

### **3 All-State XC Runners for EPGJH Titan Girls Team places 15<sup>th</sup> at State Finals**

[OCTOBER 18, 2014] – Over 600 runners and several thousand fans were on hand for the 36<sup>th</sup> IESA State Championships Saturday morning. Race conditions were good, although a couple muddy spots remained on the course from the rainy weather earlier in the week. Temperatures were in the upper 40's for the 11:00am Class 2A Girls Race. Despite the clouds and cool breeze, a colorful scene was unfolding at Maxwell Park as 208 of the fastest girls in the state were warming up for the State Finals.

EPGJH Cross Country had already made history by putting its first team on the line at the IESA State Championship Meet. The 7 Titan runners warming up were also the first Girls Team in the district to qualify for State at any level – high school or junior high. But even more records were to fall before the clock would strike 12 noon.

Cate Atkins (12.11) and Sophi Allen (12.13) started strong in the 200-runner field, passing the half mile in about 35<sup>th</sup> place. They blazed past the mile mark in 5.53 – the fastest mile either had ever run – and moved into 26<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, just a couple places out of the Top 25, which is what it takes to earn All-State honors. By 1.5 miles they had moved into a pack of runners which included 25<sup>th</sup> place. With 400 meters to go, Atkins opened a gap on Allen and surged into 23<sup>rd</sup> overall as she crossed the finish line. Allen gave it everything she had down the home stretch, just barely holding off Caroline Jachino of Pleasant Plains for 25<sup>th</sup> place. EPG's Allen beat Jachino to the line by about a foot, claiming the last All-State spot by less than one second.

The excitement was not over yet, though. Hannah Ludy (13.31), who had twice run 14.33 this season and never faster, entered the meet as EPG's #6 runner. She finished #3 for the Titans at State, and was so far up in the field during the 3200-meter race that her coach completely missed seeing her among the other 200 runners. Ludy ran to a mind-blowing PR of 1 minute 2 seconds, placing 147<sup>th</sup> and moving from #25 on the EPG all-time list to #12.

For the seventh time this season, Allison Kelly (13.41) raced to a personal record time. She ran through a side stitch, and pushed her way to a 157<sup>th</sup> place finish, two seconds ahead of 6<sup>th</sup>-grader Kiley Weaver of Olympia. Kelly improved her all-time best by 5 seconds and jumped to #14 on EPG's all-time list.

After running to an all-time PR by 29 seconds at Sectionals last weekend, Molly Holt (13.45) dropped another 12 seconds off her time and placed 162<sup>nd</sup> for the Titans. Her stomach gave her fits yet again, but she still ran strong and steady, making EPG's Top 5 for the fourth time this season.

Tia Reilly (13.55) broke the 14-minute barrier for the second time in her life, despite some soreness in her hamstring. She placed 172<sup>nd</sup> and was just 2 seconds off her all-time PR set at Sectionals last week.

Megan Endress (15.14) had a season-best 16.39 coming into this meet but had been out for most of the season with an injury. She started running about 3 weeks ago, and had been gradually increasing her mileage. The State Meet was her first race since August and would be her last cross country race ever as an EPGJH Titan. Endress somehow managed to run a season-best time by an incredible 1 minute 25 seconds.

At the Sectional Meet, Olympia had eeked out a 2-point margin over EPG, but with the Titan Top 5 all running personal records at the State Meet, EPG (397) surged ahead of Olympia (430) and placed 15<sup>th</sup> of 24 teams competing in the Class 2A Finals. Dixon Reagan (79), running with four 7<sup>th</sup> graders, two 6<sup>th</sup> graders, and just one 8<sup>th</sup> grader were team champions, while DeKalb Clinton Rosette's Christina Ryzhov took the individual title.

EPG's Sean Supan would be running in the Class 2A field of 206 runners. U-High junior Shannan Supan, #2 on the EPG all-time list (2011, 11.56) reassured her brother that he was prepared for the State Finals, a race that had eluded him the past two years due to football injuries. Despite having to miss a couple weeks in the middle of the 2014 season for appendectomy surgery, Supan was well-trained and ready to compete. He wanted Top 25 for All-State, and he wanted the 11.08 EPGJH school record.

Supan opened the race well. He looked strong at the half mile, running in about 46<sup>th</sup> place. By the one mile (5.18), he had moved into 26<sup>th</sup> place with a big pack in front of him. At 1.5 miles, he was running well in 18<sup>th</sup> place. But with 300 meters to go, he had fallen back and was with two other athletes, the trio running 23<sup>rd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>.

Supan (11.08) came across the line in 25<sup>th</sup> place, claiming the last All-State spot by just 2 seconds over Rockford Christian's Nick Capriola. In doing so, Supan became the fastest EPG athlete ever on the Parkside course, besting 2012 times by Jake Mueller (11.09) and Andy Layden (11.09). With Mueller having run 11.08 on the Ewing Park course in 2012, Supan would end the day – and his EPGJH cross country career – with a share of the school record.

It was a record-breaking day for EPGJH Cross Country. The Girls Team concluded the most successful EPGJH cross country season in history by placing 15<sup>th</sup> at State. A record six runners ran to season best times at State. The Girls Team's Top 5 average of 13.04 was good enough for an all-time EPG record. It was the first time that any EPG Cross Country team has had both a boy and a girl make All-State. And it was the first time that any EPG Cross Country team has had 3 All-State runners.

