

# Rome High Cross-Country Team Hosts Ridge Ferry Invitational Meet



On Saturday, August 25th, the Rome High School Cross-Country Team unofficially kicked off their season by hosting the 27th annual Ridge Ferry Invitational at Ridge Ferry Park in Rome, Georgia.

The Ridge Ferry Invitational is an annual cross-country meet that has engaged close to forty-six schools and 1600 runners throughout the past several years and continues to grow as around thirty-five High School teams and twenty-four Middle School teams from eighteen counties were in attendance this year. Overall, there were fifty-nine teams competing with over 1800 Middle School and High School runners, as well as 100 members from the Elementary School Rome City Running Club.

The Invitational is a collaboration of student athletes and educators from all over the state---from young children in Elementary school to skilled Varsity runners in High School. Runners from all ages and skills came out to participate in this amazing day, which serves as a celebration of running and a dedication to the many teachers and volunteers that support the sport.

During the Ridge Ferry Invitational, there were three separate distance races for all ages:

- Junior Varsity and Varsity boys and girls ran a 5K
- Middle School participants jogged the two-mile course
- Elementary School children raced the one-mile course

The Ridge Ferry Invitational has grown by leaps and bounds, especially after Luis Goya, Head Cross Country Coach, took over the event four years ago. "When I started working with this race, we had around twenty teams participating, so we have changed a lot in recent years," explained Goya. "Rome High has participated in many other big meets, which made me realize just how wonderful we could make the Ridge Ferry

Invitational as we have such a beautiful course. We also have the man-power, eagerness and determination that has helped to make us so successful,” said Goya.

Hannah Nabors, Assistant Cross-Country Coach, described her experience during the Invitational. “We have a very devoted group of people that join us each year, and we get a lot of teams that come back every year. It’s so exciting to see that we are continually growing,” said Nabors.

Parents, teachers and volunteers all lined the course and cheered for the kids as they ran by. One proud parent, Jenna Cavin, could be found front row of the sidelines to express her gratitude for the event.

“This is such an organized event-- the speaker has been doing a great job, the music gives off great energy, just everything about today has been great!” raved Cavin. “I have a twelve-year-old and a sixteen-year-old that run in many different meets, however, this is the first time we have been to Ridge Ferry and we absolutely love it!”

All of the proceeds from the Ridge Ferry Invitational support the running programs in all Rome City Schools. Go wolves!