Cross Country (2018)

Girls Still The Measuring Stick @ TCAL Champs; Boys 2nd

November 2, 2018



For the 7th time in 8 years, both girls teams ran away with championships at the TCAL cross country finals. While the JV girls won a closely contested race by a mere 2 points, the varsity girls completely overwhelmed the rest of the league to score a 26 point victory over the Albany Cougars.



"Both girls' teams were ready to roll today," said victorious head coach Denis Mohun at the victory celebration. "They didn't make it easy on any of the other teams. They fought hard and ran tough. Both groups were outstanding and I'm proud of all of them."



Zander Lieske



The varsity squad was led by 1st team all-league selections Jordan Cornet (2nd overall), Olivia Lawson (4th overall), Lucy Arevalo (5th), Nan Wemmer (6th), and Wiona Tan (7th)…. while sophomore Eliza Pease (9th) and senior Maddie Daganzo (12th) earned 2nd team honors.

The JV girls, who claimed their 8th straight TCAL league championship, were led by freshman Maddie Dwyer (3rd overall) and sophomores Ashley Robarts (5th) and Simone Rogers (6th). All three girls were named to the 1st team all-league team. Freshmen Emmi Akiyama-Tahara and Mallory Boell won 2nd team selections based on their 8th and 9th place finishes.



Olivia Lawson & Lucy Arevalo



Both boys teams also ran tough, competitive races according to coaches Jeff Rogers and Rob Riccardi. For the varsity, the team finished 2nd behind defending league champion Albany. Senior Zander Lieske ran his way onto the 1st team with an 8th place finish while younger brother Zax (9th overall), Riley Hartney (11th), and senior Coby Fan (15th) all were 2nd team all-league medalists.


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Jeffrey Norris

The Panthers also captured the runner-up spot in the frosh/soph boys race. Freshman Jeffrey Norris capped off a fine freshman league season with his 2nd place, 11:33 finish. His time was a personal best for the 2 mile course. Fellow freshman Ryan Painter narrowly missed earning a place on the 1st team all-league squad…. instead landing a spot on the 2nd team. Ryan finished 8th overall. Freshman Ryan Wong also ran a personal best to earn the final medal and placing as an all-league runner.



Finally, junior Talyn Mitchell ran his lifetime best in the boys junior varsity race which won him a medal and a position on the all-league podium.

Congratulations to all the Panther runners on a great league season. Both boys and girls varsity teams will focus their energies on the North Coast Section Championships to be held at Hayward High School on Saturday, November 17th.

Varsity Girls Defeat Albany – Finish TCAL Season Undefeated – Clinch TCAL Title

October 26, 2018



The Tri-County Athletic League (TCAL) has been in existence since the Fall of 2012 and, in those 7 seasons, the Saint Mary's Varsity Girls cross country team has won or shared every league championship but one. On Thursday, the Lady Panthers once again asserted their

dominance with a convincing win over the previously undefeated Albany Cougars. Sophomores Olivia Lawson, Lucy Arevalo, Nan Wemmer and Jordan Cornet finished 2nd through 5th to cement the win and run their league record to 12 – 0. Junior Wiona Tan and Senior Maddy Daganzo finished 6th and 10th respectively to complete the scoring.



After the meet, longtime girls coach Denis Mohun, reveling in his team's decisive victory, was gushing. "Our girls ran very smart and very tough today. Albany is a good team who has run fast and we knew they would be tough. But today our girls showed who they were. They ran for each other and for the league championship. I'm really proud of how they competed."



Likewise, the JV girls squad of Simone Rogers, Ashley Robarts, Maddie Dwyer, Emmi Akiyama-Tahara and Mallory Boell also completed a clean sweep of the season with their dominant win against Albany. Simone was the race winner, with Ashley a close :05 seconds back… and Maddie, Emmi and Mallory racing as a team with a mere :18 seconds between the three of them.



For the boys, senior Zander Lieske and sophomores Zax Lieske and Riley Hartney ran "very solid races" according to coach Jeff Rogers. All three ran near personal bests on the Point Pinole course yet, despite their strong runs, the speed of the Cougars proved to be a bit too much as they out-distanced the Panthers. The Panthers finished the TCAL league season 11 – 1 and will try and win a share of the TCAL title by winning the league championship race next Thursday on the same course.