## **XC Girls Team Advances to State Finals!**

### **Titans overcome adversity to surprise the field**

[OCTOBER 11, 2014] – The IESA Class 2A Cross Country Sectional Meet Saturday at Oak Ridge Park in Washington provided plenty of drama with 180 runners competing for a chance to run on October 18<sup>th</sup>. One of the most remarkable stories of the day was undoubtedly a determined Titan team running the race of their lives to beat the odds and advance to the State Finals.

On a cool sunny morning, 13 of the toughest cross country teams in central Illinois were set to race with a purpose. Only 3 Girls teams and 3 Boys teams would qualify for the upcoming State Championships, along with 5 individual girls and 5 individual boys. There were smiles and pictures, cheers and hugs, but also a focus and intensity that comes only with an IESA state series event. For most competitors, it would be their last race of the season.

The Titan girls were called to the line at 10:00am. Dunlap Middle School is one of the best teams in the state and was certain to place first. That left only two team spots up for grabs, and it would surely be a battle among many teams – Metamora, Olympia, Washington Middle, Olympia, Germantown Hills, Dunlap Valley, Eureka, and El Paso-Gridley had all traded wins and losses over the course of the regular season, with EPG maintaining the slimmest of victories over all of these rivals at the recent Dunlap Invitational and Walt Dare Classic. However, the Titans would be missing their #3 runner due to a lingering injury sustained in P.E. class, which would make it a monumental challenge for the Titans to contend for a top 3 placing. In addition, two of EPG's alternate runners were unavailable. Nevertheless, the girls had trained with passion all season, had prepared mentally and physically for this race, and simply refused to give up on their dreams.

Cate Atkins (12.23) ran the best race of her life. She had visualized the entire race many times and set a goal of running 10 seconds better than her previous 12.33 PR. And that's exactly what she did. Her 5<sup>th</sup> place finish led the Titans. Atkins commented after the race, "There was so much adrenaline on race day – a day we had all been anticipating doing our best."

Sophi Allen (12.41) simply could not control the adrenaline rush at the start of the race. She charged up front and led the entire field as the runners crossed the half mile mark of the 2.0-mile course. Atkins had caught her by the mile, and with just a half mile left in the race, Allen had faded to 11<sup>th</sup>. She had a gutsy finish to reel in two runners before crossing the line in 9<sup>th</sup> place.

Allison Kelly (13.46) absolutely crushed her PR set just two weeks earlier, dropping 37 seconds from her best 2-mile time. She was strong and focused in stepping up to run as the Titans' #3 runner. She placed 35<sup>th</sup> in the field of 89 athletes.

Tia Reilly (13.53) keyed off of Kelly during the entire race, keeping an eye on her teammate and occasionally catching a glimpse of Atkins and Allen up front. Reilly earned a 20-second all-time PR despite having a side stitch for most of the race – another gritty Titan effort. She placed 38<sup>th</sup>.

Molly Holt (13.57) in turn stuck to teammate Reilly, delivering a tenacious Titan performance. In tears afterwards, Holt said she felt like throwing up the entire race – and she did after crossing the line – but still came through with a huge 29-second PR for 39<sup>th</sup> place. Holt's team would need every one of those 29 seconds.

Hannah Ludy (14.33) nailed a solid performance, equaling her all-time best which she had run on the fast Parkside course earlier this season.

Sophia Lowery (15.09) found out on race morning that she would be competing, laced up her race shoes, and turned in a brilliant 44-second PR.

With packs of runners flooding the finish line, it was nearly impossible for the coaches to score the race on their own, but the consensus was 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> place as a team. At the awards ceremony, the Top 10 individual finishers were called up to receive their ribbons. No mention was made for Atkins and Allen qualifying as one of the Top 5 individuals, so a few Titans began to suspect that maybe, just maybe the team had advanced to the State Finals. Indeed, the team was called up to receive their 3<sup>rd</sup> place Sectional plaque amid jubilant cheers of excitement and astonishment. Later recalling the moment, alternate Megan Endress said, "It felt so good after three years to finally accomplish our goal."

As expected, it was incredibly close for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> qualifying team spots. Final team scores were Dunlap Middle (26), Stanford Olympia (124), El Paso-Gridley (126), Washington Middle (132), Germantown Hills (136), Dunlap Valley (136), Eureka (168), Mackinaw Dee-Mack (176), Washington Central (189), Metamora (226), East Peoria Central (274), Chillicothe (317), Peoria Limestone Walters (399).

The EPG boys had quite a day as well, with all 7 competitors racing to lifetime PR's.

Sean Supan (11.29) led the Titan boys by placing 7<sup>th</sup> in the field of 91 runners and earning a trip to the State Finals as an individual qualifier. Supan is closing in on the school record of 11.08. He will get one more shot at overtaking Jake Mueller's 2012 mark in a few short days at Maxwell Park.

Will Bushert (12.36) ran to an impressive 25-second PR and placed 45<sup>th</sup>. He was #2 for the Titans for the first time this season, which also happened to be the 8<sup>th</sup> grader's last junior high cross country race.

Garrett Forrest (12.40) sliced 16 seconds off his best-ever time and placed 46<sup>th</sup>, right behind Bushert.

