



The Bulldog Bark

The Voice of Alhambra Cross Country

"The bright flame of pure running desire burns incandescently in our souls"



Saturday, October 9, 2021

7 Medals !!

Bulldogs Take On Tough Castro Valley Invite Course

The Alhambra made its annual pilgrimage to the fabled Canyon Middle School course, and came away with a share of the medals.

The course

The course lived up to its reputation as one of the more rugged race courses on the invitational circuit. With its hills, steep both up and down, and the twists and turns of the Canyon loop, there was very little of easy flat terrain.

Being as we are, a team that trains on hilly terrain, all that was of little bother.

Smallish Event

Post-pandemic blues seem to afflict most of the invitationals that we have been to so far, as fewer teams have transitioned back to full participation status. Still, there were lots of fast people out there.

Alhambra helps out

We were more than just a team presence at this event. Coach Brewer is co-meet director, and so did all of the setup and markings. Our very own Bri Barnes was the trainer tending to the wounded. Parent Kevin Searls was the announcer handling the microphone. And we paid no entry fees, as the Alhambra team became part of the clean-up crew and helped take down and store the course markings.

Hey, the DJ

It's always nice to have music on hand, and Marcus our DJ was pumping the tunes all day. It was lively, but a little too lively for the neighbors who called the cops on us. The Alameda County Sheriffs asked us to turn down the volume a bit.

• = earned medal

Girls' Frosh-Soph (2.15 miles)

Alhambra incomplete

(75 finishers)

1. Barelyn Bolles (Castro Valley) 16:59
- 17. Rebecca Breedlove 18:17

In her best race of the season, Rebecca held back a bit early in the race, established her position, and held on to it. Her withering finish sprint is a thing of beauty. Nice medal.



Rebecca started out the Bulldog day in fine fashion with a medal-winning GFS race.

Boys' Frosh-Soph (2.15 miles)

Team Scores:

- | | | |
|-----|------------------|------------|
| 1. | Santa Rosa | 45 |
| 2. | Dougherty Valley | 68 |
| 3. | San Leandro | 73 |
| 4. | Castro Valley | 102 |
| 5. | De La Salle | 136 |
| 6. | SF International | 174 |
| 7. | Clayton Valley | 192 |
| 8. | Alhambra | 199 |
| 9. | Alameda | 242 |
| 10. | Hughson | 243 |

(110 finishers)

- | | | |
|-------|--------------------------------|-------|
| 1. | Tyler Omega (Dougherty Valley) | 13:26 |
| • 22. | Naj Asad | 14:47 |
| 33. | Jack Wagner | 15:19 |
| 49. | Dominic Cataldo | 16:08 |
| 66. | J Wyatt Horton | 16:45 |
| 97. | Parker Gneckow | 19:41 |



Dominic and Wyatt are a duo for us in the first half mile of the race.

Naj rose to the challenge of being our lead runner today, and stayed in the upper 1/4 of the race to earn his medal. Jack strode a bit behind, and closed well. Dominic is usually a bit closer to Jack, but held his own. Wyatt, as always, is a

version of the Tasmanian Devil with his intensity. Advised to work the hills gradually, he responded with a pretty good race. Parker had a bit harder time adjusting to the hills and turns.

Given all this, our boys were not intimidated by the course nor the competition. And with Paolo, Sam, and Ian not in the lineup we were still only points behind league rival Clayton Valley.



Naj and his mom celebrate his medal.

Girls' Varsity (3.15 miles)

Alhambra incomplete

(98 finishers)

- | | | |
|-------|----------------------------|-------|
| 1. | Amelia Stacey (El Cerrito) | 19:58 |
| • 2. | Renaë Searls | 20:19 |
| • 26. | Kylee Phillips | 23:14 |

Renaë was an early leader, and had to deal midrace to the onslaught of the El Cerrito girl. She was able to make back most of that ground in the last Canyon loop to take another top spot in an invitational.



Renaë separated herself from the field to race to a top finish in the GV race.

Kylee was very focused on her race preparation, and was determined to have a great race. Running well into the top 15-20 much of the race, her sore hip flared up in the last Canyon loop. She was still able to grind to the finish and earn her medal.