Panthers Complete Invitational Season @ Mariner Invitational

October 20, 2018



The Panthers 2018 invitational season was completed on Saturday at the Mariner Invitational. The meet, hosted by Moreau Catholic High School but contested at Hayward High School, was a huge affair that featured over 1,500 runners in 8 different races. The race is run on the site that the North Coast Section Championships will be run next month so the meet attracts many of the top teams from around the NCS.





For the Panthers, sophomore co-captain Olivia Lawson was the day's top performer. Olivia placed 15th in the frosh-soph girls race, running a lifetime best 20:38 on the championship course. She finished :37 seconds ahead of Eliza Pease (22:15), with Simone Rogers (23:15) third on the team. Ashley

Robarts (23:56) fought off a tad of injury and illness to finish 4th for Saint Mary's and the sophomore quartet.



The other top finisher of the day was by freshman stand-out Jeffrey Norris. Jeffrey, running in a very fast…very competitive frosh-soph race, ran a lifetime best 17:33 for the 3 mile course. His time was :35 seconds faster than the race he ran on the same course a month ago. Fellow freshman Ryan Painter was 2nd on the team… running 18:54. A trio of freshmen runners followed – Julian Retana, Ryan Wong, and Dominic Storella – all receiving praise from coach Rob Riccardi afterwards.



Eliza Pease



“I’m really happy these guys came out today to compete. Most of them have never run a 3 mile race and could have easily opted out. Instead, they showed up to what we knew would be a very competitive race and competed hard. I’m proud of those five guys today.”



Likewise, the varsity boys race featured the top runner in California and many of the top runners and teams from around the NCS. “The race was very, very fast,” quipped coach Jeff Rogers. “28 guys ran under 16:00 minutes and 5 guys ran under 15:00 minutes! That’s fast!”


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Sophomore Riley Hartney, recently named Athlete of the Week by the Saint Mary's Athletic Department, seems to be finding his pace and rhythm late in the season. He finished 1st on the team once again… this time posting a PR 17:09. Brothers Zander and Zax Lieske ran virtually neck and neck the entire race… finishing in 17:18 and 17:19 respectively. Max Emerling crossed the line next, with senior Nic Lauxman running his best race of the year to finish just behind Max in 18:24.



Lastly, it must be noted that the top performance of the day most certainly goes to coach Rob Riccardi who won the coaches 2.0 mile race in an impressive 10:08. Running 5:17 for the first mile and in 2nd place, coach Riccardi called upon his inner-most Panther spirit to storm to the front with 3 minutes to go in the race and charge home to victory. Congratulations coach Riccardi!

Next up for the Panthers is the final TCAL league meet against rival Albany. Both varsity teams are undefeated thus far and the meet will determine who wins the regular season league championship. The meet is on Thursday at Point Pinole Regional Park. The first race starts at 4:00.



Panthers Notch Wins Against 3 More TCAL Foes; Now 9-0

October 12, 2018



The Panthers traveled to St. Patrick's-St. Vincent (SPSV) on Thursday for their 2nd of 3 TCAL cluster meets. This time, the opponents were the hosts SPSV, Vallejo and Jesse Bethel High Schools and like the first meet, the results were resounding Panther victories, running their overall TCAL record to 9-0.



Running on a twisting, turning, sometimes hilly 2.95 mile course around the SPSV campus, the varsity boys scored the first dominant victory of the meet; a 10 point win over SPSV. Sophomore Riley Hartney out-distanced senior Zander Lieske this week…. notching a :07 second win. Zax Lieske was the 3rd runner in for the Panthers while Max Emerling bested fellow senior Coby Fan by :26 seconds for fourth. Nic Lauxman was the sixth runner in for the winning squad.





The varsity girls, running in a tight pack the entire race, weren't really challenged in their 15-48 win. Wiona Tan, Olivia Lawson, Nan Wemmer and Eliza Pease crossed the line in unison, with sophomore Simone Rogers a mere :13 seconds back. Ashley Robarts finished next while a pair of freshmen, Emmi Akiyama-Tahara and Mallory Boell – running in their first 3 mile races ever – finished 10th and 14th respectively.





The JV boys were also victorious on Thursday, beating back a tough challenge from SPSV to post a 24-32 win. Freshmen Jeffrey Norris and Ryan Painter, each a victim of several wrong turns on the course, finished 1st and 2nd for the Panthers. Talyn Mitchell and Julian Retana paced each other to very respectable 6th and 7th place finishes in the 55 runner field. Their race, according to coach Rob Riccardi, was the key to the boys victory. Ryan Wong and Alex Rudolph placed 5th and 6th for the team.





