

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Bandera's Moeller advances to state cross country meet

By Brady Keane
The Bandera Prophet

Bandera junior Taytum Moeller earned a trip to the UIL Class 4A State Cross Country Meet after placing 16th at the Region IV championships with a time of 13:14.

At each of the four regional meets across Texas, the top four teams advance to state, along with the top 10 individual runners not on those teams. Moeller earned her spot as the ninth place individual and will now compete at Old Settlers' Park, in Round Rock, on Friday, Nov. 1, at 9:30 a.m.

"We knew Taytum had a chance to get out and qualify for state, as long as she ran smart," Bandera Coach Brooke Ashcraft said. "We talked about strategy and where she needed to position herself during the race." During the regional race, it was a team effort amongst Moeller's support system to make sure she knew where she stood and what adjustments she needed to make.

"Between her family, coaches and teammates, everyone was spread out along the course to keep her updated on her place in the race," Ashcraft said. "Taytum gave everything she had coming down that last straightaway."

Qualifying for the state meet was the product of a months-long process of hard work and determination for Moeller. As a sophomore last season, Moeller told Ashcraft that she would be at the state meet this year and got to work to make it happen.

"She put in the work, starting back in May," Ashcraft said. "I remember her and a few other girls coming to me, asking to start workouts early. I knew then that they were serious and committed."

At this year's district meet, Moeller ran a personal best of 12:07, and Ashcraft believes she's capable of even more as she continues to prepare for the state meet this week.

"Her time at regionals doesn't show what she is capable of reaching," Ashcraft said. "I believe she can run under 12 minutes at state, and that would be a huge accomplishment."

Ashcraft also praised Moeller's competitive nature. Just a day after qualifying for the state meet, Moeller was back in the volleyball gym helping deliver a victory over Canyon Lake on senior night while posting 22 digs.

"The thing I love most about her is she's a competitor," Ashcraft said. "She's got that fire and grit that's hard to teach. Some kids crumble under pressure, but Taytum always rises to the occasion. I'm proud of her, but more than that, I'm excited to see what she's going to do at state."