

Hunter safety team learns a lot at national competition

SUSAN HARRIS

They had so hoped to do well at nationals, but the Perquimans County Senior Hunter Safety team found a much different competition in New Mexico than the district and state meets they won in North Carolina.

"They called it the NRA National Youth Hunter Education Challenge and they weren't kidding," said volunteer coach Randy Park. "It was a heck of a challenge. We weren't ready for that type of tournament. The kids were disappointed, (they) feel like they could have done better. We all learned a lot. It was the opportunity of a lifetime."

Park said while hunter safety competitions in North Carolina are run by

the N.C. wildlife Resources Commission, the national competition was operated by the National Rifle Association.

Closer to home, teams can field their best four members in each category: rifle, shotgun, archery and orienteering. But at nationals, five-person teams were required to participate in each category.

Also, in-state, contestants stood at a set distance from a target and shot, but at nationals, it was a hunting-type situation, shooting up grades, at unknown distances, and around trees and rocks, Park said. Instead of paper targets, sighthouses and 3-D targets were used.

The competition period was also longer. At district and state, there is a one-day event. In New Mexico, the

competition lasted four days.

Park said Perquimans fielded two, five-person teams, the Black team and the Gold team. On the teams were Kyle Winslow, Billy Park, Bryce Kime, Blayne Kime, Daniel Forbes, Chris Forbes, Chris Murray, Jonathan Stevenson, Ethan Jennings and Dustin Dellinger. Winslow was the top individual placer, coming in 91st of 165 individuals overall. The teams placed 23rd and 24th out of 27 teams, beating two Texas teams and New York team.

"We wish it could have been first," Park said.

If there was a consolation to the finish, it was that the teams from Forbush won both the junior and senior divisions. Perquimans defeated

Forbush in state competition, but was better prepared for the New Mexico tournament. A private school, Forbush and Perquimans are typically top competitors at the state event.

Park said the team could not have competed without the generous financial support of the community. Donations, including \$7,500 from the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission that goes to the state winner for expenses of national competition and \$3,000 from Blackwater USA, and support for fund raisers, financed the trip for the team members. Coaches and a handful of parents and other family members accompanied the teams.

Now they've licked their wounds and they're already taking what they've

learned from their first trip to nationals and trying to plan how they can compete well there next year. It's in Pennsylvania in 2006, close enough for Perquimans to travel there to try make a

better showing.

"We're planning on trying to make it whether we win state or not," Park said. "We know what nationals are all about now."

Lady Pirates cruise past Hatteras, Columbia

The Lady Pirates capped a long ride with a short match in Cape Hatteras last Tuesday, winning the conference outing 3-0 (25-10, 25-4, 25-14).

The serving that halted Perquimans' chances of a win against Pasquotank Monday was a big factor in Tuesday's victory.

"There was better teamwork and more communication between the girls on the court and serving

improved greatly from Monday's game," said head coach Carolyn Rogers.

Heather Perry scored 16, including 11 straight in game two, to go with four kills. Cassie Noe tallied 10 points, with seven in a row in game three, and six kills.

Marina Morita scored eight straight in game three with four kills and Jenna Lassiter recorded six points and six kills.

Brittany Jacot had five

points and three kills and Candice Nixon, three points and a kill.

Perquimans 3-Columbia 0

Strong serving again led to a win as Perquimans passed Columbia 3-0 (25-14, 25-4, 25-15) on Thursday in Hertford.

The Lady Pirates were much more poised than they had been in Monday's home match, missing only five serves in three games

and finding the holes in the Lady Wildcat defense.

Perry was again the leading server, tallying 22 for the day with 17 straight in game two, including seven aces.

Lassiter had nine points and five kills; Morita, eight points and two kills; Noe, six points, three kills and a block; Nixon, five points and four kills; and Jacot, one point and seven kills.

Pirates show promise in 38-8 loss to Northeastern

SUSAN HARRIS

It makes for a tough start to a season, but perhaps the pay-off to the Pirates' challenging non-conference schedule will be their readiness for conference play, which begins Friday night in Plymouth.

"I was proud of our guys," said Perquimans head coach Jim Swafford told The Daily Advance after his team's 38-8 loss to Northeastern in Elizabeth City Friday night. "We went through a tough three-game schedule for a 1-A team. We battled through it and we're going to be tough in the conference."

Northeastern coach Antonio Moore also recognized the potential in the Pirate ranks.

"Perquimans is a feisty team," he said. "They played hard to the end."

That's good news for a team fielding a handful of freshmen and some others in new or starting positions for the first time.

But perhaps the best news Friday night was that Perquimans' touchdown came on a halfback pass from freshman Brian Moore to Lamar Whidbee — a 96-yard beauty that was the result of weeks of drilling that finally worked. With the play at the 3:19 mark in the fourth quarter, the Pirates broke

Northeastern's seven quarter stretch of not allowing an opponent to score.

The play had also worked in the first half for 30 yards.

"You find bright spots and try to build on them and see what happens the rest of the season," Swafford said.

As had been the case in the first two games of the season, the Pirates gave up the big play and made mistakes that allowed the Eagles to post points.

A blocked Perquimans punt led to a third Northeastern touchdown, then an interception on the opening drive of the second half that set up a fourth TD quelled the Pirates' come-back hopes.

"I thought at that point (before the interception) that we had a chance to make some plays and get back in the game," Swafford said. "Our youth and inexperience caught us. Not being prepared

sometimes, that will hurt you."

Kendell Ferebee, the Pirates' fullback workhorse, was held to only 40 yards, not a good sign for Perquimans in any outing. Moore picked up 45 on a night with only 88 yards gained on the ground.

Moore also showed his potential at the quarterback slot with two passes for 126 yards, both caught by Whidbee. The duo has struggled in their attempts to connect in the early

going.

Moore has been a factor both offensively and defensively so far this season.

Penalties were also again a factor, as Perquimans lost 75 yards on seven calls.

The Pirates begin their conference schedule Friday evening in Plymouth.

The junior varsity squad opened its season Thursday evening in Hertford with a loss to Northeastern. Statistics were not available at press time.

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