The next race for the Panthers is the Mariner Invitational, hosted by Moreau Catholic High School, on Saturday, October 20th at Hayward High School.

Split Squad Braves “Cougar Hill” @ Half Moon Bay Invitational

October 7, 2018



17 Saint Mary’s cross country runners braved the 47th running of the Artichoke Invitational on Saturday… several coming away with medals and all coming away with one unforgettable memory: “Cougar Hill”. Runners entering the fearsome hill in the middle of the 2.3 mile course are met with the warning “prepare to suffer” chalked on the ground at the base of the hill. After the race, all the runners confirmed this declared eventuality.





"It was really, really hard," said freshman Jeffrey Norris. "I couldn't feel my legs once I got to the top" declared Simone Rogers. "I could barely see once I got up there," said senior Nic Lauxman. "I heard kids wimpering and crying on the way up," said junior Wiona Tan. Indeed, "Cougar Hill" will be the enduring memory of the Artichoke Invitational.





The Frosh-Sop Boys were only one of two squads that fielded a complete team and finished 4th overall to lead the day for the Panthers. Both Zax Lieske and Riley Hartney medaled… with Zax out-dueling Riley in the end to take the top prize. Jeffrey Norris was a scant 3 places from a medal… while freshman Ryan Painter recovered from a slow start to eventually run a solid race according to coach Rob Riccardi. Freshman Ryan Wong and sophomore Matteo Brownlow completed the 6 person squad for the Panthers.



The Varsity Girls, plagued by scheduling conflicts and illness, could only manage to get 3 runners to the starting line. Fortunately, those 3 runners all medaled and ran very competitive races according to coach Spencer Moore. Sophomores Jordan Cornet and Olivia Lawson were the top 2.. with junior Wiona Tan not far off to claim the final medal of the day for Saint Mary's.



The JV Girls threesome of Maddie Dwyer, Simone Rogers and Ashley Robarts were the first to test Cougar Hill while the Varsity Boys squad of Zander Lieske, Max Emerling, Coby Fan, Nic Lauxman and Talyn Mitchell were the last.



Panthers Test Their Mettle @ Stanford

September 29, 2018



On Saturday, the boys varsity sent a complete 7 runner team to compete at the venerable Stanford Invitational. Stanford, considered the most competitive meet in Northern California every year, featured teams from all parts of the Golden State whose intent was to run fast and evaluate afterwards. The Panthers, coming off a relatively easy win in their TCAL opener, tested themselves against this backdrop down on the Farm at Stanford.


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Led by senior Zander Lieske (18:10) and sophomores Zax Lieske (18:13) and Riley Hartney (18:31), the Panthers ran “about as well as we could given the circumstances” according to head coach Jeff Rogers. “The guys were a bit tired after Thursday’s race and the early morning start today. Still, I’m glad we got out here and competed against this caliber of teams. Hopefully this will benefit us down the line.”

Following Zander, Zax and Riley was freshman Jeffrey Norris, who posted a time of 19:10 in his very first 5K high school race. Seniors Max Emerling, Coby Fan and Nic Lauxman made up the final three of the 7 that lined up for the Panthers.







For the girls, the weekend was filled with scheduling conflicts and prior commitments. Therefore, the defending TCAL champions could only manage to get 3 runners to the starting line. Sophomore Olivia Lawson continued her fine 10th grade campaign… finishing first once again for her team in a brisk 21:32. Fellow co-captain Wiona Tan competed with a ferocity that was pleasing to coach Denis Mohun's standards. Her 22:09 run over the rolling, grassy 5k course was described as "very solid" by coach Mohun. Senior Maddie Daganzo, whose

toughness and improvement continues to impress her coaches and teammates, just missed breaking the 23:00 barrier… finishing in 23:23.

Congratulations to all the Panthers who ran at Stanford on Saturday!



Panthers at Full Strength – Win Big in TCAL Opener

September 28, 2018



As September comes to a close, the 2018 cross country season is nearly a month old and the Panthers having run in 3 separate meets. Yet, Thursday's TCAL opener at Point Pinole Regional Park has been the first time this season that both boys and girls teams have been at full strength. With a full compliment of healthy runners, the Saint Marys teams… led by a slew of talented sophomores, flexed their collective muscles in routing teams from De Anza, Pinole Valley, Salesian, Hercules, J.F. Kennedy and El Cerrito.