Jordan Shelton (12.41) followed one second after Forrest, claiming 47<sup>th</sup> place and an all-time PR, beating his 2013 Sectional time by 9 seconds.

Zac Nelson (12.43) continued the EPG flurry to the finish with another big Titan PR, beating his previous best time by 20 seconds and placing 50<sup>th</sup>.

Nate DeMarb (12.50) knocked 4 seconds off his PR.

Aidan Killian (13.19) had a big kick to nip his PR by 2 seconds.

The boys had their best performance of the season, with their Top 5 Team average of 12.26 registering as the 3<sup>rd</sup> best ever EPGJH team. The 2014 team finished 3 seconds per runner behind the 2011 team (Stine, Heffron, Layden, Filkins, J. Gregory) and just 7 seconds per runner behind the 2012 team (Mueller, Layden, A. Ludy, Loftus, Jb. Uphoff). All 3 teams placed 6<sup>th</sup> at Sectionals.

Team scores Saturday were Washington Central (62), Germantown Hills (66), Metamora (76), Dunlap Middle (106), Eureka (128), El Paso-Gridley (195), Stanford Olympia (202), Washington Middle (223), Peoria Limestone Walters (237), Mackinaw Dee-Mack (241), Chillicothe (276), Dunlap Valley (290), East Peoria Central (311).

The Class 2A State Finals will be Saturday, October 18<sup>th</sup> at Maxwell Park in Normal. The gun will fire at 11:00am for the Girls race (Titan Girls team in Box #7) and 11:45am for the Boys race (EPG's Sean Supan in Box #20).

## **EPGJH Girls Cross Country Places 4<sup>th</sup> of 22 Teams Eighth-grader Saylor Welsch runs PR in her final JH meet**

[OCTOBER 4, 2014] – The 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Walt Dare Classic brought in 628 runners from 25 schools. The weather at the 9:00am start time was brisk – 42 degrees, cloudy, and windy.

The Girls Varsity team showed that they have the mettle to contend with the best in the area, placing 4<sup>th</sup> of 22 full teams, despite missing one of their top runners.

Sophi Allen (13.30) placed 11<sup>th</sup> and Cate Atkins (13.31) placed 12<sup>th</sup>, both athletes earning Top 25 Varsity medals.

Allison Kelly (14.44) was EPG's #3 runner for the second meet in a row, placing 50<sup>th</sup> of 153 Varsity runners, with Tia Reilly (14.48) right there as the Titans' #4, placing 55<sup>th</sup>.

Hannah Ludy (14.57) moved up to the #5 spot for the first time since August, placing 64<sup>th</sup>, and Molly Holt (14.59) was a very strong #6 for EPG, placing 68<sup>th</sup>. Only 5 of the 22 Girls teams had a stronger #7 than Titan runner Ashley Cela (15.57), who placed 105<sup>th</sup>.

Top 10 teams were Springfield Christ the King (46), Dunlap Middle (47), Delavan (153), El Paso-Gridley (192), Germantown Hills (201), Olympia (227), Eureka (227), Dunlap Valley (234), Dee-Mack (235), and Metamora (243). Eight of these top teams, including EPG, will be among the 14 teams at the upcoming Washington Central Sectional Meet.

Garrett Forrest (13.33) led the Boys Varsity team, placing 65<sup>th</sup> of 161 runners in the field.

Jordan Shelton (13.57) held off a fast-charging Zac Nelson (13.58), with Will Bushert (14.07) right on their heels. Those three placed 82<sup>nd</sup>, 83<sup>rd</sup>, and 89<sup>th</sup>.

Aidan Killian (14.43) and Nate DeMarb (14.48) placed 114<sup>th</sup> and 115<sup>th</sup> for the Titans.

The boys' pack time was 70 seconds, and they placed 16<sup>th</sup> of 22 teams. Elmwood took the team title.

In the Open races, Sophia Lowery (16.09) ran to her second fastest time of the season, placing 44<sup>th</sup> of 161 girls. Saylor Welsch (18.44) ran a brilliant race, moving up in the field over the entire 2.0-mile course and earning a 3-second all-time PR. Her time was 2 minutes 12 seconds faster than last season at Delavan.

Other open runners were Emmalee DeMarb (18.55), Lauren Buggar (19.28), and Jesse Uphoff (16.57). Uphoff was just 6 seconds off his all-time PR and 2 minutes 20 seconds faster than his 2013 race at Delavan.

Next on tap for the Titans is Saturday's Sectional Meet at Oak Ridge Park in Washington. Races start at 10:00am.

## **Two Wins for Titan Cross Country**

### **Girls win quadrangular for 5<sup>th</sup> straight year; Boys win close contest**

[SEPTEMBER 29, 2014] – Monday's 4-team contest at Furrow Farm showcased an EPG Girls team that dominated the meet and a Boys team that took control during the second mile. 16 Titan athletes raced to their best ever Furrow time as they climbed hills and crossed creeks on a golden autumn afternoon.

The Girls team put 5 runners in the top 7 to place first by 43 points over runner-up Pontiac. Team scores were EPG (20), Pontiac (63), Heyworth (68), Tremont (75).

