



Two EPG Teams Run to Top 10 at State XC 14-second pack time boosts girls; Smith leads boys with All-State run

[OCTOBER 15, 2016] – The day began cool and misty. Skies cleared slightly as a brisk southerly breeze picked up, and temperatures climbed into the 60's by race time. A total of 470 Class 2A athletes would be competing, including individual qualifiers and 27 qualifying teams in both the girls and boys races.

Starting in Box 21, the EPG Titan girls started strong, but found themselves slowed, bumped and pushed at the first few turns. Running in a pack, the Titans found some breathing room by the half mile, and then began to move up even more after the mile. By the end of the race all 7 Titan girls had run to lifetime bests.

Jordyn Cannon (54th, 12.35) surged ahead of the pack as the course wound through the last couple turns onto the long straightaway, running to an 18-second PR. Tristyn Grube (70th, 12.42) crossed the finish line with an 11-second PR, alongside Sami Allen (71st, 12.43) coming just two-tenths of a second later with an 18-second PR of her own.

Ruby Slightom (77th, 12.46) was #4 for the Titans, having the race of the day for the girls as she ran to her 3rd PR in as many races, smashing her lifetime best by 40 seconds.

Tori Witzig (83rd, 12.49) also ran to her 3rd PR in a row, breaking barriers of 13.10, 13.00, and 12.50 as she sliced 22 seconds off her previous best 13.11. Charlene Hamilton (116th, 13.06) cut another 8 seconds off her lifetime best set last week at her breakthrough Sectional race.

Jenna Kent (156th, 13.33) ran the race of her life, crushing her PR by 44 seconds, and debuting onto the Top 25 All-time list of EPG athletes at #21.

The Titan Top 5 were all under 12.50 as they dropped 20 seconds per runner from last week's Sectional meet. Their 14-second pack time was the best ever – 1 second less than

the 15-second pack time at 2015 State. And these 5 athletes – Cannon, Grube, Allen, Slightom, and Witzig – clocked the fastest team average (12.43) ever run by an EPG team, 14 seconds faster than the 2015 State team.

The Girls also climbed to the highest State placing for any Girls XC team, HS or JH, with an 8th place showing. Team scores for the Top 10 were Dunlap Middle (102), Dixon Reagan (115), Lindenhurst Millburn (134), Winnebago (138), Tolono Unity (142), Chicago Latin (187), Lockport Oak Prairie (199), El Paso-Gridley (255), Washington Central (317), St. Joseph (330).

The Boys team started in Box 6 and battled a competitive boys field for 3200 meters.

Asa Smith (7th, 10.51) was about 10th at the half mile, moved up to 6th and was on the shoulder of Olympia's Logan Wheeler at the mile, had dropped back to about 9th with 800 meters to go, and then closed to take 7th overall, one second ahead of Dee-Mack's John Blumeyer. Smith defeated Blumeyer by 3 seconds, 2 seconds, and 1 second in head-to-head competition this season. Olympia's Wheeler faded to finish 8 seconds and 13 places behind Smith, an indication of how competitive the State races are.

Smith broke his own school record by 10 seconds, is the first EPG runner to break into the 10-minute range, and turned in the 10th All-State individual performance for the EPGJH program (now in its 10th season) while becoming the first Titan boy to crack the Top 10 at State.

Mason Ringger (34th, 11.14) ran #2 for the Titans, earning an 11-second PR and turning in the 5th best all-time performance at State in 10 years of Titan XC.

Nathan DeMarb (65th, 11.26) had a gutsy race at EPG's #3, straining his hamstring at the start but still running to a 12-second improvement from last week's Sectional race and running over one minute faster than last year at State.

Sebastian Meyer (87th, 11.34) clocked a one-second PR to run #4 for EPG, while Maison DePauw (92nd, 11.35) came in as the fourth fastest #5 runner in Class 2A State. Noah Ludy (173rd, 12.22) found another 6-second drop after his big PR at Sectionals, while Grant Morrison (229th, 13.31) was just 9 seconds off his big PR from last weekend.

It was a record-setting day for the Boys Team, as the Top 5 average of 11.20 was 38 seconds per runner faster than last year's State team, 6 seconds per runner faster than their Sectional average last week, and the fastest all-time performance for any EPG team.

The EPG Boys also placed higher than any EPG Cross Country team, HS or JH, with their 5th place showing. Team scores were very close, especially for the Top 5 teams. Scores for the Top 10 were Chicago Latin (116), Dixon Reagan (167), Manhattan (167), Lockport Oak Prairie (168), El Paso-Gridley (179), Lindenhurst Millburn (202), Germantown Hills (214), Rockford Christian (235), Willowbrook Westview Hills (243), Dunlap Middle (276).

