

The Warsaw Lady Tigers kicked off the 2026 cross country season at their home invitational with an impressive second-place team finish behind a seasoned and talented Columbia City squad.

"The final team standings were a great way to start the season," says Coach Jason Fleming, "but the real story was the tremendous effort and potential shown throughout the Warsaw lineup."

Leading the way for the Lady Tigers was sophomore Dani Rastrelli, who raced to an outstanding runner-up finish, crossing the line in 20:20.1. Sophomore Cecilli Scheetz-Holland followed with a strong 7th-place finish in 21:38.3, while sophomore Eden Gackenheimer was right behind her in 8th place at 21:42.6.

Senior Matilda Granger continued the strong pack, finishing 9th overall and fourth for the Tigers in 21:44.6. Freshman Isadora Vega made an immediate impact in her first 5K, placing 10th overall in 22:04.8. Senior Savannah Purdy followed in 11th overall with a time of 22:33.9, and junior Katie Robertson rounded out the varsity seven with an 18th-place overall finish.

The coaching staff was especially pleased in seeing so many athletes compete in their first-ever 5K race and perform beyond expectations.

"There were plenty of nerves and unknowns entering the season opener," Fleming says, "but the Lady Tigers responded with confidence, composure, and a willingness to compete. For a team that is still discovering what it can become, the opening race provided an extremely encouraging glimpse of the potential within this group."

He went on to share his optimism about the season.

"The season is only beginning, and there is plenty of room for this team to grow. With athletes gaining valuable race experience, learning to compete together, and continuing to build confidence, the future looks incredibly bright for the Lady Tigers."

The full results for the girls race are attached.

The Lady Tigers return to the course next weekend at Chesterton's Larry James Invitational. The varsity race is scheduled for 9:05 AM EST