

# Betsy Pollard started running in the eighth grade when she beat all of the boys in the school mile. # The Western Branch student credits her successes to her dedicated work ethic. She was one of 16 athletes honored as finalists on Dec. 2 at the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame Education Foundation's 14th annual Student Athlete Achievement Awards ceremony. # The acknowledgement reflects academic and community success and an impressive performance at her sport. # Pollard, a senior at Western Branch High School, decided to run competitively in the eighth grade when she attended Isle of Wight Academy. # " I beat all the boys in the school mile, " she said. " I was like, I think I like this. " # She said she persuaded the school to set up a cross-country team with the help of her mother Lou Pollard. However, the school lacked a track team. It didn't stop Betsy Pollard. # " I ran as a one girl track team, " she said. Her drive to run was so strong her parents moved from Suffolk to Western Branch in 10th grade so she could train under Claude Toukene, the acclaimed former track coach at Western Branch. # " I felt the need to move was necessary for me to get stronger, faster, and noticed by