On the boys side, sophomore Riley Hartney – who spent the bulk of his freshman year sidelined with injury – served notice that he is indeed healthy and ready to compete in the upper echelons of the league this year. His 17:38 was good for 4th place overall and was the top performance by a Panther runner. Senior Zander Lieske, a first team all-league selection a year ago, was close behind in 17:43. Zax Lieske, Max Emerling and freshman Jeffrey Norris finished the scoring for the Panthers. Seniors Coby Fan and Nic Lauxman also ran solid races according to coach Jeff Rogers. The JV Boys, led by freshman Ryan Painter and junior Talun Mitchell, also ran well according to coach Rob Riccardi. "I was proud of the way the guys ran today. Most of them had

never even been to Point Pinole park, so to run as well as they did on a windy, unfamiliar course was nice to see."





While most agreed that the boys ran well on Thursday, it was the girls – both varsity and JV – that were *the* dominant teams. The varsity girls, led by sophomores Jordan Cornet (1st), Lucy Arevalo (2nd) and Olivia Lawson (4th), swept to an easy victory over all comers at Point Pinole. Only one other runner from the six other schools were able to break up the trio.. and only one runner was able to run within 2 minutes of their final time. The defending 6-time league champions certainly showed that they will be hard to knock from the top of the TCAL mountain. Seniors Wiona Tan and Maddie Daganzo also ran well according to assistant coach (and former Panther great) Spencer Moore.





The JV girls scored 5 of the top 6 spots overall… with sophomores Eliza Pease and Ashley Robarts finishing 1-2. Fellow sophomore Simone Rogers was 4th overall… while a pair of freshmen – Maddy Dwyer and Mallory Boell – finished 5th and 6th. Nia Dippon (8th) and Emmi Akiyama-Tahara (9th) also ran very good races for the now 6-0 Panthers.

Next up for the Panthers is the Stanford Invitational on Saturday. The meet features most of the top competition from Northern California. The meet will feature varsity teams only.

Fast Times at Woodbridge High!

September 15, 2018



On Friday, the boys and girls varsity teams traveled to Southern California where they joined over 15,000 runners to compete in the Woodbridge Invitational. Woodbridge is widely considered one of the elite meets in California and features a plethora of fast runners, fast teams and fast times. For the Panthers, the talent, enormity and night-time atmosphere combined to propel them to PR's aplenty.





Sophomore Olivia Lawson ran her personal best for 3 miles (20:11) as she finished in the top spot for the Panthers. Fellow sophomores Lucy Arevalo (20:39), Eliza Pease (21:32) and Nan Wemmer (21:39) all ran faster than they ever had…. as did junior Wiona Tan (21:55), senior Maddy Daganzo (21:59) and sophomores Ashley Robarts (23:05) and Simone Rogers (23:50).

"This meet is set up perfectly for the runners to run fast," said girls coach Denis Mohun. "I was happy the girls took advantage of it and got their 3 mile PR's."





The boys, inspired by the girls fleet feet, also ran faster than they ever have. Sophomore Riley Hartney recorded his first ever sub-18:00 clocking… crossing the finish line in 17:11. Fellow sophomore Zax Lieske wasn't far behind in what was his first time breaking 18 minutes… he finished in 17:34. Senior Max Emerling, running in his first and last Woodbridge Invitational, also was relieved that he ran under 18 minutes… finishing in 17:49. Senior Nic Lauxman rounded out the abbreviated Panther boys squad with a 19:21 clocking.



Next up for the Panthers is their TCAL season opener on Thursday, September 27th against the likes of El Cerrito and 5 other league schools. The meet will begin at 4:00 at Point Pinole Regional Park in Richmond.

Youth Serve Notice @ Ed Sias Invitational

[September 8, 2018]



History and conventional thinking suggest that newer runners… because of their inexperience and youth…. are likely to struggle in their early season competitions. Then, as they gain experience and strength, they will begin to show promise. Fortunately, most of the freshmen and sophomores on this 2018 team must not be conventional thinkers. Instead, they ignored historical trends and raced their way into the hopes and aspirations of the Panther coaching staff.





The freshman boys race featured impressive runs by all the athletes, especially 6th place finisher Jeffrey Norris and 17th placer Ryan Painter. Jeffrey's 12:23 time over the rolling 2 mile course was, according to coach Jeff Rogers, "one of the four or five fastest times ever by a Saint Mary's freshman on the Ed Sias course." Ryan Painter's 13:10 was also "very impressive" according to coach Rogers. Ryan Wong (13:52), Dominic Storella (15:52), Gabriel Ishii-Lusk (16:16) and Jonas Holdenreid (16:31) completed the squad that ran for the Panthers.





