

Cross Country 2014

Girls Prove Their Mettle – Take Home Championship Medals at TCAL Champs

November 6th, 2014



With spirited efforts and un-wavering determination, both the varsity and junior varsity girls teams ran their way to league championships at the TCAL finals on Thursday. Both teams entered the meet seeking to defend their 2013 titles but knew that the task would not be easy. The varsity girls had already suffered a mid-season loss to much-improved and highly touted St. Joseph-Notre Dame while the JV girls had lost their top runner to the varsity ranks. Still, the ability to rise to the occasion and perform on the big stage is the mark of a champion... and on Thursday both girls teams rose up and showed themselves to be the biggest performers.

The varsity girls, en route to their 8th straight league championship, were led by 1st team all-leaguers Ella Hymel and Taryn Kisch-Gallagher, whose 4th and 7th place finishes paced the scoring for the Panthers. Still, the performances of 2nd team all-leaguers Ariana Corwin (10th), Avi Wilson-Perteete (11th), and Julia English (12th) may have clinched the title for the Panthers. “The entire team ran great today,” said coach Denis Mohun afterwards. “But those three in particular were crucial. We knew we needed big runs out of our 3, 4 and 5 runners and those three delivered big time.”

“Delivering big time” was also on the lips of JV coach Kim Pacatte after her team grabbed 4 of the first 7 places and 5 of the top 10 on their way to another resounding TCAL championship. First-year junior

Daniela Vaughan was an impressive winner....with teammates Genevieve Wiley (3rd) and Karah Giesecke (4th) not far behind. Freshman Esme Goldstein received special praise from her coach after running her best race of the year to finish 7th and capture a spot on the all-league team. Katie Woelffer, Salome Ragot, Giaunna Nu'man, and Noelle Shaw all ran well enough to earn 2nd team all-league honors.

Championship banners, unfortunately, were not part of the boys results. Both boys teams settled for runner-up spots while running very good races. Sophomore Owen Woo continued his sophomore surge, finishing 5th overall with a PR 16:07 on the Point Pinole course. "Owen really went after it today," said coach Jeff Rogers. "His practice sessions the past two weeks have suggested he's ready to go... which he showed today." Senior co-captain Diego Jara (16:18), junior Faraz Khan (16:34), senior Mickey Tessema (16:43), senior Zach Wilkinson (17:03), sophomore Jared Flint (17:39) and senior Carlos Martin del Campo (18:50) also posted all-time bests on the league championship course. After the race, coach Rogers summed up the day. "Today was our teams' best races of the season. I was really proud of how hard our kids competed. Hopefully this builds some momentum for them heading into the North Coast Section meet in two weeks."

The North Coast Section Meet of Champions will be held on Saturday November 22nd at Hayward High School. For the boys and girls, the top 4 teams from the Division IV race advance to the State Championships. Congratulations to all of our runners and good luck to both of our varsity teams as they prepare for the "Meet of Champions."

Pair of Panthers Medal at Mt. Sac Invitational

October 25, 2014



Juniors Taryn Kisch-Gallagher and Faraz Khan earned individual medals while leading their teams in their first ever Mt. Sac Invitational. Billed as the "largest cross country meet in the world," Mt. Sac attracts

most of the top talent from Southern California and around the Golden State. Featuring the dreaded “switch-backs”, “Poop-Out Hill” and the venerable “Reservoir Hill”, the Mt. Sac course challenges runners in ways that they may never experience again.

“I’d say the Mt. Sac course is the toughest course we run,” said coach Denis Mohun. “When you factor in the travel, the hills, the unfamiliarity, the competition and the heat.... it’s definitely no walk in the park.”

Taryn’s 15th place finish led the Panthers, with seniors Ariana Corwin and Josie Smale finishing 2nd and 3rd for the Panthers. “Taryn ran very well today,” said coach Mohun. “She steadily moved up in the race until she got herself in medal position. After that, she gutted out the final two hills. She was impressive.” Sisters Ella and Maya Hymel rounded out the scoring for the Panthers, who finished 6th overall as a team.



For the boys, junior Faraz Khan, who missed Thursday’s TCAL meet due to illness, recovered in time to lead the Panthers and earn himself an individual medal.

“Faraz ran a tough race today. I was unsure if he was going to be able to run after being sick yesterday,” said coach Jeff Rogers. “But he told me he was feeling good enough to give it a go. I guess he was right.”



Senior Diego Jara also had a good race, missing the medal position by a mere 3 places. Sophomore Owen Woo was next for the Panthers, with sophomore Jared Flint and senior Zach Wilkinson following Owen.

