

First Loss This Century at Abercrombie for Kodiak Boys

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

The Kodiak High School cross country team had a busy Labor Day weekend. Friday night the team hosted a race with West Valley, Kotzebue and Skyview at Fort Abercrombie. The evening marked the first loss for the bears on the Abercrombie course since 2000, ending a 22-match home winning streak. The West Valley Wolfpack beat the Kodiak Bears 27-31. But the boys didn't go down without a fight. Head Coach Marcus Dunbar said improvements were across the board for the varsity runners.

-- (XC Port Lions 1 : 24 "Tremendous performance up front from Cole Christiansen who PRed on the course and ran the third fastest ever time on the course and then right behind him was the sophomore sensation Levi Thomet, who ran the second fastest ever sophomore time and fourth ever fastest overall on the course. So great one two running. Levi Fried was in sixth place, and he ran about a half a minute better than he's ever run on the course. Put him number five on the all time sophomore list there.")

Dunbar said the biggest improvements came from the guys vying for the fourth and fifth slots on the team. Dunbar said a number of Kodiak boys closed the gap on West Valley's six and seventh runners, suggesting some even closer races to come.

As for the Lady Bears, Dunbar said their home record now beats the boys after an outstanding win on Friday.

-- (XC Port Lions 2 : 30 "That was really impressive because on paper West Valley had us beat, they beat us at Barlett and they looked pretty strong, so I was thinking it was going to be close battle because I knew we had improved. Bartlett we weren't at full strength we had several varsity girls sitting out. But we had our full varsity team there and they went out really aggressive and really just took it to them the whole way. And West Valley girls were really never in the team

hunt. They never really got up to where they were challenging us as a team. I don't think we have had our girls team run that strong through five places at Fort Abercrombie in a long time.”)

But the weekend didn't stop there. Three local seining boats gave up a day of fishing on Saturday to shuttle all four teams over to Port Lions. More than 100 runners invaded the village and entertained locals with what Lady Bears Coach Jen Foster calls a pursuit 5k.

-- (XC Port Lions 3 : 20 “Port Lions is more of a fun race. We did the pursuit 5k. So you have your slowest guys start first, and then everybody else is catching them. Whatever order they finished in, that was the order for getting in the lunch line, for the lunch that we brought over of subway sandwiches and pizza. So we kind of teased them as they went by at the start, OK, you're running for your lunch. ”)

Foster said it's always fun interact with visiting teams beyond the race course, and making the trip to Port Lions helped build inter-team friendships and support that runners can look forward to having at future meets on the mainland. Dunbar agreed and said Saturday's trip was a hit with the visiting teams, fed by the sunny weather, whale sightings and curious bear that meandered near the course.

This weekend the team is off island with class races at Anchorage Christian School on Friday and the Palmer Invitational on Saturday. ###