

ECH's Baskir wins Festival

BY NICK BAILEY - Correspondent- News & Observer
CARY --

East Chapel Hill's Carolyn Baskir showed she had the stuff to compete with some of the nation's best high school cross country runners on Saturday.

Baskir recorded the second-fastest time ever run on the WakeMed Soccer Park course, winning the girls Race of Champions in The Great American Cross Country Festival.

Baskir set a personal best with a time of 17:14 on the 5K course.

She was challenged in the final quarter-mile when Samantha Nadel of North Shore High School in New York passed her.

"I watched her [pass me] and she wasn't pulling away. I was thinking 'No, I think I can catch her,' " said Baskir, who reclaimed the lead within 100 yards and finished three seconds ahead of Nadel. Diane Robison of Parkway Central in Chesterfield, Mo., was third in 17:37.

Baskir's first-place finish helped East Chapel Hill to an eighth-place team finish.

Saratoga Springs (N.Y.) High won the girls race with 59 points, followed by Blacksburg (Va.) High at 109 and Midlothian (Va.) High at 120.

Green Hope had 189 as the lowest-scoring North Carolina girls team. Green Hope's girls did an excellent job running as a pack. Their top five runners all finished between the 31st and 45th places.

Competing as individuals, Millbrook's Samantha George finished 12th with a time of 18:31 and **Leesville Road's Lauren Strapp finished 18th at 18:44.**

The Green Hope boys also fared well.

Green Hope's boys finished fifth overall with 189 points, led by Bryan's Spreitzer's eighth-place finish in 15:34.

Spreitzer finished in a pack of North Carolina runners led by Reidy Jones of Broughton (sixth with a time of 15:29), followed by Cary's Mohamed Abushouk (15:30), who was competing as an individual.

"Coming in, team-wise, we were just thinking the top 10 would be great," Green Hope coach Michael Miragliuolo said. "We're going to judge ourselves on how we did versus the North Carolina teams."

Snellville (Ga.) Brookwood High won the boys' team title with 111 points, followed by Seekonk (Mass.) Bishop Hendrickson at 139, Nashua (N.H.) Bishop Guertin with 143 and Thiels (N.Y.) North Rockland with 152.

Broughton was sixth with 200 points, Sanderson eighth at 239 and Leesville Road ninth in the 21-team field with 287 points.