIGHT, RC freshman libero McKenzie Hines gets in position for one of her 13 digs as her head coach, Amanda McCoy, watches from the sidelines. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photos)



there that are still kind of learning the equation. ... They're learning their role, what they're supposed to do, when they're supposed to do it, and how they're supposed to do it every single time, but they're getting there."

Helping the Wildcats jump out to a their 6-0 lead

early in the second set were Armstrong with three kills and Clemmer with two kills during that stretch. RC gradually built up a double-digit lead to put away the set.

The Wildcats trailed 3-2 in the third set, but they went on a 9-2 run to

go up by seven points, and the Lady Giants did not threaten a comeback. The match ended with a kill from Armstrong and an ace from Whitesell.

The Wildcats were scheduled to play host to Spotswood yesterday and will continue district action

at Turner Ashby on Thursday, starting with the junior varsity match at 6 p.m. The Wildcats will then have a nondistrict home match against Salem on Monday before playing host to district rival Broadway on Tuesday, with JV action starting at 5:30 p.m. both nights.

Timmes's Win Leads RC Girls

BY JONATHAN SCHWAB

Led by Karalyn Timmes's win, the Rockbridge County High School girls cross country team placed second of five teams last Wednesday at Ridgeway Park in Waynesboro, while the RC boys finished fourth of six teams.

RC's Valley District rival Waynesboro won the girls' race with 39 points, with four runners in the top 10, while the Wildcats had three runners in the top seven and tallied 47 points. Completing the standings were Staunton (58), Stuarts Draft (76) and Stuart Hall (135).

Timmes finished the hilly 5-kilometer course in 21:48, and her younger sister Megan placed second of 35 harriers in 22:57. Aili Waller was RC's third finisher, placing seventh in 24:16.

Wildcats following Waller were Jessa Hoover (18th, 26:30), Dreamer Coleman (19th, personal-record 26:46), Abby Hickman (25th, 28:12) and Sophia Fafatas (31st, PR 29:31).

Waynesboro won the boys' race with 24 points, placing five runners in the top eight. Staunton placed second with 57 points, and Stuarts Draft (63) finished third. Completing the standings were RC (105), Stuart Hall (137) and the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind (160).

Individually, Waynesboro's Sam Sikora won the boys' race in 17:28, over a minute ahead of the runner-up, Staunton's TJ Connor (18:39).

Kyle Kendall led RC, placing 13th of 64 runners in a PR 19:41. The Wildcats' second finisher was Adam Saacke (22nd, 20:59). Wildcats following Saacke were Henry Haywood (32nd, 22:31), Jacob Ivins (34th, PR 22:40), Jackson Wassser (43rd, 23:47), Pieter Nelson (48th, PR 25:16) and Brice Hall (53rd, 27:09).

Today the Wildcats will hold their only home meet of the season against other Valley District teams. Instead of racing at the Virginia Horse Center, they have moved the home course to Natural Bridge State Park, just off Golf Course Road. The girls' race is scheduled for 5:30 p.m., followed by the boys' race at 6:15. There is a hill on the course that leads to one of the most scenic views in the area.

On Saturday the Wildcats will compete in the fifth annual Alleghany XC Invitational at Jackson River Sports Complex in Covington.

'Blast From The Past' A Hit

The Blast from the Past softball reunion was a big hit, as about 80 former softball players, managers and umpires reunited in Buena Vista on Sept. 14 to talk about the heyday of softball.

They told story after story of the past, and the highlight of the night was the reunion of two outstanding softball teams: the Green Berets, a powerhouse local women's state championship softball team, and the 1983 local men's state championship team that won 11 of 14 tournaments.

"What a joy it was to have these two great teams together again," said event chairman Ronnie Coffey. "Everyone enjoyed hearing and sharing memories, and I feel everyone had a great time. Special thanks to all who came to the reunion."



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AT LEFT, PM junior middle blocker Jordan Dawson watches her shot go over the net, as does teammate Grayson Shields (11) during the Blues' 3-0 home loss to Craig County. Dawson had two kills. ABOVE, Fighting Blue senior Shana Carter leans in for a dig. (Ronnie Coffey photos)



PM SENIOR right side hitter Grayson Shields collects a dig while teammates Jordan Dawson (10) and Shana Carter (2) watch. (Ronnie Coffey photo)

Blues

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"I thought that [the victories at Highland were] the stepping stone to get us up and over," Stiltner said. "Not so much."