“Overall, our team competed well today,” said coach Rogers. “We had a tough race against Albany yesterday, flew down here this morning, and ran in the mid-day heat on a tough course. So, all-in-all, I’d

say our kids did pretty well.

Next up for the Panthers will be the TCAL league championship race on Thursday, November 6th at Point Pinole Regional Park.

JV Girls Win Mariner Invitational

October 18th, 2014



Led by race winner Daniella Vaughn's come-from-behind victory, the JV Girls earned an impressive win at the 14th annual Mariner Invitational. "It was great to see the girls run with so much conviction today," said coach Kim Pacatte. "Our girls took command of the race early and never let up. They've really bonded as a team and, instead of just running for themselves, are starting to run for each other. When that happens, everyone runs better.... and occasionally you even win!"

Going into the final 800 meters... with a hill in front of them, Daniella was running in 3rd place, several paces behind the leaders. Unwilling to settle for the bronze, Daniela instead surged up the final hill, took the lead, and never relinquished it on her way to the win. Senior Ariana Corwin, coming back from several days of illness, finished a close 2nd, with freshmen Genevieve Wiley and Katie Woelffer both posting medal-winning performances. "Salome Ragot, Noelle Shaw, Giauna Nu'man, and Melissa Mariano also had very nice races," said coach Pacatte.



The Varsity Girls, because of illness and injury, ran an incomplete team. Despite not receiving a team score, the girls still had some nice individual performances. Junior Taryn Kisch-Gallagher continued her meteoric ascension up the team and TCAL ranks with a team-leading 20:19 run on the 3.0 mile Hayward course. One month ago, Taryn ran the same course in 21:27. By anyone's standards, a minute and 8 second improvement in a month's time is impressive. Ella Hymel ran :35 seconds faster than she did a month ago, while senior co-captain Josie Smale improved by :18 seconds.

"Considering we had a tough race on a very challenging course on Thursday, I was quite pleased with how we ran today," said head coach Denis Mohun. "Hopefully we can get Julia (English) and Isabel (Havens) back in time for our championship season. If that happens and we can keep everyone else healthy, we could be a tough out for a lot of teams in the North Coast Section."



The Varsity Boys, also were battling some mid-season fatigue and injury, served up several solid individual performances at Mariner. Sophomore Owen Woo ran the fastest 3 mile race of the year for the Panthers, finishing in 16:36. Junior Faraz Khan flirted with breaking the 17:00 mark before just coming up short, finishing in 17:02. Diego Jara ran :21 seconds faster than he did a month ago, while senior Zach

Wilkinson ran 1:38 faster than he did in September. Carlos Martin del Campo, who ran 20:22 at the Farmer Invitational, broke through the elusive 20:00 minute mark when he crossed the finish line in 19:36. Congratulations to Carlos and the rest of the Panthers on this day!

Panthers Victorious in TCAL Opener

October 2nd, 2014



Thursday marked the opening of league competition for the Saint Mary's cross country team. Running at Point Pinole Regional Park, site of the 2014 league championships, the Panthers opened the season victorious. Both varsity boys and varsity girls teams defeated Hercules, Pinole Valley and Saint Patrick's-St. Vincent's. The trio of Owen Woo, Faraz Khan and Diego Jara led the boys team... while the girls scored a decisive 1 -6 sweep in their race. Ella Hymel finished first for the Panthers... followed by Taryn Kisch-Gallgher, Ariana Corwin, Josie Smale, Julia English, and Maya Hymel in that order.

Both JV teams, featuring many runners competing in their very first race of the season, shared in the dominance. The JV Boys, led by coach Craig Sutphin (returning after a 4 year hiatus), opened their season with fairly comfortable wins over their league rivals. "It was great to finally get all the boys out to a race," said coach Sutphin. "It was hot out there yet our guys didn't back down. I was especially impressed with how Sasha and Matthews ran. Both of those guys gutted out a nice race. Andre was huge for us as well. He finished 5th for us and his points were why we won."



Coach Kim Pacatte's JV Girls, meanwhile, may have been the most dominant group of the day... taking 13 of the first 15 places in their race while cruising to easy wins. Sophomore Avi Wilson-Perteete was, once again, the top freshman. Katie Woelffer, however, received top praise from coach Pacatte. "Katie ran great today. Instead of simply running for two miles, she went out and raced today. Today, I think she took a step towards learning what the difference is. Hopefully our whole team will be inspired by her effort. I was proud of all of the girls today... but Katie's race was especially good."