Our Titan athletes have taken EPGJH Cross Country to a new level. Their hard work, dedication, and desire were represented by a historic day at the State Finals.

**Girls XC Team Qualifies for State Finals for 3rd Straight Year
Hamilton's 32-second PR, tight pack earn Titans Sectional runner-up placing**

[OCTBER 8, 2016] – Thirteen teams lined up to compete on the 2.0-mile course at Germantown Hills Saturday morning. It was a perfect morning to run – sunny and 55 degrees with a light northerly breeze. The beginning of the race did not go perfectly for the Titans, but they battled through the heart of the race and finished with the best team performance of the season.

An outside starting box position, a fast start, and a tight corner had many of the Titan girls buried toward the back of the field just 200 meters into the race. The EPG runners had a nice pack, but at 0.6 miles, Germantown Hills still had 6 runners in front of EPG's #1. With Dunlap Middle practically assured of the victory and 3 Washington Central girls running towards the front of the pack, things were not looking good for the Titans.

Never give up. Believe in yourselves. Trust in each other.

The pack began to move. Things looked a little better as EPG's top 6 runners continued to move up in the second mile. Tristyn Grube and Jordyn Cannon continued to work together, Sami Allen followed closely, and Tori Witzig was hanging on as well. Ruby Slightom was running strong but fading ever so slightly when Charlene Hamilton moved into the #5 spot and continued to nail down the race of the day for the girls.

Cannon (12th, 12.53) and Grube (14th, 12.55) fought to pick up a couple spots as they surged to the finish, Allen (18th, 13.01) powered home as well, and Witzig (23rd, 13.11) lengthened her stride and pushed through the finish. Cannon earned a PR, Grube was just 2 seconds off her lifetime best, Allen tied her 2015 State time to the tenth of a second, and Witzig cut 3 seconds off her PR.

Running the race of her life, Hamilton (25th, 13.14) was just three seconds behind Witzig as she blazed across the finish line with a 32-second PR. Slightom (31st, 13.26) competed valiantly, running to a 7-second lifetime best despite dealing with some aches and pains. Jenna Kent (60th, 14.29) matched her second-fastest time ever.

A resilient Girls Team proved their mettle yet again this season, overcoming a tough start, running patiently and with focus, and competing with unparalleled determination as they came from behind to earn 2nd place at the Sectional Meet and their 3rd trip to the State Finals in as many years.

Cannon, Grube, Allen, Witzig, and Hamilton (13.03 average, 0:21 pack time), broke the EPG course record at Germantown by 47 seconds per runner while running to the second fastest EPG team time in the 10-year history of the program.

Team scores were Dunlap Middle (38), El Paso-Gridley (92), Washington Central (105), Germantown Hills (109), Eureka (129), Washington Middle (150), Dunlap Valley (200), East Peoria Central (200), Chillicothe (235), Tremont (241), Metamora (285), Dee-Mack (324), Mossville (361).

The EPG Girls Team will compete in the Class 2A State Championships at Normal's Maxwell Park on Saturday, October 15th. The starting gun will fire at 11:00 AM.

Sectional Champions!

Boys team qualifies for State Finals; Asa Smith wins 91-runner meet

[OCTBER 8, 2016] – The day was sunny and bright, and the EPG Boys Team was fired up. They were ready to see where all their hard work would take them. Nathan DeMarb was coming off a tempo effort a week earlier at the Dare Classic, but had the green light for this one, and the team was cautiously optimistic. They were hoping for a top 3 placing and a ticket to State, but the competition would be intense. Indeed, the top 6 teams would end the day with an average time of sub-12 per runner.

Asa Smith came through the half mile in about 15th. But the lead pack was tight and he was focused and looking strong. By 0.7 he had moved into the top 10 and by the mile mark he was in 6th place and sitting on the lead pack. At the 1.3-mile mark he had moved into 3rd, and with a half mile left, Dee-Mack's John Blumeyer had broken away from the field and Smith was right on his shoulder.

Smith never let up and continued to chase Blumeyer down the final straightaway. Both runners looked strong, and then with about 75 meters left, Smith (1st, 11.01) shifted gears, pulled ahead of Blumeyer, and won the race by 2 seconds. It was a PR by 10 seconds, a course record by 10 seconds, and a new school record, 7 seconds under the previous record shared by Jake Mueller (2012) and Sean Supan (2014).