Sophi Allen (13.35) opened with a 6.29 first mile and finished off the 2.0-mile course by breaking her own EPG course record by 10 seconds. Cate Atkins (13.44) followed nine seconds later, becoming the 2<sup>nd</sup> fastest EPG girl all-time on the Furrow "W" course. It would be nearly a minute before the 3<sup>rd</sup> place runner from Tremont would cross the line.

Allison Kelly (14.59) had the race of the day for the Varsity girls, besting her previous Furrow time by 42 seconds and placing 4<sup>th</sup> of 41 runners. Tia Reilly (15.40) and Molly Holt (15.43) also had their best Furrow times as they placed 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, respectively.

Hannah Ludy (16.24) and Sophia Lowery (17.15) combined for a 2-minute improvement over their previous Furrow race times and completed EPG's Top 7, placing 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> overall.

Other Titan girls running on Monday were Ashley Cela (18.13), Mya Gramm (18.25), Emmalee DeMarb (20.54), Saylor Welsch (20.57), and Lauren Buggar (20.57).

The EPG Girls have won this race for 5 consecutive years.

The Boys team used their course knowledge with a controlled first half mile before they started moving up. Sean Supan (12.06) splashed through the 2<sup>nd</sup> creek crossing leading the 42-runner field and that's where he stayed, but EPG's pack trailed a lot of Tremont and Heyworth boys. The momentum shifted during the second mile, with Titan runners Garrett Forrest (13.39), Aidan Killian (13.40), and Nathan DeMarb (13.49) surging past several competitors to place 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup>. All three athletes had Furrow bests, with Killian having the race of the day for the Varsity boys with a 42-second improvement, equaling Kelly's time drop on the girls' side.

DeMarb finished in front of Heyworth's #3 runner by a fraction of a second, while Jordan Shelton (14.24) also sprinted past a Heyworth runner up the final hill to place 12<sup>th</sup>. In the end, the top 5 boys did just enough to take the win away from Heyworth.

Team scores in the Boys race were EPG (37), Heyworth (41), Tremont (68), Pontiac (85).

Zac Nelson (14.31) and Will Bushert (14.41) placed 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, while Jesse Uphoff (18.35) and Jackson Hinthorn (23.02) were the other EPG finishers. Uphoff beat his previous best time on the course by over a minute.

Sean Supan's 12.06 smashed the 2012 Furrow "W" course record for Titan athletes, previously held by school record holder Jake Mueller. Supan took 17 seconds off the record. Nobody has completed the Titan home course faster than Supan this year, as his time was 6 seconds under 2014 EPGJH Invitational Champion Sam Walter of Washington Middle School.

The Titans head to the Walt Dare Classic in Delavan this weekend. Races start at 9:00am.

## **Titans Roll to 9 Season-bests at DMS XC Invitational Atkins, Supan earn varsity medals at 1,600-runner meet in Peoria**

[SEPTEMBER 26, 2014] – The EPGJH cross country teams were unfazed by temperatures that were 25 degrees warmer than the morning race at Parkside two weeks earlier. Friday's Dunlap Middle School Invitational has become one of the most competitive meets in Illinois. All Titan athletes ran to strong performances, with 7 runners setting all-time PR's and 2 runners earning season-bests times. There were 1,629 finishers in the 4 races, each participant competing on the first 2.1 miles of the IHSA State Finals course.

In the Girls Varsity race, Sophi Allen (13.32) led Cate Atkins (13.24) through the mile with her 6.11 to Atkins' 6.14. But it was Atkins who surged the last straightaway to place 23<sup>rd</sup> in the 261-runner Varsity field. Allen placed 31<sup>st</sup>.

Julia Reid (14.32) notched her 2<sup>nd</sup> race in a row at sub-7 pace, placing 85<sup>th</sup> for the Titans. Tia Reilly (15.02) and Allison Kelly (15.06) ran through the 1-mile and 2-mile together before Reilly pulled away down the homestretch. Kelly captured a 7-second all-time PR and broke into EPG's Top 20 All-time list, knocking Gracie Feeney (2012) off the list by one second.

Hannah Ludy (15.42) helped pace first-time Varsity runner Ashley Cela (15.53) through much of the race, with Cela running to a 20-second PR. Cela has improved her time by 3 minutes over the past 3 weeks.

The Girls Varsity team placed 13<sup>th</sup> of 36 teams, their 370 points just barely ahead of Sectional teams Germantown Hills (372) and Dunlap Valley (399).

In the Boys Varsity race, Sean Supan (12.12) went through the mile in a blazing 5 minutes 30 seconds and followed with a second mile that had him in contention for the final Top 25 Varsity medal. He had just enough in the final 160 meters to hold off an Edwardsville runner, taking 25<sup>th</sup> place by 2.5 seconds.

In the Girls Open race, it was Molly Holt (15.09) who flashed through the mile in a fast 6.49. She gave it all she had in the second 1.1 miles but came up just short of a Top 20 medal, placing 31<sup>st</sup> in the 518-runner field. But she had the performance of the day for the girls with a stellar 33-second PR.

Following Holt were open runners Sophia Lowery (17.47), Mya Gramm (18.27), Saylor Welsch (19.48), Lauren Buggar (19.49), and Emmalee DeMarb (19.54). Welsch had a strong race, missing a PR by just 4 seconds.