Next up for the Panthers is their 2nd TCAL meet, next Thursday back at Point Pinole Park against Salesian and El Cerrito. First race will be at 4:00pm.

Farmer Invite An Eye-Opener For Panther Runners

September 22nd, 2014



Hayward High School was the host school for the Panthers this weekend as they competed at the 12th annual Farmer Invitational. The race is held on the same course as the Meet of Champions race in November and thus attracts a fair amount of North Coast Section talent who, like the Panthers, are intent on getting a test run on the championship course. The meet featured schools from Marin, Napa, Sonoma, Contra Costa and Alameda counties and was “an eye-opener” for many of the Saint Mary’s runners. “It was good for our kids to get out there and, quite frankly, get roughed up a bit,” said coach Jeff Rogers. “Sometimes you need a barometer check on where you are in order to know where you still need to get to. After today, our teams realize there’s a big pool of talented runners out there and we need to continue to practice and get better if we hope to be among the elites.”

Pacing the Panther girls were juniors Ella Hymel and Taryn Kirsch-Gallagher. Ella finished first for the varsity girls (46th overall) in the 130 runner field. Taryn moved up nicely in her race... closing to 53rd place while covering the 3 mile course in 21:27. Seniors Ariana Corwin and Josie Smale finished 3rd and 4th for the Panthers, who after injury and illness, only brought 4 girls to the starting line.

The JV Girls, meanwhile, ran their race on the shorter, 2.1 mile course. Their team score of 123 earned them 5th place overall... one scant point better than San Leandro High School. Finishing first for the Panthers, and 19th overall, was sophomore Karah Giesecke. Karah was :13 seconds better than freshman Genevieve Wiley, who ran 14:31.... which was :05 faster than junior Giauna Nu’man. After Giauna was freshman Katie Woelffer... followed by junior Salome Ragot and freshman Esme Goldstein. Noelle Shaw

(15:43), Hailey Lompa (15:54), Melissa Mariano (16:32) and Mia Young (17:31) completed the competition for the coach Kim Pacatte's group.

The boys race was also very competitive and a bit sobering, especially for the varsity boys squad. Running without one of their top 4 runners, the Panthers entered the race short-handed and it showed. Sophomore Owen Woo raced well according to coach Rogers, breaking the venerable 17:00 minute mark for the first time. After that, the Panthers ran flat and seemed a bit tired. Senior Diego Jara (17:33) and senior Mickey Tessema (17:59) were not their usual selves... neither was senior Zach Wilkinson (19:26). Sophomore Jared Flint completed his first 3 mile race in 18:23, which was certainly an accomplishment of sorts.

Several JV boys also competed in their first race of the season. Freshman Sasha edged sophomore Matthews Tessema by a single second to claim the top spot for the Panthers... followed by sophomore Efrain De La Torre, Martin Catindig and Max McCarthy.

The Panthers next race is this Saturday at the Stanford Invitational. Varsity boys race at 9:00 am... followed by the varsity girls at 9:25. Good luck to the Panthers this weekend!

Boys Highlight Panthers Run @ Ed Sias Invitational

September 14th, 2014



On Saturday, the Panthers sent 35 athletes to compete at the ever-popular, uber-competitive Ed Sias Invitational. Hosted by Campolindo High School of Moraga and run at Hidden Valley Park in Martinez, the Ed Sias meet historically features some of the finest distance teams in Northern California, with the 2014 affair being no different. For the Panthers, the highlight of the meet was turned in by the Varsity Boys team. After NOT being ranked in the top 5 Division IV pre-season polls, the defending North Coast

Section Champions had something to prove on Saturday. Running against a deep field comprised of teams from Divisions 5, 4 and 3... the Panthers came within a mere 4 points of outrunning all their Division 4 rivals. Senior Diego Jara, fresh from his fine time trial run, paced the Panthers with a nice top 20 finish. Following Diego were Faraz Khan, Owen Woo and Mickey Tessema who all finished in the top 40 of the 120 person race. Sophomore Jared Flint and senior Zach Wilkinson rounded out the race for the Panthers.

Meanwhile, the JV girls squad fielded 2 teams, both running nice races according to coach Pacatte. "All the girls ran competitive races today," said coach Pacatte. "Avi Wilson-Perteete and Daniella Vaughn ran especially tough.... as did Esme Goldstein and Genevieve Wiley. Having only started the season a couple of weeks ago and to enter such a difficult race like they did today, I'd say they did a good job."