Mason Ringger (10th, 11.25) fought hard from start to finish and it was just enough to squeeze into the Top 10 ahead of Eureka's Aden Sears by four-tenths of a second.

Maison DePauw (14th, 11.31) bounced back from a rare off-day at the Dare Classic to run #3 for the Titans, finishing just ahead of Tremont's #1. It was an impressive 10-second PR for EPG's #7 runner of all-time.

Sebastian Meyer (16th, 11.35) can always be counted on in October, and he did not disappoint as he ran to a 5-second PR for the Titan team.

Nathan DeMarb (18th, 11.37) dropped 22 seconds from his Delavan time and ran #5 for EPG, ahead of the every other team's #4.

Noah Ludy (47th, 12.28) and Grant Morrison (76th, 13.22) delivered huge PR's of more than 30 seconds each and will be looking for more on a faster State course this coming weekend. Ludy broke into the EPG Top 25 all-time with a share of the #18 spot.

Smith, Ringger, DePauw, Meyer, and DeMarb crushed the previous EPG course record at Germantown by 53 seconds per runner. Their 57.09 clocking (11.26/runner) is the fastest any Titan team has ever run in the history of EPGJH Cross Country and it is the first Sectional Championship for any EPGJH Cross Country team as well.

Team scores were El Paso-Gridley (59), Germantown Hills (93), Dunlap Middle (108), Dee-Mack (113), Washington Central (134), Dunlap Valley (135), Tremont (167), Eureka (175), East Peoria Central (231), Metamora (239), Mossville (259), Washington Middle (291), Chillicothe (350).

The EPG Boys Team will return to the State Championships at Normal's Maxwell Park for the second year in a row on Saturday, October 15th. The Boys Class 2A race starts at 11:45 AM.

**October Brings Bountiful Harvest to Titan Runners
XC team gathers medals, PR's, records, and a trophy at Dare Classic**

[OCTOBER 1, 2016] – EPG was one of 27 teams invited to the 40th Annual Delavan Dare Classic on October 1st. The Titans pushed themselves to some great performances on a challenging course that wound through fields of corn and measured just over 2 miles.

The Girls Varsity team was missing two top runners, but nevertheless ran to an EPG course record team time by 7 seconds, powered by some strong performances up front. The Titans placed 5th as a team.

Tristyn Grube (6th, 13.05) paced herself perfectly through a 6.25 mile and just kept moving her way up through the field to finish as the top Titan placer of the day. Tori Witzig (11th, 13.14) turned in a strong second mile, punctuating her September surge with an October exclamation point – a ten second season best and a 2-second lifetime best. Ruby Slightom (22nd, 13.33) also turned in a stellar PR performance and grabbed her second 22nd-place Varsity medal of the season.

Charlene Hamilton (42nd, 14.02) was passing people left and right over the last 800 meters before sprinting through the timing mats just as Jenna Kent (50th, 14.17) and Lindsey Price (51st, 14.17) were dueling down the straightaway for the final spot on the Sectional team. Kent ran to a 12-second PR and edged Price by less than half a second, 14:17.51 to 14:17.98. But it was Price who earned race of the day honors with the biggest PR of all Titans running at Delavan, crushing her lifetime best by 41 seconds.

The Boys Varsity team averaged sub-12 for the fourth time this season and broke the EPG course record at Delavan by 3 minutes 18 seconds. The Titan Boys brought home the second place team trophy in a highly contested race showing scores of Olympia (115), EPG (128), Dunlap Middle (132), Dee-Mack (141), Elmwood (148).

Asa Smith (7th, 11.26) ran a smart and strong race, earning the only Varsity medal for the EPG boys. He was right in the middle of six runners who finished at 11.23, 11.24, 11.25, 11.26, 11.27, 11.28, and 11.29.

Sebastian Meyer (27th, 11.54) ran #2 for EPG for the second meet in a row, while Mason Rinnger (28th, 11.57) and Nathan DeMarb (30th, 11.59) made for a nice pack of Titans. Maison DePauw (49th, 12.27) closed things out for the Top 5 by chasing after Dee-Mack's 3-4-5 runners.

Noah Ludy (76th, 13.06) made another strong case for Varsity Boy of the day with a great race, while Grant Morrison (125th, 14.20) ran to his second fastest time ever.

In the Girls Open, Haley Uphoff (56th, 16.27) closed out 2016 with a 30-second season best. Not to be outdone, Lexi Keating (94th, 17.43) earned an 11-second PR and officially notched an August 16th to October 1st season improvement of 6 minutes 5 seconds.