Boys' Varsity (3.15 miles)

Team Scores:

1.	Castro Valley	108
2.	Santa Rosa	110
3.	Clayton Valley	111
4.	Willow Glen	114
5.	Hughson	137
6.	Branham	153
7.	Milpitas	156
8.	Cupertino	173
9.	San Leandro	189
10.	Alhambra	205
11.	Oakland Tech	295
12.	California	298
13.	Wood	321
14.	Washington-SF	393
15.	Tracy	395
16.	Alameda	419
17.	Apostles Lutheran	476

(129 finishers)

1.	Casey Nuti (Willow Glen)	16:57
• 8.	Nolin Searls	17:46
• 14.	Tyler Allan	18:19
54.	Sam Rogers	20:07
65.	Paolo Morales	20:34
76.	Ryken Adams-Barnes	21:10
105.	Ali Sobhy	22:44

We always hope for the best with our varsity boys, which this season has been our featured team grouping. When Vince couldn't answer the bell with illness, we knew that we'd be slipping back into the pack.

But since we were essentially auditioning for the full top 7 varsity spots, the internal Bulldog competition gave us a bit of a boost.



Nolin rounds the last corner in full stride.

Nolin is getting more confident each race with blasting out with the leaders, and hanging on to a top spot as the race develops. Tyler is still running through his calf tightness, but put together a much more complete race today. Both of these boys earned medals.

Paolo was overly excited about his promotion to varsity, and surged early to be our #3 boy mid race. Sam, with a bit more veteran savvy, had a good 2nd half the race to run past opponents, and Paolo too.

Ryken was running his first ever 3 mile race, as was Ali, and was able to find enough "juice" to cover the last mile strongly. Ali had a tough time on the hilly course today.



Ryken turns on the jets at the finish.

Girls' JV (2.15 miles)

Alhambra incomplete

(43 finishers)

1.	Frida Veliz (Castro Valley)	17:08
• 16	Kaelyn Nguyen	19:55
28.	Mira Deslonde	22:03
30.	Mia Padrique	22:41

All three of our girls had missed large amounts of time away from workouts this season. The coaches were hoping for some type of survival race at best from the girls.



Kaelyn put herself into medal contention early.

Well, Kaelyn rebounded well from her lapse away from the team due to illness, and ran right into the medal picture. Mia had her own aggressive start early, but faded as the race went on. Mira, running a bit conservatively due to shins, gained confidence as the race went on catch Mia.

The coaches were glad see this type of determination, which can only pay off as the season goes along.

Boys' JV (2.15 miles)

Team Scores

1.	Califoirnia	119
2.	San Leandro	139
3.	Willos Glen	140
4.	Clayton Valley	144
5.	De La Salle	158

6.	Dougherty Valley	159
7.	Oakland Tech	168
8.	College Park	177
9.	Antioch	188
10.	Hughson	194
11.	Castro Valley	218
12.	Wood	220
13.	Cupertino	314
14.	Alhambra	341

(139 finishers)

1.	Noah Bean (Antioch)	13:53
36.	Juan Herrera	15:17
79.	Ethan Arnold-Muth	16:42
86	Waylon Crombie	16:48
119.	Nathan Jameson	18:46
121.	Jared Lipman	18:56

Our brave band of boys did well just to run and finish. Juan and Ethan were away from the team for quite some time on family obligations, and missed large blocks of training. Waylon just joined the team this week, with almost no running background. Juan ran very well despite his extended absence. Ethan had to hustle to edge out Waylon who was the surprise of the meet for us with a solid performance in his first ever race with only a few days of workouts.

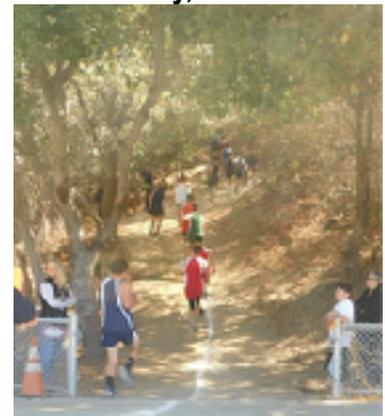
Nathan is still learning how to run a complete race. And Jared is gimped up from last weekend's race and was reduced to hobbling.

