

Four runners named all-metro honorees

by Greg Oshust

goshust@mdjonline.com

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North Cobb's Alec Clifford, Pope's Molly Schenck, Harrison's Ali Waterson and Walton's Lena Hamvas were recognized among the best cross country runners in metro Atlanta with their selections to the Atlanta Track Club's all-metro team.

The four were among the 43 runners honored at an awards banquet held Tuesday at the Westminster School in Atlanta. The honorees each received a plaque, free membership to the Atlanta Track Club and a T-shirt.

It was yet another honor for Clifford, the 2009 Marietta Daily Journal/Cobb

County Boys Runner of the Year. He was honored for an outstanding senior season at North Cobb, in which he finished third in the Class AAAAA state championships with a personal-best time of 15 minutes, 46.03 seconds.

"It was pretty awesome," Clifford said. "It's an honor, and it's nice to have that recognition."

Also on the all-metro team was Schenck, the MDJ/Cobb County Girls Runner of the Year. The Pope sophomore won the county meet in 19:37.39 and was ninth in the Class AAAAA state meet (19:05.47).

"It's a big honor to be considered among the best runners in the area," Schenck said. "There's a lot of girls that I've looked up to that are on the team and I'm really honored to be selected with them."

Waterson, a senior, finished her high school cross career with runner-up finishes at the county (19:50.68) and Region 5AAAAA (19:32.45) meets, not to mention a 13th-place showing at the state meet with a personal-best time of 19:16.98.

"I worked very hard this season, and I feel privileged to be a part of this experience," Waterson said.

Hamvas saved her best for last as the Walton senior closed out her career with a 12th-place finish at the state meet with a personal-best time of 19:12.14.

"It's a huge honor," Hamvas said. "This is the first year that I have been selected to be on the team. The first three years, I have never been selected to the all-county team, so to be selected to the all-county team and the all-metro team is a big jump for me."

Class AAAAA boys state champion Kirubel Erassa of Grayson and AAAAA girls champion Nicky Akande of Collins Hill were selected as the male and female cross country athletes of the year, respectively.