In the Boys Open, Gunner Cobbley (129th, 16.40) found the 16's for the fourth time in a row (not counting his 17.10 at Furrow), while Celestino Duley (166th, 19.17) threw out his old PR for one that is 40 seconds faster. Duley put up a 6-and-a-half week improvement of 6 minutes 43 seconds, cutting 25% off his opening 2-mile race. If Duley continues at this pace, in less than 20 weeks he will be running at the speed of light.

Titan Cross Country will be competing at the Germantown Hills Sectional Meet on Saturday, October 8th. The course is behind Great Oaks Community Church. The Girls team will race at

10:00am, and the Boys team will race at 10:40am. The Top 3 teams will advance to the IESA State Championship Meet.

Girls Win Quadrangular for Seventh Year in a Row Grube leads team to 3-minute course record

[SEPTEMBER 26, 2016] – The Titans welcomed Heyworth, Pontiac and Tremont to Furrow Farm for the annual EPG Quadrangular Meet on Monday. Cool temperatures and a brisk breeze made for a pleasant fall day of running through creeks and corn.

The Girls Team got rolling with an impressive 1-2-3-4-6-7 finish. The Titan's #1 through #4 finished within 12 seconds of each other. Tristyn Grube (1st, 13.38), Jordyn Cannon (2nd, 13.40), Sami Allen (3rd, 13.44), and Tori Witzig (4th, 13.50) are now among the Top 7 runners of all-time on the Furrow "W" course. Those four athletes combined with Ruby Slightom (6th, 14.56) to break the all-time team record set 20 days earlier by the same 5 girls, dropping their average time from 14.36 to 13.58.

EPG's #6 runner Jenna Kent (7th, 15.34) and #7 Lindsey Price (13th, 16.12) both ran to Furrow best times by 37 seconds and 49 seconds, respectively. Lexi Keating (27th, 20.53) and Gracie Skolek (31st, 23.22) were the final Titans to cross the line in the 36-runner event.

Asa Smith (1st, 12.02) notched his second win in two tries on the Furrow course this season. He now holds the fastest two EPG times ever at the farm. Sebastian Meyer (3rd, 12.44) had a fantastic race after face-planting in creek #1, and Noah Ludy (6th, 13.46) ran extremely strong on his home course. Grant Morrison (12th, 14.45) also turned in a nice performance.

EPG's #5 Conner Betts (22nd, 16.32) was right in the middle of the 41-runner field, while #6 Gunner Cobbley (27th, 17.10) dropped nearly 4 minutes from his time 3 weeks ago – that's an average drop of 11-and-a-half seconds every day since September 6th.

The Girls Team won this meet for the 7th straight year. Scores were EPG (16), Tremont (48), Heyworth (76), Pontiac (98). A strong Tremont Boys Team grabbed the quadrangular title back from the Titans, with team scores showing Tremont (34), EPG (43), Pontiac (58), Heyworth (83).

Titan XC Takes Two Team Trophies at DMS Invite Hamilton, Ludy deliver big races at 1,600-runner event

[SEPTEMBER 23, 2016] – Sunshine was plentiful, as were cross-country teams at the Dunlap Middle School Invitational on this Friday afternoon. 46 schools from across the state were competing on a very warm fall day, and colorful crowds lined much of Detweiller Park's 2.1-mile course. El Paso-Gridley athletes accounted for just 1% of the field, but brought home two team trophies to add to their 2016 collection.

In the 254-runner Girls Varsity race, Jordyn Cannon (23rd, 13.37) ran smart splits and then had the fastest finishing kick of all 254 runners. Not only did Cannon earn a Top 25 medal, but she also set a 20-second PR with a 2-mile adjusted time of 12.58.

Sami Allen (26th, 13.42) also ran excellent splits and hammered out a 17-second season best effort with her 2-mile adjusted time of 13.03. She was less than 1 second out of a medal, just 2 seconds off her lifetime best set at State 2015, and only 3.8 seconds away

from getting under 13 minutes. Those are all some big-time barriers she can attempt to break through next weekend at Delavan.

Tristyn Grube (28th, 13.43) was right on Allen's heels, also running about what she did at State 2015. Tori Witzig (48th, 13.24) ran to an 8-second season best and closed to within 8 seconds of her PR set at 2015 State.

Charlene Hamilton (71st, 14.28) clocked a 2-mile adjusted time of 13.47, just one second off her PR, delivering a huge race for the Titans. She was in about 175th place at the half mile and then got down to business. Continuing to snake her way through the field, she found herself in about 125th at the mile mark. Running the best splits of all EPG Varsity girls, Hamilton moved into the top 100 in the triangle, then continued to blaze around the flags with 500 meters to go, surging through the tunnel of cheering spectators to place 71st.

