



Photo by Craig T. Greenlee

Mount Tabor sophomore Charnessa Reid turned in a surprise third-place finish in the girls' 55-meter hurdles at the Class 4-A state indoor track championships.

Spring

from page B1

second-place finish at the state.

In the 4x200 relay, Parkland clocked 1 minute 45.26 seconds for third, which was only .01 seconds behind second-place High Point Central. Whether this crew can successfully challenge state champ Southeast Raleigh is anyone's guess.

The outlook in the 4x400 relay is the same. Although Southeast Raleigh is clearly dominant, the Mustangs should prove to be viable con-

tenders to finish no worse than second at the state outdoor meet in late May. The team of McNeill, Davis, Cannon and Francis ran 3:59.97 to claim the runner-up spot in that relay at the state indoor meet.

Spartans' newcomer: One of the more surprising performances at the state championships was delivered by Charnessa Reid, a sophomore hurdler and long jumper at Mount Tabor. Reid raised a few eyebrows with her medal-winning, third-place finish in the 55-meter hurdles (8.30 seconds).

At this point in her career, there is a lot of

upside. That's because she's just beginning to improve her technique. As Reid gains more experience, there's no question that in time, she could develop as a legitimate challenger for a state title.

Reid didn't fare as well in the long jump at states. While she didn't medal (finish among the top four) as a jumper, she did place eighth, which is not bad for a still budding novice. In her case, it appears to be all a matter of how much work she wants to put in to elevate her skill set to another level.

On the rise: Based on the results

from the winter season, it's clear that Parkland's boys' team is on the rise. Quarter-miler Lorenzo Graise is expected to make a strong push for the outdoor 400 title. He ran well during the indoor season and more than held his own at the state meet with a third-place finish in the 500.

Graise (1:06.79) was in contention from start to finish in an intensely-contested race. The top three runners (Joshua Cooper of Charlotte Ardrey Kell, William Hoffman of Cary Green Hope, and Graise) were separated by .47 seconds.

In the 4x400 relay, the

Mustangs are indeed for real. They won the relay at last year's Central Piedmont Conference outdoor championships. But now, this relay is proving itself worthy against the best.

At the state indoor meet, Trequan Barnes, Graise, Chris Hayes and Braxton Ford showed that the Mustangs figure to be in the thick of the chase to win the 4x400 at the state outdoor meet.

Ford put together a gritty anchor leg which helped Parkland (3:27.56) go from third to second place behind champ Green Hope (3:26.64).

Formidable jumper: By the time the high school outdoor season ends in May, Jordan Johnson of East Forsyth could prove to be the best long jumper in the state. For now, though, he's close.

At the state indoor championships, Johnson battled Marcus Krah of Durham Hillside for supremacy. In the end, Krah (22-feet, 4 3/4 inches) prevailed over Johnson, who came in second at 22-feet, 4 inches.

This spring, Johnson looks to rise in the rankings in the triple jump. He was seventh at the state meet.



Photo by Craig T. Greenlee

Connor Sparrow (33) was the true centerpiece for East Forsyth this season.

"I take my hat off to our guys."

-Rodney Minor, Coach

No.1

from page B1

"I take my hat off to our guys," said coach Rodney Minor. "They're a great group who came to practice every day and worked hard. They deserve all the credit. I'm just blessed to coach a group of guys like that. I'm going to love seeing them play in the future."

In the season-ender against Northwest Guilford, the outcome wasn't decided until the final buzzer. East Forsyth went up 65-60 with a little under two minutes left in the fourth quarter, but the Vikings managed to stay in contention.

Connor Sparrow of East Forsyth provided what proved to be the game-winning points when he converted a pair of free throws to put the Eagles up 67-63. Northwest Guilford answered with a 3-pointer by Jacob Riddles to make it a one-point game with .7 seconds left remaining.

On the next sequence, East Forsyth successfully inbounded the ball to end the game and claim the victory. Sparrow led the Eagles with 22 points, which included eight of his team's 16 points in the fourth quarter. Tanis Samuels performed well at both ends and contributed 18 points to the cause. Josh Mahaffey added 13 points and Josh Wiley finished with nine points.