A pair of sophomores, Zax Lieske and Riley Hartney, both threatened to break the esteemed 12:00 minute mark before each falling just seconds short. Zax was the top Panther in the frosh-soph race… running almost a minute faster than he did a year ago in finishing in 12:07. Riley, running for the first time on the Ed Sias course, ran 12:18. Matteo Brownlow finished his day by running 15:31.


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Senior Zander Lieske ran the day's fastest time by a Panther, running 12:02… with fellow senior Max Emerling :32 seconds behind at 12:34. Both Zander and Max competed in the varsity boys race.

For the girls, the sophomore class ruled the day. 10th grader Jordan Cornet's 13:43 was the day's fastest… and also her first ever high school cross country race! Classmate Lucy Arevalo, also running her first race ever, ran 14:07 to place 2nd overall for the Panthers… with fellow sophomore Olivia Lawson placing 3rd for the Panthers at 14:55.





Co-captain Wiona Tan ran almost a minute faster than she did a year ago, crossing the finish line in 15:09… while senior Maddie Daganzo ran 15:33 as she continues to show her massive improvement from last year. Sophomores Eliza Pease (15:31) and Ashley Robarts (16:20) joined freshman Mallory Boell in running “strong races” according to first year coach Spencer Moore.



Finally, the race of the day may have belonged to boys coach Riccardi… whose 11:43 run in the 8:30 coaches race nearly matched his 10th grade – 2004 time of 11:36. Congratulations to coach Riccardi and all the Panthers in their season opener.



Zander Lieske, Olivia Lawson Are Fastest @ 20th Annual Time Trial

September 5, 2018



For the 20th consecutive year, the cross country season kicked off at Tilden Park with the annual time trial. The race, whose course has gone un-changed for 2 decades, offers a preview of the team, their fitness, and often times helps forecast the upcoming season. If Tuesday's run was, in fact, an indicator.. the 2018 season should once again be a very competitive and rewarding one for the Panthers.





The fastest male performer of the day was senior co-captain Zander Lieske. His 11:20 over the rolling, 1.9 mile course was :09 seconds faster than last season…. a season that saw him earn 1st team all-league honors. Thus, it doesn't seem to be too much of a stretch to consider Zander one of the top runners in the TCAL. Following Zander were a pair of talented sophomores: Zax Lieske and Riley Hartney. Zax, who is two years Zander's junior but was a mere :27 seconds behind his older brother, is poised to have a break out 2018 campaign. Teammate Riley, whose 2017 season was reduced to just a few races because of injury, seems ready to join Zander and Zax atop the league rankings this year. Senior Max Emerling had a stellar summer and should be considered a member of the quartet that will lead the varsity team this year. Max ran 12:10 on Tuesday. Senior co-captain Nic Lauxman and senior Coby Fan round out this year's varsity boys squad.





Last year's fastest JV girl a year ago moved to the fastest varsity girl on Tuesday. Sophomore Olivia Lawson is fast proving that she may very well contend for one of the top few spots in the TCAL this year. She ran 13:30 at the time trial, the #7 sophomore time in school history. Fellow sophomore Nan Wemmer wasn't far behind, finishing in 13:58 to rank #9 all-time for sophomores. Simone Rogers and Eliza Pease ran identical 14:32 times to etch their name onto the all-time list… as did sophomore teammate Ashley Robarts (15:50).

Junior co-captain Wiona Tan ran 14:20… a :50 second improvement from last year to signal that her 2018 season could be special. Finally, senior Maddie Daganzo ran an incredible 1:21 faster than she did a year ago to capture the biggest improvement prize.





For the JV runners, many were seeing the time trial course for the very first time. A pair of newcomers, however, did some running at Tilden Park with the team over the summer and it showed. Freshmen Jeffrey Norris and Ryan Painter were the top JV runners of the day… Jeffrey with an impressive 12:52 – with Ryan just :12 back at 13:04. Ryan Wong also ran well… clocking 14:18… as did sophomore Matteo Brownlow. In fact, Matteo recorded the biggest improvement of all the returners, running 2:56 faster than he ran last year. Freshmen Julian Retana and Dominic Storella also performed well for coach Rob Riccardi and Adalberto Gonzalez' team.



Zander Lieske & Olivia Lawson

The 2018 season officially kicks off this Saturday at the Ed Sias Invitational at Hidden Valley Park in Martinez. Good luck to the Panthers this weekend.