Cannon, Allen, Grube, Witzig, and Hamilton ran to the best team performance outside of State 2014 and State 2015. The highest EPG placing ever at this meet was 11th by last year's Girls Varsity team. This year the Varsity Girls took home the 4th place trophy, placing just 10 points behind Class 3A Normal Parkside, 56 points behind 2015 Class 2A State Runner-up Dunlap Middle School, and 79 points behind seemingly indomitable Class 3A Chatham Glenwood.

The Boys Varsity race saw strong performances from Asa Smith (9th, 11.53), Mason Ringger (21st, 12.14), Maison DePauw (25th, 12.18), and Sebastian Meyer (38th, 12.35). Only one 7th grade runner was in front of Smith. Ringger and Smith both showed some grit by picking up some spots in the final 500 meters. DePauw's 2-mile adjusted time of 11.43 was just 2 seconds off his all-time PR, and Meyer ran 25 seconds faster than at this meet last season.

Noah Ludy (125th, 13.40) cruised through the mile in 6.15 on his way to the biggest PR of any EPG Varsity runner, cutting 29 seconds off his best set just 7 days ago. With a 2-mile adjusted time of 13.01, he's now poised to go sub-13 next weekend. It was Ludy's 6th race in a row, outside of the infamous Furrow course, of running a lifetime best.

Smith, Ringger, DePauw, Meyer, and Ludy ran to the 3rd fastest EPG clocking in the history of our XC program. No team prior to this season has run faster. The Titans (212) found themselves sandwiched between two Sectional rivals – Dunlap Middle School (209) and Germantown Hills (251), as they earned yet another team trophy by placing 3rd. In the Girls Open, Jenna Kent (35th, 15.29) bounced back from a hockey injury sustained a couple weeks ago, running a 2-mile adjusted time of 14.45, just 16 seconds off her PR. Lindsey Price (52nd, 15.47) had a spectacular race, just missing her 2-mile PR by 4 seconds. Lexi Keating (286th, 18.48) had the biggest Titan PR of the day – 41 seconds – while clocking a 2-mile adjusted time of 17.54. Allison Probst (356th, 19.59) had some ankle pain flare up during the race, but showed determination in getting to the finish line.

In the Boys Open, Grant Morrison (110th, 14.38) and Conner Betts (113th, 14.39) found each other shortly before the mile and pushed each other to a fabulous race, running just 15 seconds positive for their splits. They passed competitors the entire race and finished with a pair of PR's, Morrison running a 21-second lifetime best and Betts a 39-second lifetime best. Betts, like Ludy, has PR'd at every meet excluding the Furrow course. Gunner Cobbley (418th, 17.29) ran to his second fastest time ever, a 2-mile adjusted 16.39.

The Titans host their annual quadrangular meet on Monday. The Boys will be defending last year's win, while the Girls are aiming for 7 wins in a row at this 4-team meet. Girls Race is at 4:30 PM and Boys Race is at 5:00 PM.

XC Girls/Boys Run to Combined Champs at Ewing Park Titans defend Corpus Christi title at 12-team Invite

[SEPTEMBER 16, 2016] – The rains came early to soften and slow the course, but the thunderstorms stayed away during meet time so the Corpus Christi Invitational races could proceed as scheduled. Twelve teams were participating, with 10 full teams competing in both the Girls and Boys Varsity races. Hills, trails, mud, and a couple bridge crossings kept things interesting for the athletes.

In the Girls Varsity race, the Titans found themselves short 3 Varsity runners and with only 5 girls on the starting line. Jordyn Cannon led the way (7th, 13.19), moving up throughout the race and outkicking 3 girls in the last 200 meters by 1 second, 2 seconds, and 3 seconds. Tristyn Grube (11th, 13.24), Sami Allen (14th, 13.41), Tori Witzig (15th, 14.16), and Lindsey Price (42nd, 16.01) followed in the 66-runner event. It was seventh-grader Price's first time running Varsity.

Despite missing 3 of their top runners, the Titans found themselves among the best in a close finish among the top 5 teams. Scores were Philo St. Thomas (69), Corpus Christi (80), Epiphany (80), EPG (87), St. Matthew (88). The next 5 scores ranged from 122 to 253.