Midway through the season, PM is still trying to determine its offensive identity. The Blues have some good weapons, most notably Persinger at outside hitter, but they continue to struggle to get in system and to provide good opportunities for their attacking players.

"We tried something new at Highland that seemed to work," Stiltner

said. "We brought it down here, and once again it didn't click. ... Come tomorrow [at practice], we'll just have to go back out and start all over again."

On the other side of the net, the Rockets looked consistent – and balanced – throughout the match. With Stroop directing traffic, Craig mixed up its swings between its pin hitters and its middles, keeping the Blues' defense from getting into rhythm.

PM held an early 7-5 advantage in the opening set, but the Rockets reeled off seven straight points to take the lead for good at 12-7. Austin had a big

first frame at middle blocker, tallying six kills, while Hutchison put down five for a comfortable Craig win.

The Rockets controlled the second stanza nearly from start to finish, jumping on top 7-2 and never letting the Blues back into it. McAlwee had a string of powerhouse attacks from the left side, tallying six kills in the set.

PM changed up its lineup in the third set, going deeper into its bench for a different look. With several new players on the back row for the Blues, Craig capitalized with a dozen aces in the frame.

But the Blues' reserves refused to quit. Down 24-7, PM strung together five consecutive points – including two aces from Coleman and a kill from Cassie Carte – before the Rockets finished off the match.

"When I put [the reserves] out on the floor, they played hard," Stiltner said. "They didn't give up. ... There at the end, they scored five straight points. They talked and they communicated; they were having fun together and enjoying it. That's what I wanted out of them."

JR 3, PM 0

James River defeated PM 3-0 in Buchanan on Monday of last week.

The Knights completed a season sweep of the Blues with a 25-13, 25-13, 25-20 triumph. Burton and Persinger tallied five kills apiece to lead PM, with Persinger also serving up three aces.

The Blues will visit Riverheads this evening before returning home to face district rival Covington on Thursday. Junior varsity action will begin at 5:30 p.m. both nights.

Wildcats

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not give up any sacks. When teams know you're going to sit it in and you can stay in the pocket like we did, you've got a good thing going. Our offensive line is legit, and they showed it tonight."

The line was also successful at giving the Wildcats' backs room to run, and the Wildcats were glad to have lineman Austin Doyle back from injury.

Gage Shafer and Bret McClung each ran for two TDs for the Wildcats, with McClung bolting away from defenders from Christiansburg for a 43-yard TD in the fourth quarter.

McClung led all players with 132 rushing yards on 10 carries, often bursting past defenders. "Bret is just a naturally athletic guy," Poston said, noting that McClung is a key member of the RC soccer team's offense. He lifts weights every day."

As a team, the Wildcats rushed for 234 yards, while Christiansburg rushed for 193 yards, led by Maston Stanley with 71 yards on 19 carries.

The Wildcats scored on their first possession of the game, as Jay completed a 40-yard pass to Mayr to get the ball to the Christiansburg 23-yard line. After a 5-yard pass and several runs, Shafer ran in for a 2-yard TD with 9:33 left in the first quarter, and kicker Daniel Cunningham converted the extra point. The Wildcats welcomed the return of Cunningham from injury, as he converted all five of his extra point attempts.

On Christiansburg's first drive, the RC defense stopped the Blue Demons in their own territory, setting up the Wildcats to make another TD drive. After a series of runs and a 32-yard pass from Jay to Lynch, Jay made a 20-yard TD pass to Lynch, and Cunningham's PAT extended RC's lead to 14-0 with 3:32 left in the first quarter.

The Blue Demons went mostly to their running game before they turned the ball over on downs at the RC 38-yard line, but Jay was intercepted by Christiansburg's MJ Hunter at the start of the second quarter. Hunter, also Christiansburg's quarterback, made a 16-yard pass to Caleb Henley. After a couple of Christiansburg runs, Hunter found Andrew Lloyd for a 19-yard TD pass just under two minutes into the second quarter, and Curtis Altizer kicked in the PAT to cut RC's lead to 14-7.

On RC's next drive, Shafer made several runs to get the Wildcats into Christiansburg territory, setting up Jay to make a 38-yard TD strike to Lynch. Cunningham's PAT extended the Wildcats lead to 21-7 with 7:32 left in the half.

Christiansburg was able to move downfield rushing the ball on its next possession, setting up Hunter to make a 2-yard TD pass to Jake Clemons with 1:13 to go before intermission. RC's Elijah Poindexter blocked the PAT to keep the score at 21-13 going into halftime.