In the Boys Open race, Garrett Forrest (13.35) broke the 13-minute barrier for the first time ever, with his 12.56 at the 2-mile mark. He placed 41<sup>st</sup> of 565 runners. Jordan Shelton (13.39), Will Bushert (13.40), Zac Nelson (13.42), and Nate DeMarb (13.46) finished right on Forrest's heels, all five runners finishing within 11 seconds of each other. Bushert and Nelson ran negative splits, getting faster and faster as the race went on, and the first four Titan boys to cross the line all earned season-best times.

Aidan Killian (14.07) and Jesse Uphoff (17.50) narrowly missed PR's, while Jackson Hinthorn had the race of the day for the boys, running to an amazing 48-second season best time.

The Titans host a quadrangular meet on Monday at Furrow Farm. The Girls race is at 4:30pm, with the Boys race to start at approximately 5:05pm.

## **XC Runners Rewrite Record Books at Parkside Invite All 24 Titans run to season-best times at 1,600-runner meet**

[SEPTEMBER 13, 2014] – On a sunny Saturday morning that was ideal for running, the EPGJH cross country teams showed up with each runner focusing on running to their best time of the season. And every Titan runner did just that, which in turn led to one of the best showings ever for EPG at a 50-team meet typically dominated by large 3A schools from across the state.

In the Girls Varsity race, Sophi Allen (12.28) and Cate Atkins (12.33) became the first EPG girls to bring home a Top 25 Varsity Medal from this invitational since Julie James in 2008. They placed 13<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, respectively, both running to all-time PR's and engraving their names as the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> fastest girls ever to run for EPGJH.

Julia Reid (13.27), placing 75<sup>th</sup> in the 284-runner race, ran to a PR by an amazing 1 minute 37 seconds, squeaking into the 7<sup>th</sup> spot all-time on the Parkside course, 1 second faster than Maddie Morrison's 2012 time. Reid is now the 10<sup>th</sup> fastest EPGJH runner ever.

Tia Reilly (14.13) improved dramatically with her 1 minute 42 second PR, and was EPG's #4 runner for the first time this season. She is now tied with Delaney Killian's 2009 mark as the 16<sup>th</sup> fastest Titan runner all-time.

Allison Kelly (14.30) ran to a PR by over a minute, securing a Top 25 all-time spot in the EPGJH record books for all five Varsity scorers.

Varsity runners Molly Holt (14.59) and Sophia Lowery (15.53) ran to all-time PR's by 55 seconds and 87 seconds, respectively. Lowery ran over 2 minutes faster than her previous best time this season.

The Girls Varsity team placed 13<sup>th</sup> of 42 teams, the best-ever showing for any EPGJH team at this meet. The Girls top 5 team average was 13.26, a season-best improvement of 1 minute 28 seconds.

In the Boys Varsity race, Sean Supan (11.55) placed 61<sup>st</sup> of 305 runners to become the 4<sup>th</sup> fastest all-time runner for the Titans, knocking Brendan Loftus (11.56, 2013) down to the #5 spot. It was a 37-second PR for Supan.

Sixth-grader Nate DeMarb (12.54) found himself at the #2 spot for the first time since EPGJH opened its season at Heyworth, the result of a big 57-second PR. This puts DeMarb in a tie at #15 all-time with Jeb Uphoff (2013).

Garrett Forrest (13.00) ran to a 38-second PR, Jordan Shelton (13.05) clocked a 43-second season best, and Will Bushert (13.06) crushed his PR by 1 minute 34 seconds. It was Bushert's first time to make the Varsity top 5 this season. Forrest, Shelton, and Bushert are all on the Top 20 all-time list for EPGJH.

Zac Nelson (13.07) and Aidan Killian (13.21) also dropped time from their season bests, Nelson by 55 seconds and Killian by 42 seconds.

The Boys Varsity top 5 average dropped more than a minute, to 12.48, as they placed 25<sup>th</sup> of 43 teams.

The performances in the open races were equally impressive.

Hannah Ludy (14.33) placed 47<sup>th</sup> of 485 girls and improved on her season best time by nearly 2 minutes.

Ashley Cela (15.28) placed 126<sup>th</sup> and had the race of the day for the girls, running to an all-time PR by an astounding 2 minutes 39 seconds.

Mya Gramm (17.00) improved by 1 minute 45 seconds, Bekah Loftus (17.04) by 1 minute 32 seconds, Lauren Buggar (17.53) by 2 minutes 36 seconds, Emmalee DeMarb (18.18) by 2 minutes 2 seconds, and Saylor Welsch (18.47) by 2 minutes 34 seconds.

Evan Higgins (14.43) placed 235<sup>th</sup> of 573 boys and ran to a 40-second PR, while Jackson Hinthorn (20.50) earned a 42-second season best.

Jesse Uphoff (16.51) had the race of the day for the boys, running to an all-time PR by 2 minutes 18 seconds. His previous season-best time was 19.44.

The Titans next travel to the Dunlap Invitational on Friday, September 26<sup>th</sup>. Races are held on the IHSA State Meet course and begin at 4:00pm.

