

19TH ANNUAL UNITED WAY INVITATIONAL

Boyles runs best



PHOTOS BY BRUCE MATLOCK/ FOR THE HICKORY DAILY RECORD

Asheville Roberson's Brooke Gordon race to the line first in the girls championship race.

Maiden runner among winners in field of more than 1,100

BY BART KEELER
Record Sports Correspondent

NEWTON — Like many other runners in a field of 1,000-plus, Maiden High's Corbin Boyles ran a personal best on a big day on Wednesday.

Boyles won the boys invitational race — for cross country runners from smaller classifications — in 16 minutes, 28.76 seconds at the 19th annual United Way Invitational at Southside Park in Newton.

"The guy really pushed me," said Boyles said of second-place Justin Wilkes of East Lincoln (16:36.97). "I broke a new (personal record) and I'm really happy about it. ... It was painful."

Challenged to run some top times, a field of more than 1,120 runners from 36 high schools ran in seven different races.

The boys and girls championships featured runners from 3A and 4A schools, and the invitational fields were for 1A and 2A runners. There were also open races and boys and girls developmental races for junior varsity runners.

The running day began with a co-ed open race, where Asheville Roberson set the tone with three

See **RACES**, Page 4B



South Iredell's Colt Bradley (866) and Robert Henderson (872) compete in the boys invitational race Wednesday in Newton.



BRUCE MATLOCK/ FOR THE HICKORY DAILY RECORD

Hickory High's Ella Juerges leads a pack of runners in the girls invitational race Wednesday.

Races

From Page 1B

of the top 10 finishers. Justin McCarthy won a tight race, finishing in 18:18.38 with Watauga's Jacob Soule second in 18:23.94.

Providence Day won the boys championship race, with sophomore Ben Huffman second in (15:51.76), plus senior Reed Payne (16:26.78) in fifth and freshmen Jack Paddison (16:31.75) and Nick Linder (16:31.98) in sixth and seventh, respectively.

"I feel really good," said Huffman. "It was a tough race. I took it out fast, but it was fun."

Asheville School's Ben Fielder won the boys championship in 15:38.93.

Providence Day finished 50 points ahead of Asheville Roberson.

"That's more important than the individual place," said Huffman. "We had two freshmen who just broke 17 (minutes) and also three sophomores in the top seven ... it's huge."

One of the more dominating runs of the day was by Brooke Gordon of Asheville Roberson in the girls' championship. She jumped ahead of the pack in the first half mile and



McCarthy



Fielder

finished in 17:15.34, two seconds faster than her previous best.

"Running really fast and running a (personal record) never feels awesome physically, but mentally it's great," said Gordon. "I really had to keep myself going the whole race."

"I tried to run really even. I started out a little too fast to run even, but if I could have it would have been awesome."

Gordon's run, plus six finishes in the top 20 for the Rams, gave them the team title.

Asheville School's boys won the boys' invitational race, sparked by a fourth-place finish by Brett Smogye in 17:23.

In the girls' invitational, Allie Whitley of East Lincoln won in 19:19.23, finishing ahead of Asheville's Anne Worth (19:46.98).

Asheville won the team title with three other runners in the top 20.

Lenoir-Rhyne University's Katie Griewisch, a two-time NCAA Division II All-American, was the meet's guest speaker. She shared with the runners her experiences as a college runner.

"What we want to do here is give kids a great message about life values," said race coordinator and United Way representative John Hall. "That's what they bring to our community, and hopefully make it better."



Griewisch