But they all started, and they all finished, so we could have a team score for the Bulldogs.



BJV get their mental game on at the start.

A bit Hobby, eh?



Varsity runners disappear into the Tolkienesque woods.

And how do we stack up this week?

Team Time Comparisons

2.1 mile course

Naj Asad	14:47
Juan Herrera	15:17
Jack Wagner	15:19
Dominic Cataldo	16:08
Ethan Arnold-Muth	16:42
J Wyatt Horton	16:45
Waylon Crombie	16:48
Rebecca Breedlove	18:17
Nathan Jameson	18:46
Jared Lipman	18:56
Parker Gneckow	19:41
Kaelyn Nguyen	19:55
Mira Deslonde	22:03
Mia Padrique	22:41

3.1 mile course

Nolin Searls	17:46
Tyler Allan	18:19
Sam Rogers	20:07
Renae Searls	20:19
Paolo Morales	20:34
Ryken Adams-Barnes	21:10
Ali Sobhy	22:44
Kylee Phillips	23:14

Did not run:
Noura Sobhy
Alexia Hisquierdos
Vince Montegrande
Ian Knutson
Sam Regan

Looking Ahead:

Friday 10/15 Rough Rider Invitational Woodward Park, Fresno

We will be taking out top varsity candidates to Fresno to run on the Woodward Park course, which is the same course the State Meet is on. This is a weekday, and those invited athletes will be gone from school all day.

The remaining athletes will be assigned a workout for the day.

Wednesday 10/20 **DAL # 2** Newhall Park, Concord

This is our 2nd DAL center meet, which counts for 1/4 of the march towards league standings.

The races start at 3:30. Parking is limited, so it is advisable to drop off the athletes, and then go looking for a parking spot.

The races go on a rolling schedule, which means that one follows another but not on an exact time. The idea is to get all the races in before dark.

Saturday 11/6 **DAL Championships**

This is the season finale for the team (except for the varsity) and will determine the league standings and All-League spots.

We are on track to be DAL-Valley champions in all three boys' divisions, and we hope to contend in the Girls' Varsity as well.

Notes:

1. **Tough course.** This will be the hardest courses we will race on this season. By comparison even the Finale Hill at Hidden Valley pales vis-à-vis the hills our runners had to grind up today. This was a great test of our training, both physically and mentally.

2. **Course Adjustments.** With the race having to be slightly rerouted due to the torn-up soccer fields (feral pigs on a year-long rampage), the races were about .05 miles longer, but much harder with more hills up and down. Times are therefore not truly transferable from one year to another. I think we'll have to asterisk this 2021 in the books.

3. **Helpful hands.** The team was outstanding in helping Coach Brewer take down the finish line assortment. Sure, this is why we didn't have to pay any entry fees, but the enthusiasm and willingness of the athletes made it all that more a positive contribution.

Clearly all the practice we had in previous meets in taking down our own team area paid off, right? Good work all around.

4. **Team attitude.** We had great vocal support from everyone for the Bulldogs in races. Athletes organized themselves for course walks and warmups. Parents came through with snacks.

5. **Medals** - - and another invitational yields even more medals. Our brave little bunch got its share of the hardware. And even more impressively, we got a medal across the board with awards in 5 of the 6 races we were entered in. Great team talent at all levels.

6. **Last Month of the Season** - - As we enter the last part of the regular season, we now have a pretty good idea of the team we have. We have our top runners who have proved they can contend at a high level in all races.

We also have a solid core of hard workers, who come daily to do the workouts and try hard.

And we are turning the corner and getting past the bulk of the tweaks and twinges and illnesses that inevitably affect all teams. This is good news as we enter the last 4 weeks of the season.

And we also have four more weeks of workouts to do, to continue to maximize our improvement to the very end.



The crowd at the finish line, the banners waving in the breeze, the bay in the background, and clear blue skies on a sunny day . . . perfect setting for race day at Canyon Middle School.