The varsity girls, battling injuries and the ACT test, ran only 4 runners in their race and thus finished with no score (cross country is scored using the top 5 runners from each team.) Still, coach Denis Mohun was happy with the pace and unity his girls ran with. "The spread between our first and fourth runners was :15 seconds or so. That kind of pack running is something we've been working on and talking about. I'm pleased with that aspect of our race today."

The Panthers next race is this Saturday at Hayward High School in the 13th annual Farmer Invitational. Both JV and Varsity teams will be competing. Hope to see you at the race supporting the 2014 Panthers Cross Country Team!



Panthers & Comets Get Together For A Great Day of Running

September 10th, 2014



In what is fast becoming an annual event, 14 varsity runners from Saint Mary's traveled to Joaquin Miller Park in Oakland to host the Comets from Corpus Christi school in an afternoon of running, instruction, and fun. Corpus Christi, sporting a team of nearly 60 runners, was tremendously receptive and energetic. The day, in the words of head coach Jeff Rogers, was "a win-win for both groups."

"I really enjoy this event every year," said coach Rogers. "I think the Saint Mary's kids have a good time with it. It allows them to not only share their talents, experience and knowledge, but hopefully inspire the younger kids to pursue the sport that we love."

The Panthers would like to thank the Comets for their cooperation and spirited participation! Good luck Comets in your upcoming season!!

Fast Times at Tilden Park

September 9th, 2014



Like a new school year that blends the familiar with the new, each Fall the cross country season begins with familiar names posting predictable performances as well as fresh newcomers showing exciting potential. Tuesdays time trial, run on the same course for the 16th consecutive year, certainly combined the solidly familiar with the tantalizingly new in a way that suggests that this 2014 season could be wrought with success. For the boys, senior Diego Jara bested all others in clocking the 11th fastest time ever on the course... covering the hilly 1.85 mile course in 10:34. Following closely behind was sophomore Owen Woo, whose 10:37 was the 2nd fastest time ever for a sophomore... trailing only school record-holder Matt Duffy. Junior Faraz Khan (3rd overall) and senior Mickey Tessema (4th) followed... with sophomore Jared Flint and senior Zach Wilkinson finishing 5th and 6th respectively. Sophomore Roger Levaux and senior Carlos Martin del Campo also ran good races.

The girls team was led by junior Ella Hymel who out-dueled senior Isabel Havens in finishing first in 13:28. Isabel's 13:32 was almost a :30 improvement from last year. Senior Ariana Corwin may have turned in the performance of the meet, running exactly 3:00 minutes faster than she did a year ago! Teammate Taryn Kirsch-Gallagher was :08 seconds behind Ariana.. with Maya Hymel just :04 seconds behind Taryn. Senior Josie Smale finished next in 14:20 while sophomore Avi Wilson-Perteete broke the 15:00 barrier.. crossing the finish line in 14:54. Newcomer Daniela Vaughn, in this her junior year, was a pleasant surprise for coach Kim Pacatte's squad, as were freshmen Katie Woelffer, Genevieve Wiley and Esme Goldstein. Add in sophomore Karah Giesecke and junior Giauna Nu'man and this year's JV Girls team has the look of a championship team.

In sum, 43 runners raced over the venerable time trial course.... Including JV Boys coach Craig Sutphin. After the race, when asked about the course, coach Sutphin may have spoken for all the runners in expressing his thoughts. "That course challenges you and the hill at the end is no joke. I thought I was going pretty well until that hill. It didn't care about my age, my weight or my conditioning.... it showed no mercy. It seemed as though it was trying to remind me that discretion is the better part of valor. Indeed, I may tread a little lighter next time."

Split Squad Travels Opens The Season at the Monte Vista Invitational

September 3rd, 2014

The 2014 Cross Country season got underway on Tuesday as the sent an abbreviated squad to compete at Vista Invitational. With school just most of the team wasn't quite ready for season invitational. However, for the athletes who did compete the meet an early barometer of the success of their conditioning.

The Monte Vista Invitational divides participating schools according to the grade level, with each athlete running in grades race. For the boys, junior Faraz started the day by placing 24th out of 186 the junior boys race. Sophomore Owen upped the ante by placing 5th out of 195 the sophomore boys race. Teammate placed 45th in the same race. Seniors Jara and Zach Wilkinson lined up 125 other seniors... placing 26th and 65th respectively.

For the girls, the top time of the day by senior co-captain Isabel Havens who 24th in the senior girls race. She was by teammates Ariana Corwin (47th) and Smale (52nd). The junior girls race Panthers, Ella Hymel, Taryn Gallagher, and Maya Hymel. Each ran competitive races against the other 115 runners... placing 25th, 37th and 40th.