Northwest Guilford (8-2 PTC) got a game-high 25 points from Landon Sutton and Riddles was next with 19. Thomas Smith rounded out the double figures scoring with 11 points.

"I'm proud of the way we finished the season," said Minor. "Our guys fought from the beginning of the game to the end. We got off to a very fast start (14-0 in the first quarter). But I knew they would put together a run and push back. We played hard, played smart and ultimately, we came out on top."

Over the final three minutes of the fourth quarter, East Forsyth held the lead and slowed the pace of the game by spreading the floor and taking time off the clock. During that stretch, the Eagles showed patience in running their offense. But most importantly, they hit enough foul shots to keep the lead.

"We had the lead, so there was no reason to play fast-paced, especially with them playing a packed-in zone," said Minor. "We spread them out, which made them guard us. As a result, we either got wide-open looks, or we went to the foul line. At the end of the game, we were able to knock down free throws and make lay-ups."

In retrospect, the Eagles showing at the Lash-Chronicle proved to be a positive sign of good things to come for the entire season. During that

holiday run, East Forsyth won each of its four tournament games by double digits.

"Entering the Lash-Chronicle, they were hungry and they wanted it," said Minor. "Then we got used to winning by big margins and we got a little complacent, midway through the season. We had some games where we didn't play well and we ended up losing one of those games (58-55 to Glenn in late January).

"That loss really woke them up. They learned that you have to come out and play every night. You cannot just show up and expect to win."

JV season finale played on 2-12-16

East Forsyth beats Northwest Guilford 67-66
NWG --- #10 Thomas Smith 11 points
#11 Landon Sutton 25 pts
#12 Jacob Riddles 19 pts

EF - Tanis Samuels 18, Josh Mahaffey 13, Connor Sparrow 22 (8 of EF's 16 points in 4th quarter), Josh Wiley 9

Entering game
East 8-1 PTC NWG 8-1 PTC

East finished 19-2 9-1 PTC NWG finished 8-2 PTC



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At the CIAA championships, Rams distance runner Taska Johnson was second in the mile, third in the 800 and she was part of the winning Distance Medley Relay and the 4x400 relay that finished third.

WSSU's Domtilla Kiplagat was voted the women's track MVP at the CIAA Indoor Track and Field Championships.

Freshmen show up at CIAA championships

Sh'Naiya Chapman (4th, 60-meter hurdles)
Jenele Terry (4th long jump)
Halvandra McNeill (6th, pentathlon)
Aaliyah Craft (4th high jump)

New Faces

from page B1

Turner. "It's special because last year, I graduated all of the athletes who came in with me, which was over half the team. But we were able to rebuild and bring in some freshmen who really stepped up to the plate. That makes me very proud of everyone."

"Looking ahead, I believe our team has a bright future. This year, what our athletes have learned is that it's in them (winning championships)."

There's still three weeks remaining in the winter season before the NCAA Division II indoor national track and field championships on March 11-12 in Pittsburg, Kan. For the time being, though, it's not certain if any Rams will make the trip.

The most likely candidates to compete at the nationals are provisional qualifiers Raven Covington (CIAA runner-up in the

60-meter dash) and the 4x400 relay foursome of Tametris Morrison, Ty-Leah Hampton, Taska Johnson and Fazwia Kheir.

Athletes can qualify for the NCAA championships by making the automatic qualifying standard or on a provisional basis. Automatic qualifiers have a guaranteed spot at the nationals.

To go as a provisional qualifier in the women's competition, individuals must be ranked among the nation's top 17 in their respective events. Relay teams are required to rank among the top 12. As of Feb. 21, Covington was ranked 10th nationally at 60 meters and the Rams 4x400 relay was 20th.

WSSU athletes have one more opportunity to better their performances in an effort to enhance their chances to make the provisional cut for the nationals. The Rams will compete in the Mason Last Chance Meet on Sunday at George Mason University in Virginia.