## **EPGJH Girls Take 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Trophy at Titan Invitational 8<sup>th</sup> annual event draws 525 runners**

[SEPTEMBER 9, 2014] – The Titans hosted the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual EPGJH Cross Country Invitational Tuesday. The rain held off until the end of the awards ceremony, but runners still found the creeks to be wet and muddy as they splashed through crossing #1 just before the half mile and crossing #2 about a quarter mile later. Twenty schools were participating.

In the Girls Varsity race, the EPG girls were more than ready to compete on their home course at Furrow Farm. In previous years on the "W" course, our Varsity Girls top 5 had run average times of 16.45 ('11), 16.16 ('12), and 16.12 ('13). The 2014 Varsity girls team put an exclamation point on their achievement this year, hammering out a 14.54 average, setting the best-ever Top 5 average at Furrow by an astonishing 1 minute 18 seconds per runner, while bringing home their second trophy in the past 11 days. It was an historic day for the girls.

The top 7 teams of the 13 full Girls teams were Dunlap Middle School (49), Dunlap Valley (90), El Paso-Gridley (108), Delavan (116), Eureka (117), Olympia (166), Dee-Mack (187).

Sophi Allen (13.45) placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 97-runner field as she ran to the fastest time ever by a Titan girl on the "W" course, besting EPGJH All-State runner Shannan Supan's 2011 mark by 5 seconds. Cate Atkins (13.54) placed 3<sup>rd</sup>. Both Allen and Atkins ran to season-best times despite the hills and creek crossings on the challenging course.

EPG's #3, #4, and #5 runners were Julia Reid (15.15), 29<sup>th</sup>, Allison Kelly (15.41) 39<sup>th</sup>, and Molly Holt (15.54) 44<sup>th</sup>. Reid entered the record books at #7 all-time on the "W" course, consistent Kelly was the #4 runner for the Titans for the fourth meet in a row, and Holt ran to an all-time best 2-mile time by 17 seconds while helping her team claim the 3<sup>rd</sup> place trophy. Other Varsity runners Tia Reilly (16.14) and Hannah Ludy (16.51) also contributed strong races for the team.

The Varsity Boys held their own without front-runner Sean Supan, running to a season-best pack time of just 36 seconds (runners 1-5), which is among the best ever by an EPGJH team. The Boys team placed 9<sup>th</sup> of 15 full teams. 7<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup> place teams were extremely tight in the standings – Washington Middle School (213), Dee-Mack (215), El Paso-Gridley (220), Tri-Valley (225), Bloomington Holy Trinity (225).

Garrett Forrest (13.52) led the Titans, followed by Zac Nelson (14.02), Jordan Shelton (14.04), Aidan Killian (14.22), Nate DeMarb (14.28), and Will Bushert (14.42). Nelson clocked a 17-second PR.

In the Open Combined race, Ashley Cela (18.33) led the EPG girls, placing 83<sup>rd</sup> of 167 girls. Evan Higgins (15.34) led the boys, placing 35<sup>th</sup> of 154 boys. Other open runners were Bekah Loftus (18.36), Sophia Lowery (18.52), Mya Gramm (19.04), Emmalee DeMarb (20.20), Lauren Buggar (20.29), Saylor Welsch (22.24), and Jesse Uphoff (19.44). DeMarb and Uphoff ran season-best times, while Buggar ran to an all-time PR by 24 seconds. The race of the day for all Titans went to Loftus, who set an all-time PR by an astonishing 1 minute 17 seconds.

The Titans next travel to the Parkside Invitational for a Saturday morning meet. Races begin at 9:30am.

## **Titan Cross Country Teams Place 2<sup>nd</sup> at Metamora Atkins, Allen, and Reid Race to Top 10**

[SEPTEMBER 4, 2014] – Metamora Grade School hosted a five-team meet on Thursday. The 2.08-mile course was altered from previous years, but still circled Black Partridge Park, turned into the trails and past Lee Cabin, and then finished diagonally to the wooden posts.

In the Girls race, Cate Atkins (14.32) and Sophi Allen (14.37) led the way for the Titans, moving up in the field throughout the race to place 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> overall, just 7 and 12 seconds behind individual winner Rachel Ehrhart from St. Philomena. Julia Reid (15.40) ran a similarly well-paced race to place 8<sup>th</sup>. All three EPG girls had season-best times.

Other Titan finishers were Allison Kelly (16.15, 16<sup>th</sup>), Tia Reilly (17.01, 22<sup>nd</sup>), Molly Holt (17.57, 25<sup>th</sup>), Hannah Ludy (18.18, 28<sup>th</sup>), Ashley Cela (18.55, 31<sup>st</sup>), Sophia Lowery (19.22, 34<sup>th</sup>), Mya Gramm (19.49, 37<sup>th</sup>), Bekah Loftus (20.46, 40<sup>th</sup>), Emmalee DeMarb (23.47, 46<sup>th</sup>), Lauren Buggar (23.50, 48<sup>th</sup>), and Saylor Welsch (24.53, 54<sup>th</sup>). Kelly, Cela, and Loftus were within 5 seconds of their season best times. 64 runners were competing in the Girls race.