For the game, Hunter completed 5-of-12 passes with one interception for 48 yards, and the Wildcat defense held him to minus-seven rushing yards.

In the second half, the Wildcats went mostly to their running game, applying their jumbo offense.

The teams traded possessions before Shafer made a series of runs for the Wildcats to set up McClung for a 1-yard TD run, and Cunningham's PAT extended RC's lead to 28-13 with 4:02 left in the third quarter.

The Blue Demons advanced the ball to the RC 16-yard line on their next drive, but Matt Nicely made an interception to prevent a score.

It was an example of superb defense by the Wildcats throughout the night. "Defense played awesome," Poston said. "[Defensive coordinator] Mat [Rapoza] does a fantastic job."

Christiansburg's lone second-half TD came when Jaxson Clarke intercepted Jay and ran the ball back 13 yards into the end zone 11 seconds into the fourth quarter. The RC defense stopped Blue Demons' two-point conversion run attempt at the line of scrimmage, and the score remained 28-19.

On the next RC drive, McClung made a 15-yard run and then sprinted away for his 43-yard TD, and Cunningham's PAT extended RC's lead to 35-19 with 11:13 left in the game.

After the RC defense stopped Christiansburg again, Shafer made a series of runs that ended with a 6-yard TD run with 2:22 left. Nic Marando tried a two-point conversion pass that failed. That was the end of the scoring for the night, as Christiansburg moved the ball into RC territory before the clock expired.

Praising his players on earning the big win, Poston said, "This bunch can scrap. They can fight, and they can play hard. The biggest difference is they expect to win, and they do a great job. We're just so blessed with great kids. Good times tonight."

The Wildcats will play their last game before Valley District action begins when they travel to Fort Defiance (2-1) this Friday for a 7 p.m. kickoff.

"That's going to be tough. Fort's played us tough. [Fort head coach] Dan Rolfe's a great football coach," said Poston. "They'll be ready for us, but it's all about us. It's 100 percent about us. We continue to do what we do and we lift and we have great practices, and the guys continue to take a mature way of what we're trying to get done. They believe in us, and we believe in them."

CHS	0	13	0	6	19
RC	14	7	7	13	41

First Quarter

RC – Shafer 2 run (Cunningham kick)

RC – Lynch 20 pass from Jay (Cunningham kick)

Second Quarter

CHS – Lloyd 19 pass from Hunter (Altizer kick)

RC – Lynch 38 pass from Jay (Cunningham kick)

CHS – Clemons 2 pass from Hunter (kick blocked)

Third Quarter

RC – McClung 1 run (Cunningham kick)

Fourth Quarter

CHS – Clark 13 interception return (run failed)

RC – McClung 43 run (Cunningham kick)

RC – Shafer 6 run (pass failed)

	CHS	RC
First downs	12	13
Rushes-yards	41-193	31-234
Passing yards	48	202
Comp-Att-Int	5-13-1	10-17-3
Fumbles-lost	1-0	0-0
Penalties-yards	5-65	8-55

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING – CHS, Stanley 19-71, Cunningham 2-43, Williams 5-41, Johnson-Buchannon 3-30, Lloyd 4-15, Hunter 8-(-7). RC, McClung 10-132, Shafer 20-100, Jay 1-2.

PASSING – CHS, Hunter 5-12-1 48, Graham 0-1-0 0. RC, Jay 10-17-3 202.

RECEIVING – CHS, Henley 2-27, Lloyd 1-19, Clemons 2-2. RC, Lynch 4-128, Mayr 3-49, Cook 1-8, Looney 1-5, Shafer 1-(-5).

PREDICTIONS

Rockbridge County (3-1) at Fort Defiance (2-1)

WHEN: 7 p.m. on Friday

WHERE: Fort Defiance High School

LAST YEAR: In a sign of what was to come, then-RC backup quarterback Miller Jay threw the winning touchdown pass to Johnny Dunn with just over a minute left in the Wildcats' 14-10 homecoming victory. Dunn has graduated, but Jay, a sophomore, is now the Wildcats' starting quarterback and has found his rhythm with Jailik Lynch and other receivers. The offensive line stepped up for the Wildcats, helping block for Chase Crook's second-quarter TD.

THE SCOOP: Both teams are riding two-game winning streaks. Last Friday, the Wildcats earned a 41-19 win over previously undefeated Christiansburg, and Fort cruised to a 40-6 victory over Stonewall Jackson (Quicksburg). The Wildcats' one loss was a 28-26 setback against William Fleming on Sept. 6, while the Indians also lost a nail-biter on the same night, 21-20 to Liberty (Bedford).

