

# SPECIAL EDITION

# Fall Sports

**APPOMATTOX COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL**

Football • Volleyball • Golf  
Cross Country • Cheerleading

## Coach Smith more than a champ

**CHARLES CONRAD**  
*Times Virginian*

In Appomattox County, Doug Smith is known for more than leading the local high school varsity football team, the Appomattox Raiders, to four VHSL (Virginia High School League) Class 2 State Championships in the last five seasons.

Smith is known around here as much more than a champion on the gridiron. He is also known as a man of faith, a family man, a servant to the community and a leader of young men.

Through the slogan “Power of One,” Smith and the Raiders have been able to galvanize the local citizens through some tough times, including the 2016 tornado that took one life and caused significant damage to various parts of the county.

Every year, Smith and his football players

participate in various community service efforts. Several years ago, for example, Smith and a handful of Raiders assisted with some tasks of labor associated with the development of Courtland Festival Park in Appomattox.

Other than the four state championships won since beginning his tenure as Raiders head coach in 2012, Smith’s greatest on-field achievement was being named as one of two winners (out of 1,500 nominees) of the U.S. Cellular 2016 Most Valuable Coach award. Smith received the award at halftime of the 2016 Under Armour All-America Game in Orlando, Fla., an all-star game featuring high school seniors that was broadcast on ESPN.

The 2020 fall football season was delayed until March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but Smith found another



**Doug Smith, Appomattox Raiders varsity football head coach, celebrates the 2017 VHSL Class 2 State Championship trophy as he is hoisted up by coaches and players after the Raiders defeated Robert E. Lee High School 38-34 for their third consecutive state title.**

Charles Conrad/Times Virginian

er foe to face despite the lack of any football opponents.

In late 2020, Smith was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a cancer of plasma cells. The Mayo Clinic website describes multiple myeloma as “a cancer that forms in a type of white blood cell called

a plasma cell. Healthy plasma cells help you fight infections by making antibodies that recognize and attack germs. In multiple myeloma, cancerous plasma cells accumulate in the bone marrow and crowd out healthy blood cells. Rather than produce helpful

antibodies, the cancer cells produce abnormal proteins that can cause complications.”

Now, in his hour of need, the community is giving back. Going around Appomattox County, one may notice signs in a variety of places such as businesses, homes and

schools, which display “Smith Strong” messages in support of the Raider coach. Several fundraisers have been organized to help Smith’s family with medical expenses.

The Raiders are now on the playing field once

See **SMITH**, Page B3

## Raiders cheer vying for third trip to the state championships

**CHARLES CONRAD**  
*Times Virginian*

For the past two years, the Appomattox Raiders competition cheerleading team has won their regional competition and qualified for the VHSL (Virginia High School League) Class 2 State Championships in Richmond.

Appomattox finished sixth overall in

2018 and fourth in 2019.

Typically held in November, the state championships were moved to April for the 2020-21 season because concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic prompted the VHSL to move fall sports to the late winter/early spring.

Despite having a new head coach and some new squad

members this year, the Raider girls are hoping for a third consecutive trip to the event that will be held April 17 at Lord Botetourt High School in Daleville.

Jean Bowman, who has coached cheerleading at Appomattox since 2011, takes over as competition cheer head coach following the departure of Tammi Moore.

The team returns



**The 2020-21 Appomattox Raiders competition cheer team. Back row, from left: Kirsten Gunter, Harmony Troxler, Lauren Weakley, Markasha Jones, Jakyra Morgan, Amyah Bolar and Kristen Kidd. Front row, from left: Ameya Hubbard and Kelsie White. Not pictured: Haleigh Tweedy.**

Charles Davis/Contributed

some trusted veterans such as Lauren Weakley, Amyah Bolar, Kelsie White, Ameya

Hubbard and Jakyra Morgan. New faces are Kirsten Gunter, Harmony Troxler,

Markasha Jones, Kristen Kidd and Haleigh

See **CHEER**, Page B2



## Cross country Raiders get to running again

**CHARLES CONRAD**  
*Times Virginian*

Like all other teams who normally compete in the fall season, the 2020-21 Appomattox Raiders cross country running team had to wait until March to perform due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

High school sports schedules have been shortened by the VHSL (Virginia High School League) in order to give all athletic teams (winter, fall and spring) a chance to compete within a reasonable timeframe. Head coach Lisa Fort, who has led the Raiders for more than 15 years, sees some positives and negatives to the long layoff and compacted schedule.

“Our season is much shorter, so that has hurt the kids,” Fort said. “But the weather seems to be bet-

ter, we have avoided all the really hot and humid days. Also, with the school schedule being changed, getting the kids to and from practice has put more of a burden on the parents.”

However, the cross country runners seem to be adapting to the changes now that the season has officially begun.

“Most of the kids are fine,” Fort said. “The change from fall to winter has been something they are dealing with, but since we had our first meet last week, they are doing fine.”

The first meet was held at Altavista on March 10. Teams from various schools met for a relay race in which they used sticks from the nearby woods as batons. Fort said

See **RUNNING**, Page B2