



***FORK UNION TRACK AND FIELD NEWSLETTER***

# ***WINGED F***

SEPTEMBER 2022 EDITION



# **SETTING THE STANDARD!**





## JV SECOND EATON ROLLS

The 25th edition of the Invitational was among the very best as three meet records went down at the beautiful Hardy Cross Country Course. Fifty- eight schools made the trip on a very busy weekend for meets across Virginia.

The fireworks started early as David Eaton battled his former Pacers teammate Zed Zealand in the Middle School 2500. Both athletes shattered the meet record by twenty seconds with Zealand barely holding off Eaton.

The next two hours were action packed with two more meet records and scintillating competition. Jackson Pretus led the varsity team in the Colonial division, though FUMA struggled as a team in the mega competitive race.

The day ended with FUMA getting on the podium in the Sabre division. The Blue Devils were led by newcomers Nick Willis, Nic Coleman, Rhys Lawrence and Robert Callahan. Willis and Callahan also won awards for their top ten finishes as did Nic Coleman for being the top 5th man.



## JAMES RIVER CHALLENGE EATON ON SHORT NOTICE FUMA WINS TEAM TITLE

With Hurricane Ian threatening torrential rains for the upcoming weekend Middle school invite, David Eaton was given very short notice on his participation in the annual James River Challenge. To be exact, he was given about two hours notice. The middle school meet was moved to a later date which meant the FUMA varsity got a huge boost. The amazing 8th grader proceeded to lead a 1-2 sweep and help the Blue Devils win the team title. While Eaton cruised to a solid 18:15 effort on the course, Jackson Pretus worked from the back to claim second place.

The Blue Devils packed a total of five runners in the top 15 to win the title for the first time since 2019. Also placing were newcomers Ben Burtram, Nic Willis and Nic Coleman. For Coleman and Willis it was the first time running the full 5k at Hardy. The event brought together the James River District along with FUMA. The race allows the mostly rural athletes a rare chance at running in an invitational.





## VTCA FALL CLASSIC

### PRETUS GETS PERSONAL BEST

One week after the hugely successful Fork Union Invitational, the Blue Devils stayed local and competed at the VTCA Classic at Panorama Farms. The course will serve as host to the 2023 NCAA Division 1 Championship.

Senior Jackson Pretus made the most of the deluxe accommodations with a 17 second personal best on the Panorama Course. The big jump came from 10th grader Nic Willis at 20:12. Now just a few meets into the sport, Willis could be a big contributor in the future.



## WFS INVITATIONAL

### IN SEARCH OF DEPTH

With no assistant coach and a full roster, the cross country team has had to improvise to help everyone get a chance to compete. Just two days after winning the James River Challenge, the team loaded up a bus to go and compete on Virginia's toughest course. Leading the way was three year team member Kendall Coard. The senior improved his time on the legendary course by well over four minutes (4:27) since his least effort there a year ago. Also making a big improvement was William Vasko with a 22:26 run, 3:16 better than a year ago. Newcomers Rhys Lawrence and Hunter McDonnell also had good efforts as did George Boitano.



## KNIGHTS CROSSING

### EATON TAKES DOWN STELLAR FIELD

FUMA made its first trip to the Knights Crossing Invitational in Roanoke, Virginia, one of the states largest meets annually. And the first trip was highlighted by a FUMA runner taking a title. David Eaton withstood a strong finish from Bassett County's Thomas Fulcher to win his second race of the opening week. Other highlights included Jackson Pretus breaking 19 for the first time and newcomer Ben Burtram running 20:19 in his first race.



## RAGGED MOUNTAIN CUP

### 2022 UNDERWAY

FUMA kicked off the 2022 campaign with the traditional Ragged Mountain Cup relay. Jackson Pretus led the varsity with a 12:00 carry. In the J.V. competition, newcomer David Eaton, an eighth grader, crushed the field with a 10:56 effort. The last time an 8th grader led FUMA was by a guy named Lomong. Watchout!





# WHO WE ARE—

MATT DAUGHERTY (2008) U.S. NAVY PILOT  
THE JULIUS BROTHERS AT YOUNGSTOWN  
STATE.

MIKE REDDEN AND COLONEL B.  
THE FRENCH FAMILY BACK AT THE INVITE.  
AL AND PETE—STILL CELEBRITIES!

JETT MONTES IS BECOMING A SUPER STAR



## SIMPLY THE BEST

The lead up to the Invitational this year was perhaps the most difficult in the 25 year history of the meet. A brutal winter storm left the course unusable and un "mowable" for much of the summer. To compound matters, FUMA Legend Rich Taddei called it a career in August. The jack of all trades will be deeply missed by FUMA Athletics but we wish him only the best. Three individuals with deep FUMA ties made the meet possible, Roger Bowles, Mike Reese and Brian Haney. Their resources and expertise saved the day. The FUMA community was fantastic on race day with every department of the school getting in on the effort.

Over the years, the meet has become something special to the larger community. Several thousand people make the trip to a course 20 miles off the beaten path on a weekend that offers a dozen other meets. They come for the total presentation of the best of Fork Union Military Academy. The bugle, the cannon, the awards and the picturesque course make it one of the special days in the cross country season. To everyone in the FUMA community that helped or simply came out to watch, I say thank you! The 25th edition will always be special to me for what went into it and for what happened on race day. My wife's team won the middle school division, my youngest placed in the top ten and my two oldest rode the lead vehicle in all seven races. For the dumb guy with the push mower in the summer of 1998 it can't get much better.