These teams were both in the Valley District last year, but Fort has moved to the Shenandoah District. However, the rivalry should still be a strong one, and the Wildcats are eager to take a win into their upcoming bye week. The RC defense did a great job last year of stopping Fort Defiance quarterback Austin Monroe, who was held to 51 passing yards, and the Wildcats' defenders will be called upon to step up again.

THE NEWS-GAZETTE'S PICK: After last year's clutch play, we expect the Indians' defense to focus on Jay and try to prevent the passing game from being successful. RC's offensive line should allow Jay and his receivers to make some noise, but we expect the Wildcats to go to their running game also, as Bret McClung and Gage Shafer showed how effective they can be last week. It will be another competitive game, with the Wildcats earning a 36-28 win.

Fort Chiswell (1-3) at Parry McCluer (0-3)

WHEN: 7 p.m. on Friday

WHERE: Bobby Williams Field in Buena Vista

LAST YEAR: These two teams haven't met since the 2016 season, when the Parry McCluer dominated the Pioneers 50-14 in Max Meadows.

THE SCOOP: Last time out, PM dropped a nail-biter at James River, 6-0. After transferring from Rockbridge County, Ty Ruley made his debut as a Fighting Blue and helped PM to what was easily its best performance of the young season. The defense was strong and gave the Blues a real chance to win. However, despite Ruley's contributions at quarterback, the Blues failed to score for their third consecutive game.

The Blues had a bye last week and surely used that practice time to integrate Ruley into the offense. Fort Chiswell is coming off a 13-6 loss against Clarke County, with Fort slotback Jonathan Poole rushing for 186 yards and quarterback Dylan Bailey running for the Pioneers' only touchdown. The Pioneers have also suffered losses to Wythe County and Radford. Fort picked up its lone victory with a 15-14 triumph over Rural Retreat in the season opener on Aug. 30.

THE NEWS-GAZETTE'S PICK: PM's offensive production will be the deciding factor as to whether the Blues pick up their first victory of the season or not on Friday night. With time to prepare and work on schemes, Ruley will shine in his home debut for the Blues' faithful and will lead PM to a 26-7 victory. Fort can run the ball well at times, but if the Blues' defense piggybacks off its performance against James River, the Pioneers will be in for a long night.

PM Boys 15th At RVA Relays

BY JONATHAN SCHWAB

The Parry McCluer High School boys and girls cross country teams competed well at the RVA Relays on Saturday at Pole Green Park in Mechanicsville, just outside of Richmond.

Taking on tough competition on a flat and fast course, the PM boys placed 15th of 43 teams. Each team member ran 2.5 kilometers for a total of 12.5 kilometers as a team. The Blues finished in 39:05, just over two minutes behind the winner, Deep Run, which crossed the line in 36:59. PM head coach Chris Poluikis said the Blues were hoping to place a little higher and just missed accomplishing their goal of finishing in 39 minutes or faster. Despite not meeting that goal, Poluikis said the Blues' performance was "still pretty promising."

Dylan May ran the first leg for PM in 7:22, 14 seconds faster than his time last year, when the Blues ran in the extra race for individuals. Trevor Tomlin ran the next leg in 7:50, 29 seconds faster than his time last year. Kedryn Chandler, who is in his first year running for the Blues, finished the third leg in 7:52.

Running the fourth leg for PM was Cooper Braddy, who struggled with a stomach cramp before finishing in 8:01, eighth seconds slower than his time last year. Brenden Plogger ran PM's anchor leg in 7:57, 24 seconds faster than last year.

PM's Matthew Hemmings won the Boys Extras 2 race, finishing the 2.5-kilometer course in 8:19, edging Riverside's Stefan Hans Vanderzon by a fraction of a second. Teammate Landon Mahaffey placed 23rd of 125 harriers in 8:49.

In the Girls Extras 2 race, PM sophomore Kensey May won in 8:39, improving by 19 seconds on her winning time last year

and beating runner-up Hannah Weber of Battlefield by 57 seconds.

PM's Jillian Wheelock placed 23rd of 196 harriers in 10:27, and Koya Chandler was the Blues' third runner in, finishing 26th in 10:26. Teammate Sadie Dryden followed in 37th in 10:42, and Cloey Mazingo was PM's final runner, finishing 86th in 11:22, improving by 48 seconds from last year.

Hirt Sixth At Home

PM freshman Sam Hirt placed sixth of 18 runners in the boys' race at the Blues' only home cross country meet, taking on Pioneer District rivals last Wednesday afternoon in Buena Vista.

