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## Area cross country teams set to compete

Orange County has always been a place where runners flourish. There are a number of races (both road and trail), enough teams where anyone can find a place and even a local running celebrity – former Olympian Joan Nesbit Mabe.

It's therefore fitting that there will be an Orange County Cross Country championship this year for the first time in over a decade.

Carrboro, Chapel Hill, East Chapel Hill, Orange and Cedar Ridge all will be fighting for the title of best team in Orange County — a title that will come with a lot of clout.

Adding further to the excitement of the meet is the fact that many of the runners will have taken the SAT earlier that day.

"It will be a great way for the kids to let off steam and compete," said Ron Olsen, Chapel Hill coach and event coordinator.

But before that event, and after, the teams will need to concentrate on their own seasons. Some big names have graduated, so the high school cross country landscape should look a little different this year.

**Carrboro High School**

Like the rest of the Carrboro sports teams, the first couple of years were a struggle for the cross country Jaguars, with a smaller and younger pool of athletes to work from than the rest of the area high schools. But in its third year, Carrboro is looking to finally set a tone in the Carolina 9 Conference.

"We have a lot of experienced runners now," Coach Jay Crooker said. "Some of them have been with us for two years, and it really makes a big difference in terms of the amount of miles they can run over the summer,



the experience level they come in with each season, and they pretty much know the courses we're running."

Crooker said that experience is especially helpful when it comes to the veteran players helping the younger kids get acclimated to the grueling cross country season.

**Who's gone:** For the girls, Kristina Witcher was a standout runner for Carrboro last year, and her graduation will put a dent in Carrboro's top times. For the boys, Ben Gregory's graduation will also leave a hole that needs to be filled. Not only were those runners fast and consistent, they were unwavering leaders as part of CHS's first graduating class.

**Who's here:** She's only a sophomore, but Laura Hamon is expected to step up and try to fill Witcher's prodigious running shoes. For the boys, Elliot Pahel-Short and Jordan Thomas are

well for the Chapel Hill boys and girls teams, who have already placed first and third, respectively, at their first meet of the season.

**Who's gone:** In addition to Gilland graduating, Molly Spencer's consistent top-tier scoring for the Tigers will be missed.

**Who's here:** Standouts should include Lindsay Savelli and Meg Duffy for the girls and Kyle Villemain and Asher Colburn-Hertzberg for the boys.

**Expectations:** Though a long season lies ahead, it's not going out on a limb to say the Tigers should be a force to be reckoned with in the playoff meets.

**East Chapel Hill**

East will be facing the challenge of improving on a stellar performance from last year.

Of course, coaches always try to downplay the good and accentuate the bad in trying to inspire the team to be better, but Coach Steve Marquis will have more trouble than most finding the bad in a girls team that won the 4A State Championship last year – not such a bad problem to have.

The boys will have to step it up to keep pace with the girls this year, and both teams won their first match against Jordan last week.

**Who's here:** Carolyn Baskir is one of the top girls' runners in the state, if not *the* top, and having her back as a senior will have an immeasurable effect on the Wildcats. For the boys, Sam Marks and Sam Miner are two of the team's top runners.

**Expectations:** If Baskir stays healthy, there's no reason to think she can't perform at the same high level as last year, and both East teams will be looking to make a statement in the Orange County championship.

## School Briefs

**Carrboro High Scores:**

Football: Aug. 28: Orange 28–Carrboro 7

Soccer: Aug. 31: Chapel Hill 3–Carrboro 0

Carrboro set the pace for most of the game but was unable to score. Two goals by Chipper Root and another by Alex Steiner sealed the deal for the Tigers.

Field Hockey: Aug. 28: Chapel Hill 4–Carrboro 1

**East Chapel Hill High Scores:**

Football: Aug. 28: Cardinal Gibbons 34–East 7

Field Hockey: Aug. 27: East 2–Forsyth County Day 0

Soccer: Aug. 27: East 3–Durham Academy 0

Chris Jaques scored all three goals for the Wildcats, rounding out a week in which he scored five overall.

**Chapel Hill High Scores:**

Volleyball: Aug. 27: v. Riverside: 21-25, 25-17, 25-13, 25-19, win.

Soccer: Aug. 27: Sanderson 5–Chapel Hill 1

Cross Country: Aug. 29: The boys' team placed first in the WNC XC Invitational with 55 points. Top finisher was Will Bunch (11th in the meet) at 16:42. The girls' team placed third with 83 points. Top finisher (7th in the meet) was Tristin Van Ord at 20:15.

**Carolina Central Golf Conference:**

Aug. 31:

Northwood 126

Chapel Hill 134

East Chapel Hill 150

Cardinal Gibbons 168

Carrboro 177

**Volunteer to be a coach**

The Carrboro Recreation & Parks Department is accepting volunteer coaches' applications for the 2009-10 Youth Basketball Program. Coaches must exhibit the ability to organize practices and communicate effectively with players, parents and rec department staff. They must also exhibit the ability to teach proper playing skills and fundamentals and proper sportsmanship and provide an enjoyable atmosphere at practices and games. Limited openings remain. To receive a volunteer coach's application or additional information, call 918-7364.

**Children learning athletic sports skills**

The Carrboro Recreation & Parks Department is sponsoring C.L.A.S.S. (Children Learning

Athletic Sports Skills) soccer for kids and their parents. The program is designed for children 4 to 6 years old as of the start of the class. The goal of the program is to introduce the fundamentals of soccer to the participant and parent. The instructor guides both the child and parent in understanding the skills of passing, dribbling, trapping and shooting. Parent and child will be encouraged to practice the skills learned at home. Parent participation is a major part of this program. The program will be held on Saturday's (9-10 a.m.) from Sept. 12 to Oct. 17. The cost is \$47 per child. Registration is currently being accepted at the Carrboro Recreation & Parks Department, 100 N. Greensboro St. Space is limited. For more information, call 918-7364

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