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“Overall, the runners we brought did a nice job on a tough course against quality competition,” said girls head coach Denis Mohun. “This meet primarily draws schools that compete in Division 1 and 2. I’d say we were easily the smallest school at the meet. Still, our kids lined up and held their own against some of the best runners in the section. I’d say it was a good start to the season. It definitely shows us where we are and where we need to go.”

The Panthers next compete at the 16th annual time trial on Tuesday, September 9th in Tilden Park.

Saint Mary’s Cross Country Preview

August 26th, 2014

In 2013, the performances of the cross country teams at Saint Mary’s College High School were simply outstanding. Team championships at the league and section levels, individual championships, all-section and all-state honors and newly established records were all part of a tremendously successful season. So, like all performers who follow a crowd-stealing opening act, how do you top that?

“Each year brings it’s challenges and its rewards,” said long-time coach Denis Mohun. “I expect 2014 will have its share of memorable accomplishments. The kids we have are hard-working and seem intent on making this year one to remember.” Indeed, the 2014 boys and girls squads return a crew of runners who are familiar with big meets and fast times. The girls team, last year’s TCAL champions and NCS runner-ups, feature several veterans. Senior co-captains Isabel Havens and Josie Smale look to lead the way, both having run in their share of championship meets.... while juniors Ella Hymel, Maya Hymel and Miriam Raffel-Smith give the Panthers added talent and much-needed depth. Sophomore Julia English is still recovering from an ACL injury she suffered last year and will probably miss the first half of the season, but another emerging sophomore, Avi Wilson-Perteete, maybe just the addition the Panthers need in the meantime. Compliment this group with senior Ariana Corwin and junior Taryn Gallagher and the Panthers seem to be a team that can compete with the top teams in the TCAL and beyond.

For the boys, graduation stole much of the depth of the team... but fortunately not all of the talent. In fact, the summertime indicators suggest that this year’s group should be plenty competitive. Seniors Mickey Tessema and Diego Jara will lead the team... each relying on some fast track times in May and a healthy summer to springboard them into this season. Junior Faraz Khan has been a pleasant surprise for coach Jeff Rogers, as has been the continued growth and improvement of sophomores Owen Woo and Jared Flint. Add in senior Zach Wilkinson and sophomore Roger Levaux and this years 2014 group could surprise some of the early-season prognosticators.

“As a coaching staff, we’re really looking forward to seeing this group perform. We like the mix of kids and their attitudes have been great thus far,” says boys head coach Jeff Rogers. “We like to remind the kids that the equation for success in cross country is pretty simple: time in = results out. So far they’ve been listening. Hopefully their diligence will continue.”

Saint Mary's Cross Country - 2014

Date		Meet	Venue/Place	Time
Sep. 2 nd	Tues.	Monte Vista Invitational	Oak Hill Park, Danville	4:00 pm
Sep. 9 th	Tues.	16 th Annual Time Trial	Tilden Park, Berkeley	5:00 pm
Sep. 13 th	Sat.	Ed Sias Invitational	Hidden Valley Park, Martinez, CA	9:00 am
Sep. 20 th	Sat.	Farmer Invitational	Hayward High School, Hayward	9:00 am
Sep. 27 th	Sat.	Stanford Invitational (Varsity Only)	Stanford Golf Course, Palo Alto	9:00 am
Oct. 2 nd	Thurs.	SPSV, Hercules, Pinole	Point Pinole Regional Park,	4:00 pm
Oct. 4 th	Sat.	Artichoke Invitational	Half Moon Bay H.S., Half Moon Bay	8:00 am
Oct. 9 th	Thurs.	Salesian, El Cerrito	Point Pinole Regional Park	4:00 pm
Oct. 16 th	Thurs.	St. Joseph's, John Swett	Eckley Pier, Crockett, CA	4:00 pm
Oct. 18 th	Sat.	Mariner Invitational (JV Only)	Garin Park, Hayward	9:00 am
Oct. 23 rd	Thurs.	Albany, Kennedy, De Anza	Kennedy Grove Park, El Sobrante	4:00 pm
Oct. 24 th	Fri.	Mt. Sac Invitational (Varsity Only)	Mt. San Antonio College, Walnut, CA	TBA
Nov. 6 th	Thurs.	TCAL League Finals	Point Pinole Regional Park	1:30 pm
Nov 22 nd	Sat.	NCS Meet of Champions	Hayward High School, Hayward	TBA
Nov. 29 th	Sat.	CIF State Championships	Woodward Park, Clovis, CA	TBA