Hirt, the lone varsity runner competing for PM, finished the flat 3-mile course in 21:40.67, running under sunny skies and temperatures in the mid-70s. Jamie Wall of Narrows won the race in 17:01.01. The meet was originally set to take place at Glen Maury Park, but it was moved to the flood wall and adjacent field due to the large number of campers stationed at the park for last weekend's Nothin' Fancy Bluegrass Festival.

Poluikis, Hirt's teammates, administrators and fans were at the meet to cheer Hirt on.

There were only two complete boys' teams, with at least five runners required to record a team score. Covington won with 19 points, and Highland County placed second with 44.

Eight runners competed in the girls' race, with Paige Spade of Narrows winning in 22:00.28. There were no full girls' teams.

Next up the Blues will compete in the fifth annual Alleghany XC Invitational on Saturday at Jackson River Sports Complex in Covington.



ABOVE, PM freshman Sam Hirt leads a Narrows runner along the flood wall in Buena Vista as teammates cheer him on during the Blues' home meet last Wednesday. Hirt placed sixth of 18 boys, finishing the 3-mile course in 21:40.67. AT RIGHT, Chris Poluikis (right), PM's head coach, goes over results with and Southern Virginia University head coach Kyle Chandler (center), who was volunteering at the meet, and the Narrows cross country coach. BELOW LEFT, Hirt finishes the race as a fan applauds and Poluikis waits to congratulate him. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photos)



Hospice Hustle Raises \$16,000

Drawing 52 runners, the 22nd annual Hospice Hustle 5K and the second annual Hospice Half Marathon raised \$16,000 for Rockbridge Area Hospice on Sept. 14 in Buena Vista.

Race director Katelyn Lunsford said the fundraising total was a combination of entry fees from the race participants and donations from sponsors. "We are grateful for the continued support of the Hospice Hustle," Lunsford said. Lunsford is the communications and development manager at Rockbridge Area Hospice, which helps provide end-of-life care for patients.

Both races started and finished on the cloudy and mild morning at Camden Field. There were 35 runners in the 5K, which went along the flood wall and downtown Buena Vista streets. The half marathon, a mountainous run up Robinson Gap Road and on the Blue Ridge Parkway, welcomed 17 runners.

Winning the 5K was Bobby Hobbs, 31, in 27:06.9. His wife, Megan, 31, placed second and was the first female finisher in

27:07.7. The Hobbses traded turns pushing their daughter, Annabelle, in a stroller. Midway through the course, the Hobbses had to wait about three minutes for a train to pass, and several other runners were delayed as well. Placing third and winning the 31-45 age group was Jonathan Schwab, 38, in 28:40.4.

The second female finisher was Teresa Seelke, 56, placing sixth overall in 29:56.9 and finishing second in the 46-59 age group. Emily Seelke, 25, was the third female finisher, placing eighth in 32:38.4 and winning the 21-30 age group.

The overall male and female winners in each race received trophies, and the top two finishers in each age group received medals. Age groups were not separated by gender.

Other age group medalists were Kalob Slough (first, 12 and under, 36:13), TJ Staton (second, 12 and under, 42:30.8), Stephen Wells (first, 13-20, 35:41.3), Virginia Price (second, 13-20, 36:34.2), Lauren Shank (second, 21-30, 43:40.1), David Wells (second, 31-45, 30:49.2), William Sayre (first, 46-59,

29:12.4), Danny Keatley (first, 60 and over, 29:06.7) and David Howison (second, 60 and over, 34:38.4).

Dan Baur, 33, won the half marathon in 1:30:24.9, and Les Gearhart, 55, placed second in 1:52:29.8 and won the 46-59 age group. John Ekin, 71, finished third in 1:54:54.9 and won the 60 and over age group.

Helen MacDermott, 40, was the top female finisher, placing fifth overall in 2:02:37.7 Tammi Hellwig, 47, placed second among women and in the 46-59 age group in 2:13:05.9, and she finished seventh overall. Celia Koval, 39, was the third female finisher, placing eighth overall and winning the 31-45 age group in 2:14:07.8.

Other age group medalists were Gabriel Jackson (first, 21-30, 2:20:31.4), Taylor Casaburo (second, 21-30, 2:20:32.3), Jamie Capaldo (second, 31-45, 2:44:05.1) and Melvin Roberts (second, 60 and over, 1:59:31.3).

For full results from both races, visit www.hospicehustle.org.

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