The Boys Varsity were also without #2 runner Nathan DeMarb, but Noah Ludy stepped up as the new Titan #5 runner with a PR performance. Asa Smith (1st, 11.57), Mason Ringger (2nd, 12.11), and Maison DePauw (3rd, 12.14) grabbed the first 3 spots, with DePauw just holding off Dee-Mack's William Cates and Trinity Lutheran's Grayson Talaski, who both ran 12.15. Sebastian Meyer (6th, 12.17) followed on the heels of Cates and Talaski.

Noah Ludy (23rd, 13.30) came through with a strong effort, clocking one of only 3 Titan PR's on the day. He cut 4 seconds off his Parkside time and placed 23rd, which helped the Titans to a 28-point victory over Dee-Mack. Grant Morrison (48th, 15.00) wrapped things up for EPGJH Varsity athletes in the 72-runner race.

Scores for the Top 5 teams in the 10-team Boys Varsity race were EPG (35), Dee-Mack (68), Corpus Christi (101), Trinity Lutheran (102), St. Matthew (115).

Open Girls runners were Allison Probst (11th, 17.15), Haley Uphoff (15th, 17.54), and Lexi Keating (24th, 20.17). Open Boys runners were Conner Betts (2nd, 14.36), Gunner Cobbley (14th, 16.12), and Celestino Duley (49th, 21.32). 34 girls and 61 boys were competing in each of those races. Betts moved up to second place early on, and held that position through the finish, cranking out a 41-second PR, while Cobbley sliced 29 seconds off his lifetime best.

Corpus Christi awards a trophy to the overall top team by combining Girls Varsity scores with Boys Varsity scores. The Titans were defending their title from the previous running of this race in 2014 when the Girls placed 1st and the Boys placed 4th, good enough for a combined championship by 18 points. This year things were flip-flopped, with the Girls placing 4th and the Boys winning, but the margin of victory for the team championship was a bit wider this year with EPG (122) earning top honors over runner-up Corpus Christi (181) by 59 points.

The Titans will face a competitive field at the Dunlap Invitational next Friday night. The course will consist of the first 2.1 miles of the IHSA State Championship course in Peoria. Races begin at 4:30 PM.

EPG Boys 2nd at Parkside Invitational, Lower School Record 18 Season bests for Titans; Big PR's for Duley, Kent, Miller, Price, Skolek

[SEPTEMBER 10, 2016] – Fifty teams and over 1,800 athletes were competing at Saturday's Parkside Invitational. The rains finally stopped shortly before the 9:30 AM start, but standing water and muddy spots were scattered throughout the course. Nevertheless, the EPG Titans continue to overcome whatever obstacles are placed in front of them and ran to 18 season best times, 16 of those being lifetime bests.

In the Varsity Girls race, Tristyn Grube (31st, 12.53) had a breakthrough performance, knocking 43 seconds off her season best and breaking 13 minutes for the first time ever. She now owns a share of the 8th fastest Titan girl ever, along with Karly Miller (2009). Jordyn Cannon (66th, 13.18), Sami Allen (70th, 13.20), Tori Witzig (80th, 13.32), and Ruby Slightom (97th, 13.41) all ran to season best times.

Those 5 girls ran the 5th fastest team time (66.44/13.21) in school history and the fastest time ever for a regular season meet. It was their lowest pack time of the season at 48 seconds.

Charlene Hamilton (104th, 13.46) and Jenna Kent (163rd, 14.29) continue to dominate in the #6-7 position for EPG, finishing ahead of almost every team's #6-7. They had the biggest PR's of all the Varsity Girls, Hamilton improving her PR by 54 seconds and Kent by 85 seconds. Hamilton (#22-tie) and Slightom (#20) found their way onto the all-time records board as well.

The Girls team placed 11th of 42 full teams, their highest placing ever at this meet.

In the Varsity Boys race, Asa Smith (12th, 11.11) and Nathan DeMarb (13th, 11.11) went through the muddy first mile at 5.24 and 5.26. They began working together shortly after, with Mason Ringger (23rd, 11.26) running strong throughout the race and earning the 3rd Titan medal of the day. Maison DePauw (34th, 11.41) and Sebastian Meyer (35th, 11.42) were tough as nails, and all 5 boys ran to lifetime bests.

Those 5 boys ran to a school record team time (57.11/11.26) and like the girls had their lowest pack time of the season – just 31 seconds.

Noah Ludy (219th, 13.34) ran to a 21-second PR, while Grant Morrison (268th, 14.21) was just 4 seconds off his best time.

