

How to Research Oregon High School Records

Have you found that your school records are lacking for many performances which predate the modern era of your team? Have you been interested in solidifying this history but felt it was futile for fear of too few available older records? Fear not! What follows is a primer on how to recreate your programs history, as best as the available records allow.

We should caution all that the records you find are only as good and as accurate as the coach who reports them and the print source which publishes them. However, there are so many sources that it would not be difficult to collaborate the marks to ensure accuracy.

The following should all be examined in any pursuit of your programs Track and Field or Cross Country history.

➤ Who's Who in Oregon Track and Field

This publication has been published annually since the 1965 (boys) and 1970 (girls) seasons, and has striven for accuracy in listing the top hundred athletes statewide in each event and in identifying related statistical patterns.

There are some Who's Who in certain Oregon public and school libraries, many other Who's Who (not all) available for purchase, and there are also a few locations around the State which have a complete set of the publication you could examine for free should you be able to come out to do research in-person.

➤ Contact former coaches

It is worth emailing former head coaches and longtime assistant coaches of your team, and inquire as to whether they may have any old records filed away forgotten in their garage or laying around.

➤ Community newspapers

Some newspapers have been digitized online, while most others still remain entombed in microfiche. These are fantastic, particularly if you're in a community which has (or used to have...) good coverage of high school sports. Consider both statewide and local newspapers, no matter your school size.

Large newspapers like The Oregonian (Portland) would occasionally have weekly State-best rankings of individuals, while local newspapers like the Register-Guard (Eugene) or Statesman Journal (Salem) would also cover major events in their readership area.

Recognize too that numerous newspapers may cover your school's common competitive region. For instance, of the four which overlap the competitive region Phoenix HS competes in – the Mail Tribune (Medford), Daily Tidings (Ashland), Courier (Grants Pass), and Herald and News (Klamath Falls) newspapers – three of the four yielded many race results in their research.

Most of this is free (microfiche in the library, or the Google Newspaper Archive), while some pay sites (Newspapers.Com) are great resources which offer a free trial period.

➤ School yearbooks and newspapers

Many schools used to have a practice of putting marks in the teams' yearbook page. This was most common in the 1970s and earlier but did happen occasionally since. Even if you don't find marks posted there, you will get some cool historical photos of the team and can estimate a rough approximation of team size based on the team photo!

It is also worth asking your school if any old school newspapers exist, as they may have covered the team.

➤ Other meets

Consider too records from old meets your team has been known to attend. This might include past heat sheets, results and meet records. You can email the meet director to see what old records may exist.

Also, consider contacting other longtime coaches in your conference to ask what they may have available in their files. See if you can get copies of any meet results which feature your team. OSAA State records are posted in the archives on their website, and some contain preliminary results as well as the finals.

➤ Individual athletes

Do a Google search on your top athletes, the school, and year, in quotes.

For instance, for Ashland HS, search “*Taylor Cropper Ashland 1998*” or you can do a search specific to a newspaper, like the following four words *Molly Luman Ashland site:www.mailtribune.com* If that athlete headlined a newspaper article from a meet or featured anywhere in the article, this would be your gateway toward possibly accessing the article.

You could also do a similar search on the names of your teams common rivals, which might connect you to an article in which your team was competing against theirs, with the race results you are searching for.

➤ VERY IMPORTANT: As you get information, note it in a notebook where each page is devoted to a season/year just to help you get organized.

Once ready, then input it into a centralized location. I recommend Athletic.Net. Just create a ‘Season Pr’ meet for each year, and then input marks/athletes in the appropriate season as you learn things.

You can learn the grades of your alumni either by the article content or by looking through old yearbooks at your school (this part of the research is not quick...this may be a good project for a student aide!)

This will eventually give you accurate class records as well as overall top-15 lists per event.

A final word (or two) of advice . . .

First, realize that events change¹ so be sure to put the mark in the correct year. Athletic.Net is helpful insomuch as it allows you to select the appropriate weight of the implement or height of the hurdle.

Second, NEVER convert marks in what you put in the computer. Athletic.Net will convert hand for you for the purpose of comparison to automatic times. Just put the mark in as you see it.

Finally, for those who do wish to have a top-15 list which allows comparison for how modern meter times compare to the old yard times, I’d recommend – after all is set in Athletic.Net – maintaining an Excel spreadsheet which has the yard times adjusted using national federation accepted conversion equivalencies, and marry this list to the meter marks. This way you would have a combined master rankings for each event for internal team use without messing with your official records.

If you have questions or would like advice, email the Who’s Who Editors.

¹ For instance: A Shot in 1975 weighed differently than a Shot in 1984, and yards were used prior to 1978, and “High” Hurdles in 1974 were a different hurdle height than the Highs are today.