

This is a printer friendly version of an article from the **The Olympian**.
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

[\[Back\]](#)

Published October 31, 2010

T-Birds tops on muddy course

GAIL WOOD; Staff writer

OLYMPIA - Mud and rain weren't on Rich Brown's wish list.

But Tumwater's crosscountry coach figured that it might work to his girls team's advantage at Saturday's 2A district championship.

It did just that.

Northwest Christian's Justin Holden wasn't complaining about the mud, either.

The Tumwater girls, while not speedsters, are strong in endurance. That worked to their advantage as the Thunderbirds placed five in the top 16 on a muddy, 3.2-mile course at The Evergreen State College, lifting Tumwater to a district title

"We have runners who grind it out," Brown said. "We're a strong team with lots of endurance. The mud slowed the faster runners. But we were consistent and gained ground."

Tumwater, led by Lindsay Andersen's eighth-place finish, won with 58 points. Hockinson, placing two in the top three, was second with 61 points.

Holden, not bothered by the mud, led from start to finish in the 1B/2B boys race and won in 16 minutes, 45 seconds. Teammate Lucas Graham, last year's state champ, finished 18 seconds back in second place, giving the Navigators an impressive 1-2 sweep on their way to the team title.

"I love the mud," Holden said.

North Thurston freshman Hallie Whitley overcame nerves and a strong field in the 2A girls race, pulling away a mile into the race when she chugged up a steep hill to pass two runners and move into the lead. She won in 20:04 – 17 seconds ahead of Chantalle Blundell of Hockinson.

"I figured if I didn't catch them on that hill, they'd pull away," Whitley said. "Then you just feel broken."

Whitley, the only underclassman to finish in top the 12, continued to pull away and opened a 300-yard lead.

"I was so nervous before the race," Whitley said. "I felt I'd mess up."

Black Hills junior Ellie Justice was fourth in 20:40.

The Northwest Christian girls placed six in the top 10 and repeated as the 1B/2B district champs, giving the Navigators a shot at winning their fifth state title. NWC senior Joanna Sowers placed second in 20:13, and teammate Hailey Bredeson finished 27 seconds back in third.

“Both Joanna and Hailey ran well,” NWC coach Larry Weber said. “Our other girls stepped it up, too.”

In the fastest race of the day, Chehalis’ Dakota Parker sprinted into the lead at the start of the 2A boys race, hoping to exhaust his competition with a frantic pace. But Washougal’s Dylan Croeni caught Parker with 400 meters left and won in 15:57, beating Parker by nine seconds.

“I wanted them to follow me and then burn them out,” said Parker, who finished second at state last year. “When Dylan passed me, I was tired. I went out too fast. I’ll have to revise my strategy for state.”

Chehalis’ Andy Robertson finished third in 16:29.

Mark Morris placed five in the top 11 to win the 2A boys title 38 points, and Chehalis was second with 59. North Thurston was fourth with 127 points, one place out of qualifying as a team for state. Washougal was third with 112 points.

Elma’s Todd Jackson won the 1A boys race in 16:30.

The state meet is Saturday in Pasco.