The EPG Boys placed 2nd overall, splitting two perennial powerhouse Class 3A schools in the team scores: Chatham Glenwood (72), EPG (117), Yorkville (154). Glenwood entered the meet with a roster of 100 runners.

In the Girls Open race, Lindsey Price (81st, 14.58) had the race of the day as she lowered her PR by a whopping 2 minutes 3 seconds. And this came after setting a PR just four days earlier by nearly 2 minutes.

Amelia Miller (84th, 14.59) also destroyed her PR for the second meet in a row, this time cutting 75 seconds off her best time ever. Allison Probst (267th, 16.53), Haley Uphoff (340th, 17.36), and Lexi Keating (436th, 19.17) were within 45 seconds of their season best times, while Gracie Skolek (408th, 18.33) not only broke 20 minutes for the first time ever, but also broke 19 minutes, running to a huge 102-second PR.

In Boys Open race, Gunner Cobby (442nd, 16.41) ran to a 20-second PR, while Celestino Duley (622nd, 19.57) ran to a 2-minute 39 second PR on a muddy course, and needs to find himself a new season goal now that he has broken 20 minutes. The Boys Open race was the biggest race of the day, with 665 finishers.

Titan Cross Country heads to Ewing Park on Friday to defend their Girls team title and Combined Boys/Girls team title at the Corpus Christi Invitational. Those honors are from 2014, as the 2015 race was postponed, then canceled due to thunderstorms. Races begin at 4:15 PM. Hopefully.

Two Titan Championships at 21-team EPGJH Invitational Girls win by 36 points; Boys put 5 in the top 11

[SEPTEMBER 6, 2016] – It was warm and breezy at Furrow Farm, as 600 runners enjoyed splashing through the cold creek crossings even more than usual. The El Paso-Gridley Titans certainly enjoyed the creek crossings, the hills, the corn tunnel, the “W”, the cattle chute, the apple trees by the pond, and even the finish up the hill to the red barn as they ran to two team championships at the 10th Annual EPGJH Invitational.

Jordyn Cannon (6th, 14.05) led the Varsity Girls (73) to a 36-point victory over runner up Eureka (109) and third place Dunlap Middle School (110). All 3 teams will face off again in October’s Sectional Meet at Germantown Hills. Cannon moved up in the field throughout the race and will have another shot at the EPG course record (13.35) held by 2014 All-State runner Sophi Allen later this month.

Tristyn Grube (11th, 14.24) ran faster than last year, while Sami Allen (20th, 14.36) cut over 1 minute off her 2015 time. Ruby Slightom (22nd, 14.46) had yet another strong performance running within 31 seconds of her all-time PR on the tough Furrow course, and #5 EPG runner Tori Witzig (27th, 15.09) matched her time at the fast Eureka course with strength and determination through the creeks and hills of the farm.

Charlene Hamilton (30th, 15.20) and Jenna Kent (56th, 16.11) were the fastest 6-7 runners of any team in the 123-runner Varsity field.

Asa Smith (1st, 11.51) had a dramatic 3-second victory over Dee-Mack’s John Blumeyer. Smith ran strong and smart for the entire 2.0-mile race, and his clocking was just 27 seconds off his PR, an amazing performance for the course and conditions.

Nathan DeMarb (5th, 12.29) ran 1 minute 59 seconds faster than last year, while Mason Ringger (6th, 12.30) ran strong the whole race, then laid down his finishing kick up the hill to nip Tri-Valley’s #1 runner at the line. Maison DePauw (9th, 12.38) earned Top 10 honors, while Sebastian Meyer (11th, 12.42) cut 47 seconds off his time from last year.

Seventh graders Noah Ludy (81st, 15.16) and Grant Morrison (96th, 15.41) made a strong Furrow debut as EPG’s #6 and #7 Varsity runners.

Smith, DeMarb, Ringger, DePauw, and Meyer ran over one-minute per runner faster than 2nd place team Dunlap Valley. The top 3 team scores of the 21 teams entered were EPG (32), Dunlap Valley (130), Dee-Mack (137).

Both the Girls Team and Boys Team set EPG team course records.

Amelia Miller (3rd, 16.14) had the race of a lifetime in the Combined Open. She got a strong start and safely through both creek crossings, and then just kept moving up through the field to place 3rd of 126 in the Open Girls division. Miller clocked a 34-second season-best time and ran to a lifetime best as well, 21 seconds faster than her previous PR set at 2015 Parkside.

Lindsey Price (11th, 17.01) had an astounding 109-second PR. Simply amazing.

