

County teams shine at Coaches

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ATLANTA - Walton and Wheeler led the way among the boys, and Lassiter sat atop the girls standings, after the first day of the Coaches Invitational track and field meet Friday at Georgia Tech's Griffin Stadium.

Walton and Wheeler were tied for first in the boys meet with 18 points each, with Grayson only a half-point behind in third place.

Meanwhile, Lassiter had an undisputed hold of first place in the girls standings with 22 points. Brookwood and Parkview were tied for second with 14 points each, followed by Walton (12) fourth and Kell tied for fifth with Starr's Mill and Peachtree Ridge (11).

The Walton boys got their points from a win by Chris Foster in the long jump and a second-place showing by Braylon Williams in the high jump.

Foster won the long jump with a personal-best 22 feet, 5 inches, surpassing his previous best of 22-4 set at the Wheeler Relays earlier this month.

Foster edged Jaleen White of Southwind (Tenn.) (22-4), while Wheeler's Jamal Bryant (21-11) finished third.

The boys high jump featured a rematch of last year's Class AAAAA state high jump competition, between reigning state champion David Smith of Lovejoy and Williams, who was competing for Douglass when he finished second behind Smith in '09.

It was Smith who once again finished ahead of Williams. While both of them jumped 6-10, Smith was awarded first based on fewer missed jumps.

Nevertheless, it was a satisfying performance for Williams, who fell just 2 inches short of his personal-best mark of 7-0 that he set at last year's state meet.

"It was great, because it's still early in the year," Williams said. "I jumped 7-0 at the state meet last year, and I was excited to get so close (to that mark). I enjoyed competing in this meet and here at Georgia Tech."

Hillgrove's Stephen Payne, who finished fourth in the high jump in Class AAAA at last year's state meet, cleared 6-2 to finish behind Smith and Williams.

Wheeler won the 800-meter sprint medley relay as the quartet of Jordan Thompson, Aaron Williams, Torey Smith and Ryan Artman recorded a time of 1 minute, 32.18 seconds to finish ahead of Chattahoochee (1:33.25) and South Gwinnett (1:33.34).

In the girls competition, Kell's Kendall Williams held back the challenge of Lassiter teammates Julienne McKee and Gabrielle Piper to win the long jump.

Williams jumped 19-3 , followed by McKee (18-7) and Piper (17-10).

McKee and Piper later teamed up with Cydnee Ann Gordon and Marshara Fross to lead Lassiter to a second-place finish in the 800 sprint medley relay, running a time of 1:48.80 to finish behind Peachtree Ridge (1:45.31).

Walton's 6,400 relay team was the only other county girls winner as the foursome of Lena Hamvas, Kylie Womack, Mara Canning and Caroline Sullivan won with a time of 21:30.86. Brookwood (21:39.11) was second and Marist (22:00.93) placed third.

The Coaches Invitational will conclude today at Georgia Tech at 10 a.m., with field event finals in the morning and the finals of the running events in the afternoon.