



LISA MASSEY/Staff

On the run: North Mecklenburg cross-country runner Natalie Hollar, a 15-year-old, keeps a busy schedule. In addition to running, she baby-sits for eight families and jet skis.

N. Meck runner sets pace as busy teenager

By **LANGSTON WERTZ Jr.**
Staff Writer

Whitney Campbell, a North Mecklenburg cross-country runner, says the reason teammate Natalie Hollar baby-sits so often — and, at last count, Hollar works for eight families — is simple:

"Natalie likes little girls because they're her size," Campbell says, grinning.

Hollar, 15, is a sophomore who stands 4-10 and weighs less than 100 pounds. But in her sport, she's a heavyweight.

Last year, she finished eighth in the N.C. 4A cross-country championships, missing the all-state team by one spot. She was all-conference, all-region and Observer All-Mecklenburg.

She is also industrious.

Using money she earned baby-sitting, Hollar bought a \$1,500 jet ski last year. And since she lives near Lake Norman, she skis each weekend. Her parents and two brothers also have joined in the fun.

"Oh yeah, they get to ride, too," she says. "When I let them."

"She's always budgeted her money very carefully," says Natalie's mother, Dawn. "She's saved from the time she was born."

Hollar's cross-country coach, Rick Jackson, doesn't share his runner's passion for water or skiing. But the two have a little wager that just might land the coach in

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

the middle of the lake.

"If I run a 19:30 (this fall in the 5,000-meter race), I get to pull coach knee-boarding behind me," Hollar says.

"I don't think Natalie has a 19:15 in her little body," Jackson says.

"Wait a minute, coach, you said 19:30."

Jackson, walking away, said: "No, 19:15."

It's a bet Jackson doesn't mind losing.

He says Hollar has the potential to win a state championship before she's finished at North Mecklenburg. She reminds some of former Providence star Ami Herrman, who now competes at N.C. State.

Hollar has determination, her mother says. She's always running, or into something. She jumps on the family's trampoline and is a "a darn good little gymnast," her mother says.

"Natalie thinks fast, talks fast and moves fast. I think they broke the mold when they made Natalie," Dawn Hollar says. "She's very good in almost everything she tries."

Guess coach Jackson had better learn to knee-board.

"I'm not worried," he says.

SOMEONE YOU SHOULD KNOW...



Kim Robinson, 15 West Mecklenburg

Sport: Cross-country

Class: Junior

Favorite subject: Pre-calculus

Favorite book: "Skyliners" by Louis Lamour

Favorite movie: "Cape Fear"

Favorite food: Pizza

Favorite musical act: Garth Brooks

Hobbies: Horseback riding

Career goals: To become an agriculturalist or an environmentalist

College: Would like to attend N.C. State

Athlete you most admire: Michael Jordan

Person in history most admires: Christopher Columbus

If you were president, what would be the primary focus of your administration?: I would emphasis health reform and make sure everyone had quality health care.

— Langston Wertz Jr.



"Someone You Should Know" appears in Wednesday's Observer.