In the Boys race, Aidan Killian (14.37) followed EPG's #1 runner Garrett Forrest (14.34) for the entire race, while Jordan Shelton (14.38) moved up steadily to nearly catch Killian. The trio placed 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup> for the Titans with Killian running to his fourth season best in as many meets. EPG's #4 and #5 boys Nate DeMarb (15.06) and Zac Nelson (15.18) moved up nicely during the race to place 15<sup>th</sup> and

16<sup>th</sup>. The final Titan boys to cross the line in the 60-runner field were Will Bushert (15.55, 26<sup>th</sup>), Evan Higgins (17.38, 34<sup>th</sup>), and Jesse Uphoff (22.41, 51<sup>st</sup>).

Metamora (43) won a closely contested girls' race, followed by EPG (54), Blessed Sacrament (56), and St. Philomena (64). In the boys' race, placings were similar, but there was a much wider gap between all the teams. Winning team Metamora (17) took the top four individual spots and 7<sup>th</sup>, while runner-up EPG (60) claimed individual places 11-12-13-15-16 with a pack time of just 44 seconds. Blessed Sacrament (80), St. Philomena (103), and Ladd (122) followed.

The Titans will be hosting the 8<sup>th</sup> annual EPG Invitational at Furrow Farm this Tuesday at 4:30pm.

## **XC Girls Win Holy Trinity Invitational Allen takes individual title; EPGJH Girls/Boys Awarded Combined Team Championship**

[AUGUST 29, 2014] – Eight teams competed at Friday afternoon's Holy Trinity Invitational at Ewing Park in Bloomington. The course alternated between open grass paths and trails through the woods. The EPGJH Cross Country Girls brought home their first Invitational Championship trophy ever, while the Boys team placed 4<sup>th</sup>. The Titans also claimed the overall combined championship trophy, scoring 122 points to runner-up Holy Trinity's 140. EPG ran to a total of 14 season-best times.

In the Girls Varsity race, Sophi Allen (14.19) started in about 10<sup>th</sup> place, but moved into the lead at about 800 meters. She pushed the pace from the front for the remainder of the race, claiming her first individual title of 2014. Cate Atkins (14.24) also ran strong, following closely behind Allen to earn runner-up honors. Both ran season-best times.

Julia Reid (15.23) and Allison Kelly (15.34) had impressive races, each slicing about 30 seconds off their PR. They placed 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> overall. Tia Reilly (15.55) was EPG's #5 runner, running to a terrific 52-second season best and blazing past two runners in the final 100 meters to place 10<sup>th</sup>.

Molly Holt (16.11) ran to her best time ever, while Hannah Ludy (16.39) just missed her season-best time by a few seconds. Holt and Ludy placed 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> overall.

Allen, Atkins, Reid, Kelly, and Reilly all earned Varsity medals for their top 10 finishes.

The EPG girls won the Invitational Championship title with a convincing victory, putting all 7 runners in the top 15. Final team scores were EPG (28), Dee-Mack (52), Holy Trinity (59), Illini Central (100).

In the Boys Varsity race, Garrett Forrest (13.38) led the way, blasting to a 49-second all-time PR. Forrest earned a 10<sup>th</sup> place medal with a fast and furious finish. After being passed with 40 meters to go he fought back all the way to the finish line, barely edging Race Damm of Illini Central by a fraction of a second for the final medal.

Jordan Shelton (13.48) knocked 15 seconds off his season best, placing 15<sup>th</sup>. Zac Nelson (14.19) continues to improve dramatically, today running #3 for the Titans with a 31-second PR and placing 18<sup>th</sup>. Aidan Killian (14.24) ran to a season best, 6<sup>th</sup>-grader Nate DeMarb (14.39) was EPG's #5 runner, and Will Bushert (14.40) followed with the biggest PR of the day for any Titan runner, dropping 1 minute 5 seconds from his previous best.

The EPG boys placed 4<sup>th</sup> in a close contest for 2<sup>nd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup>. Team scores were Trinity Lutheran (30), Holy Trinity (81), Illini Central (89), EPG (94), Bethel Lutheran (94), Dee-Mack (108), St. Mary's (214).

Bethel Lutheran's Bryan Huizenga won the individual title by nearly a minute, but with team scores tied through 5 runners, it was EPG's #6 runner Will Bushert besting Bethel Lutheran's #6 runner by 21 seconds that gave EPG the edge over Bethel Lutheran in the team standings.

In the combined open race, Megan Endress (16.51) earned an award for her 5<sup>th</sup> place finish, while Evan Higgins (15.23) ran a gutsy race but couldn't quite hold on to 10<sup>th</sup> place, getting passed just before the finish line.

Sophia Lowery (17.59) had a huge race, cutting a full minute off her season-best, while Mya Gramm (18.45) had an equally impressive day, running to a 53-second PR.

Other Open runners were Jesse Uphoff (20.35), Lauren Buggar (21.15), Emmalee DeMarb (22.20), Jackson Hinthorn (22.21), Saylor Welsch (22.22), and Ashley Cela (22.50).

The Titans travel to Metamora's Black Partridge Park for a 2.18-mile race on Thursday.

## **EPGJH Cross Country Conquers Clinton's Hilly Course**

### **Titans run to 11 season best times**

[AUGUST 23, 2014] – EPGJH Cross Country competed at Clinton's Maroon XC Invite on a steamy Saturday morning. The weather and the course both posed challenges for the runners. Races began at 9:00am, with the heat and humidity becoming more oppressive during later events as the sun climbed higher. The monster muddy hill in the middle of the 2-mile course required all athletes to find a little extra strength and determination.

