# Cougars Compete at Navy Nationals

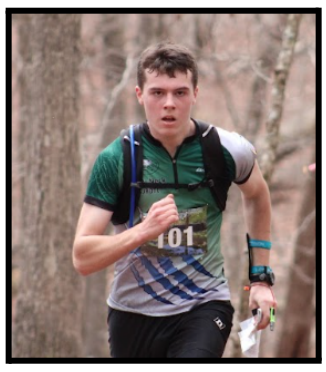
By: Paige Suhocki

Colts Neck NJROTC Orienteering Team had the opportunity to compete in the US Navy Nationals Orienteering Championships held at Kings Mountain in South Carolina this past March. The Colts Neck cadets are grateful for DVOA and all that the membership does to put on fun and challenging courses throughout the year, so we would like to share with you, interview style, a glimpse of our competition experience…

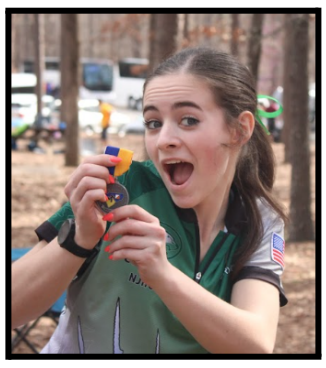
Interviewees:



Chuckie T.
(Freshman)



Colin G.
(Sophomore)



Paige S.
(Sophomore)



Michael P.
(Junior)

*1. What is something you learned, worked on, or took note of on Friday's practice course?*

**Chuckie T. (Freshman / Yellow)**: Some things I took note of were that there is way more than one way to get to a point because the practice course was all off-trial. I also took note of the fact that although one way may look shorter than another, that doesn't mean that it is a faster way.

**Colin G. (Sophomore / Orange)**: On Friday, I particularly took note of the challenges of identifying the re-entrants and contours with the terrain.

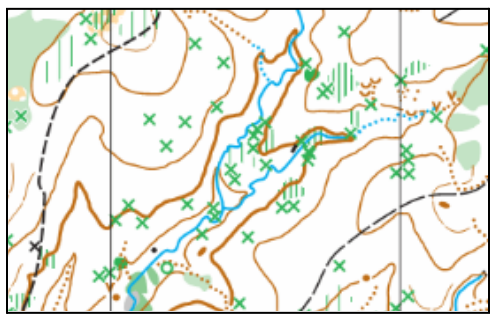
**Paige S. (Sophomore / Brown):** Something my group and I took note of on Friday's practice course was how few features were mapped. We discovered that some knolls and rootstocks, decent in size, were not mapped.

**Michael P. (Junior / Green)**: On Friday my group and I really focused on establishing how the course setter likes to map all the features. That way we knew what features we could use as catching points throughout the course.



*2. Favorite part of Saturday's course? (favorite leg, challenge, cool wild-life encounter, etc.)*

**Chuckie T. (Freshman / Yellow)**: I liked point 2 to 3 where I had to follow a stream and run down to where it connected to another stream… I thought that was pretty cool because I didn't really need to look at the map because my catching feature was the intersection of the two streams.



***Chuckie's stream junction***

**Colin G. (Sophomore / Orange)**: I'd say my favorite part of Saturday's course was the finishing legs - compared to the earlier legs, they seemed easier to navigate between.

**Paige S. (Sophomore / Brown):** My favorite part of Saturday's course was going to point 7. I was able to visualize the contours very well, and I decided to actually look at my compass. (Something I sometimes forget to do **:/** )

**Michael P. (Junior / Green):** My favorite part of Saturday's course was when I found myself needing to cross a bigger stream with no really easy point of cross. So my solution was to use part of a beaver dam and half broken tree as a bridge. I found that once I stepped on a piece of the tree it broke and fell into the water creating an easy point of passage for me.

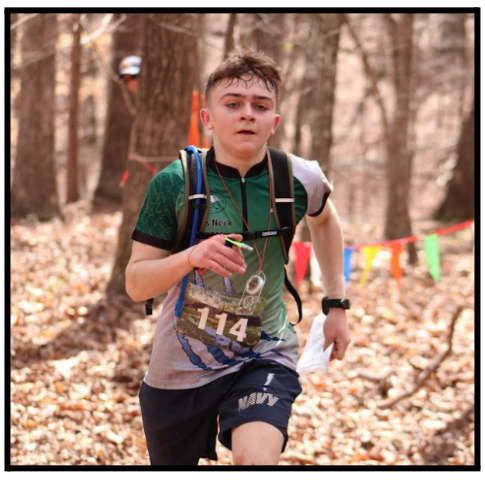
*3. Favorite part of Sunday's course? (favorite leg, challenge, epic wipeout, etc.)*

**Chuckie T. (Freshman / Yellow)**: Going from point 1 to point 2 was really cool because there was a spur leading down into a valley where point 2 was… I liked this point because it was a point I was sure I knew where I was going, and I could just sprint because I knew where I was going, and I knew where I was supposed to be. And it was just really cool scenery.

