



Over 400 Girls & Boys set to “Battle” on November 20th

Can Virginia’s Girls keep their winning streak alive and can Maryland’s Boys dominate again?

The rolling hills of Smokey Glen Farm are ready for the teams to lay the claim, “Best Cross Country State along the Potomac”. For the fifth year in a row, girls and boys from Virginia, Maryland, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia will meet on a cross country “battlefield.” Their goal is to determine through a series of races which state along the Potomac River can claim the title of “Best in Cross Country” and take home the Potomac Cups. This weekend, there will be more than 400 runners fighting for the POTOMAC XC Cups.

Last year’s races resulted in a split. The Maryland boys just brought too much depth for the Virginia boys. Despite a come from behind win by the VA-based St Albans Junior Tom Harrison, Maryland’s top 10 boys had a solid base to push back the Virginia runners. This year, Harrison suffered a season-ending foot fracture in early September. Last year’s winner will be back to serve as honorary team captain for Team Virginia. The girls’ race in 2009 was most memorable. Kaitlyn Davis of Mountain View had just won the VA AAA State title and wanted to defend her title in the Battle of the Potomac. She also recruited the 2009 Boys State Champion squad from Mountain View to come race and tune up for the Southeast Nike Cross Nationals Regional. Much to Davis’ surprise, All-State freshman Hannah Lowery registered and was right by Davis’ side from the start. The two dueled right up to the final curve with a deft pass by Davis nipping Lowery for the win. Both girls broke the course record.

Moving on to 2010, it’s the Maryland Girls who seem poised to take back the Potomac Cup from the Virginia Girls. Leading the charge will be Anna Ryba of Whitman HS who has been the most dominant girl in Maryland this fall. Close on her heels is senior Anna Bosse who will be running in her 4th consecutive Battle XC. The two “Anna’s” also have some formidable teammates in Elizabeth Tauber of Carroll HS who won a DC-MD Private Schools State title last weekend at the Agricultural Farm Park site in Derwood MD. Along with Tauber, add in another dominant underclassman in Abbey Daley of Clarksburg. The talented sophomore was the MD 3A state runner-up. Other top girls in Maryland who can be part of the top 10 scorers are Eva Farrell of BCC who was all-State in MD’s 4A and the top freshman girl in the field, Morgana D’Ottavi of Blair HS who also was all-State in MD’s 4A. Virginia’s girls could sneak up on Maryland this year. There are some girls coming who may still be burning from just missing the podium with their teams at the VA State Championships, namely two of the top girls for Thomas Jefferson Science & Technology HS, Stephanie Marzen and Kelly Rogers. Marzen just missed an all-state finish as TJ’s #1 runner in 18th place. Her teammate Rogers was a solid 26th. Yet the #1 Virginia girl is most likely to be Millbrook’s top runner and bearer of the fastest 5K time in the field, Crystal Nelson. Nelson was a strong 6th in the VA AA race. She is not coming alone, just like TJ’s Marzen, her #2 teammate is racing, Karly Knectel who grabbed the final All-State finish in the AA race. Other top Virginia girls are Dale Lescher of West Potomac. Lescher had her best cross country race of her career with her 16th place finish in the AAA race. Other top Virginia girls are Rachel Hagen of Potomac Falls who also ran well with a near all-state finish in 17th place in the AA race. The x-factor for Team Virginia is the top girls from the Patriot District. They have been key to the previous 3 Team Virginia victories and this year could be more of the same. Keep an eye on all-Region performer Shannon Smythe of TC Williams and West Springfield’s Lauren Blackburn. The Patriot District has been one of the most competitive districts in all of Virginia. Just making it out of the Districts to Regionals is not easy. Lastly, keep an eye on the sister of our two-time champion and course record holder, Mackenzie Davis. She ran her best race of the year in the AAA final with a 30th place 19:16 finish

On the Boys battlefield for 2010, the race could come down to the depth in Montgomery County based runners vs. the depth from the Fairfax County and other counties that abut the Potomac River. Maryland’s team will be led by JB Adams of St Albans, Tom Harrison’s teammate who took over Harrison’s #1 slot on this fall’s team after Harrison suffered his injury. The top boy from last weekend’s public state championships in Hereford is James Beacham of Westminster HS. Beacham was 6th in the 4A race. The next fastest finisher on the Maryland squad is the #1 runner for Eleanor Roosevelt, Charles Bollinger. He was 18 seconds behind Beacham in the 4A race. His teammate Justin Ahalt should figure on the top 10 scorers for Team Maryland. Look out for a top runner who was not seen too often: Greg Hadley from the Heights School was the private schools MD-DC small school state champion. Perhaps the key to a Team Maryland win is the solid top 3 runners from Quince Orchard (QO) High School in Connor Spaulding, Drew Lehner and Evan Laratta. The QO teammates matched Hereford’s team with all 3 placing in the top 15 for an All-State finish. Hereford was stronger in the middle and came away with the state 3A title. The QO trio has

one advantage over other runners: the Smokey Glen Farm site is used in some Dual meets and is just a mile down the road from Quince Orchard HS.

Virginia Boys will be looking for a pair of runners with similar credentials to lead a solid pack. Patrick Henry's Patrick Woodford is making the long drive from Roanoke to show Maryland that southwest Virginia has some tough cross country runners. Woodford will not be intimidated by the Smokey Glen hill. His races typically have no flat courses. His 13th place All-State finish was just 3 seconds ahead of West Springfield's Colin Taylor. In their only previous race at the Running with the Wolves Rocktoberfest, Taylor beat out Woodford. On Saturday, look for Taylor and Woodford to go out with the lead Maryland boys. Just like the girls squad, Virginia will need strong performances from other All Region runners from the Patriot District to secure a Potomac Cup. Dylan Morgan of South County and Darren Foreman of TC Williams have run upfront in several races this fall. In addition, Potomac Falls' all-state Connor Wilson could be right on Taylor and Woodford's heels.

Perhaps the one boy who can bring home an individual title and some pride to the Mountaineer state is Brandon Doughty. Doughty was 4th in the fastest state championship race in West Virginia history. He narrowly missed breaking the state course meet record as the first 3 finishers all were under the previous meet record. Doughty has another motivator: he ran the Battle XC 4 and now knows how to attack the course on the second loop.

First race is at 12:45 with the 2500m Middle School race. OPEN 5Ks follow and the two races that determine the POTOMAC CUP winners hit the dual start lines at 2:30 and 3:00 pm respectively.

Results will be posted immediately after the races on www.runhigh.com