Despite the challenges, the Titan runners brought home 11 season-best times.

In the Girls Varsity race, Cate Atkins (14.31) nipped Sophi Allen (14.32) at the line, as EPG's 1-2 punch placed 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> overall. Both Atkins and Allen improved on their Heyworth times from 3 days earlier.

Julia Reid (15.55) cut 19 seconds off her personal record, while Allison Kelly (16.04) also set a PR. Reid and Kelly placed 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Hannah Ludy (16.34), Tia Reilly (16.47), and Megan Endress (16.48) were the Titans' #5, #6, and #7 runners, with Reilly besting her Heyworth time by 41 seconds.

In the Boys Varsity race, Sean Supan (12.31) started conservatively and moved up steadily throughout the race. His 2-second PR earned him 2<sup>nd</sup> place overall. There were just under 50 varsity boys competing.

Jordan Shelton (14.23), Garrett Forrest (14.24), and Aidan Killian (14.25) came across the line in a pack of about seven runners. Forrest and Killian both had season-best times, but it was Zac Nelson (14.45) who had the race of the day for the boys, clocking a 58-second improvement over his cross country debut 3 days earlier. Nate DeMarb (15.09) was #6 for the EPG varsity boys.

In the Girls Open race, it was Molly Holt (16.21) leading the way for the Titans, placing 8<sup>th</sup> overall. Holt had the race of the day for the girls, running to a remarkable drop of 1 minute 16 seconds from her Wednesday time at Heyworth.

Ashley Cela (18.34), Sophia Lowery (19.46), and Emmalee DeMarb (19.54) were next across the line. DeMarb ran to a season-best time by 56 seconds.

Mya Gramm (19.55), Bekah Loftus (21.02), and Saylor Welsch (22.00) completed the Titan showing in the Girls Open Race.

In the Boys Open Race, Jesse Uphoff (20.53) and Jackson Hinthorn (25.46) conquered the warmest weather of the invitational races and the hilly 2-mile course.

Next up for Titan Cross Country is the Holy Trinity Invitational at Ewing Park in Bloomington on Friday afternoon. EPGJH will face several teams they have not yet seen this season. Races begin at 4:00pm.

## **EPG's Supan Wins Cross Country Opener at Heyworth Girls, Boys both place 2<sup>nd</sup> in triangular meet**

[AUGUST 20, 2014] – A noon-time shower a few hours before meet time kept things reasonably cool on an August afternoon that saw EPGJH open their season with some great times. The 1.9-mile course on grass and wooded trails that loops around a pond was in good shape, as were the Titan runners.

Leading the girls for EPG were Sophi Allen (13.57), who was battling for 2<sup>nd</sup> most of the race, and Cate Atkins (13.59), who made a late charge to close the gap on Allen. They placed 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>.

Allison Kelly (15.19) and Julia Reid (15.25) had fantastic cross country debuts, running #3 and #4 for the Titans. Hannah Ludy (15.41) ran an exceptionally well-paced race, picking up spots as she maintained a strong pace from start to finish.

Megan Endress (15.49) and Tia Reilly (16.36) competed well, helping the Titans to a 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish in the 3-team race. Team champion Normal Epiphany (24) led EPG (46) and Heyworth (68) in team scoring.

Other Titan girls competing at Heyworth's Centennial Park were Molly Holt (16.44), Ashley Cela (17.13), Sophia Lowery (18.02), Mya Gramm (18.39), Bekah Loftus (18.52), Emmalee DeMarb (19.47), Lauren Buggar (19.48), and Saylor Welsh (20.18).

Of EPG's returning runners from the 2013 season, Ludy and Welsch had the biggest improvements of the day compared with last season, both cutting over 5 minutes off their 2013 times at Heyworth.

The top 5 girls ran a 2-mile adjusted combined time of 78 minutes 16 seconds, the all-time fastest EPG team time at Heyworth by over 4 minutes.

In the Boys race, Sean Supan (11.55) had instructions not to take the lead until after three-quarters of a mile. He held back as much as possible, taking the lead about 200 meters before the designated mark. From there he opened up a big gap, cruising to an all-time course best for Titan runners by 10 seconds over Andy Layden's 2012 mark.

Sixth-grader Nate DeMarb (13.09) had the best debut of any 6<sup>th</sup> grader ever to run for EPG, cranking out a time that almost made the Top 20 all-time list for EPG athletes. He placed 6<sup>th</sup> overall.

Jordan Shelton (13.22) raced well, as did Garrett Forrest (13.44) and Aidan Killian (14.03). Zac Nelson (14.56) and Will Bushert (14.58) both ran impressive negative splits on the 2-loop course, helping the Titans put a scare in Heyworth. However, Heyworth (32) eeked out a razor-thin one point victory over EPG (33), with Normal Epiphany (67) placing a distant third.

Jesse Uphoff (19.03) and Jackson Hinthorn (20.27) also finished strong, besting their 2013 Heyworth times by 2 and 4 minutes, respectively. Only Forrest had a bigger improvement among the returning boys, improving his time by more than four-and-a-half minutes over last year.

The Titans head to Clinton's Maroon XC Invite on Saturday at Little Galilee Camp for their first invitational of the season. Races begin at 9:00am.