**Colin G. (Sophomore / Orange)**: The best part of Sunday's course was just the great feeling of speed the course provided. The terrain this day provided a type of slope which made it feel far faster than the previous day.

**Paige S. (Sophomore / Brown):** Everything went smoothly on Sunday's course, and I really felt like I was in a movie when it started to mist going to point 10. It was a "keep going you're almost done!" moment.

**Michael P. (Junior / Green):** My favorite part of Sunday's course was my overall strategy. I went into the day with a lot of confidence and focused on setting a bearing and trusting myself. Specifically when heading to point 4, I trusted my instinct, and my bearing led me right to the point with ease.








*4. Biggest thing you learned or best piece of advice you got?*

**Chuckie T. (Freshman / Yellow)**: The best piece of advice I got was to take it slow… I took it fast the first day because I was trying to get everywhere as fast as I could even though I didn't know where I was going. But I took it slow the second day and then I got lost a lot less, and I had a way better time than I did the day before.

**Colin G. (Sophomore / Orange)**: Don't rely on unknown features (tree stumps, etc…) but instead focus on the contours.

**Paige S. (Sophomore / Brown):** After posting on my Attackpoint log about my recurring weakness going to the first control, I got some very good advice from Sandy, Oriana, and Bridget. They gave me tips on how to tackle Point 1 in the future.

**Michael P. (Junior / Green):** The biggest thing I learned was to trust my instinct and to always remain calm when running.

*5. Silliest or best(worst) mistake of the weekend?*

**Chuckie T. (Freshman / Yellow)**: On the first day I tried to get the course done by running and sprinting everywhere and that made me lose catching features and run past points. I wasn't checking my map often enough to know for a fact where I was. The scaling of the map also posed problems, but I got used to the scale on the second day.

**Colin G. (Sophomore / Orange)**: Miscalculating the distance of a fence, which eventually caused me to spend far too much time finding one point on Day 1.

**Paige S. (Sophomore / Brown):** My silliest mistake was forgetting that I am, in fact, not a mountain goat. After making a mistake going to Point 10, I sure did feel like one…

**Michael P. (Junior / Green):** My silliest mistake of the week was the amount of times that I completely ate the ground.

*6. What was your favorite non-orienteering part of the trip?*

**Chuckie T. (Freshman / Yellow)**: I liked when we went to Topgolf and then the mall after. It was really fun.

**Colin G. (Sophomore / Orange)**: Going to the mall a day or two before the competition.

**Paige S. (Sophomore / Brown):** After our Sunday courses, a few of us Colts Neck cadets walked around and introduced ourselves to cadets from other schools. We did a Q and A with some of them and had fun comparing our NROTC units.

**Michael P. (Junior / Green):** My favorite non-orienteering part of the trip was definitely Topgolf as I had forgotten how much fun it can be.







*9. What is your ideal pre-race breakfast?*

**Chuckie T. (Freshman / Yellow)**: My ideal pre race breakfast is light because I don't want to cramp and throw up on the course… so I'll have some scrambled eggs and some yogurt and something like cereal but only a little cereal.

**Colin G. (Sophomore / Orange)**: Yogurt and apple slices, with some water. Nothing more.

**Paige S. (Sophomore / Brown):** A peanut butter and jelly sandwich is always the way to go.

**Michael P. (Junior / Green):** My ideal pre-race breakfast is no doubt a Fair-life Core power vanilla protein shake and a muffin on the side for some carbs.

In closing, I would like to congratulate our Freshman team on an incredible comeback Sunday. Yellow courses were challenging at Nationals this year, and our Freshmen had the added challenge of working with a 1:10,000 scale for the very first time. At the close of Saturday, our Freshman were in 11th place. Our entire team spent Saturday night with course review and studying the map. The Freshman were at it the longest and their efforts paid off. Sunday the Freshman finished 3rd for the day and moved into 5th overall! Well done, Freshmen. The team is proud of you!