Allison Probst (25th, 18.18) had to momentarily stop with less than a half mile to go, but then put on a burst of speed all the way to the finish to grab a medal and some stage time during the awards ceremony. Haley Uphoff (43rd, 19.28) found herself finishing in the top third of the field, while Gracie Skolek (82nd, 22.08) ran a gutsy race, finishing just ahead of Lexi Keating (83rd, 22.30). Both Skolek and Keating were making their Furrow course debut.

In the Open Boys division, Conner Betts (31st, 15.48) finished less than 30 seconds out of medal position. Gunner Cobbley (125th, 21.03) held off 4 runners who were within 7 seconds of him in the Open Boys division. There were 319 runners in the Combined Open.

The unbeaten Titan Cross Country teams travel to the Parkside Invitational on Saturday. This will be the biggest meet of the year with more than 50 teams from all over the state, many large 3A schools from the Chicago suburbs, and plenty of competition and excitement. Races start at 9:30 AM.

EPGJH Girls and Boys Cross Country Remains Undefeated Titan XC teams, Jordyn Cannon, Asa Smith score overall wins at Metamora

[SEPTEMBER 1, 2016] – Seven teams lined up for a 2.10-mile race at Metamora's Black Partridge Park on a pleasant sunny Thursday afternoon. The grass and trail course looped through the park, along the woods, past playgrounds and sports fields, into and out of the forest, and in front of historic 180-year-old Lee Cabin. The Titans made some history of their own as all 22 Titans ran season-best times.

Jordyn Cannon (1st, 13.59) pulled ahead of the pack shortly before the mile and won the race by 15 seconds. Cannon's teammates Sami Allen (2nd, 14.15) and Tristyn Grube (3rd, 14.16) had to battle with another runner, but they found the extra gear and captured a 1-2-3 sweep for the Titans. Ruby Slightom (7th, 14.56) had one of the strongest races of the day, running to a spectacular 66-second PR and finishing in the #4 spot for the EPG girls. Tori Witzig (8th, 14.57) also had a significant season-best drop of 52 seconds. Charlene Hamilton (15.23) and Jenna Kent (15.46) rounded out the Titan's Top 7.

Next across the finish line for the EPG girls were Allison Probst (17.23), Amelia Miller (17.37), and Haley Uphoff (17.46), with Probst and Miller clocking some nice season best times by over 40 seconds. But it was Lexi Keating (19.29) and Gracie Skolek (21.14) who absolutely destroyed their PR's – Keating besting hers by nearly 2 minutes and Skolek slicing more than 3 minutes off her lifetime best.

Asa Smith (1st, 11.57) picked up his first-ever victory as a Titan Cross Country runner. Smith and teammates Nathan DeMarb (2nd, 12.05), Mason Ringger (3rd, 12.18), Maison DePauw (4th, 12.23), and Sebastian Meyer (6th, 12.34) nearly completed a 1 through 5 sweep at the seven-team meet, being broken up by just one Metamora runner who claimed 5th place. The #6 runner for EPG was Noah Ludy (14.35) and the #7 runner for was Grant Morrison (14.59). Smith, DePauw, Meyer, and Ludy clocked season-best times of nearly one minute, while Morrison had a fabulous race, running to a 67-second PR.

The final three Titan finishers for the boys were Conner Betts (16.01), Gunner Cobbley (17.51), and Celestino Duley (23.42). Cobbley dropped his lifetime best by 47 seconds, while Duley ran to the biggest Titan PR of the day, knocking 3 minutes 19 seconds off his previous best time.

The Girls team (69.02) of Cannon, Allen, Grube, Slightom, and Witzig clocked their 11th fastest time in the history of the JH Cross Country program.

The Boys team (58.27) of Smith, DeMarb, Ringger, DePauw, and Meyer obliterated the all-time team record set last year at the State Meet by 17 seconds per runner, while tightening their pack time to just 35 seconds. It was also the first time ever to have each of the Titan Top 5 runners under 12 minutes.

Titan XC will host a 22-team 700-runner meet this Tuesday, September 6th at Furrow Farm with races at 4:30, 5:00, and 5:30. An awards presentation near the red barn will follow the races. The 10th Annual EPGJH Cross Country Invitational is sure to be an exciting race for all.

Titan XC Runs to Victory at 4-team Meet Runners Reel in 21 PR's at Eureka Lake

[AUGUST 23, 2016] – Titan Cross Country competed against Eureka, Tremont, and Delavan on Tuesday at Eureka Lake Park. The 1.93-mile course ran along the lake, into the woods, through the Hornets Nest, and back along the lake. EPG went home with two big wins.

In the Girls race, Eureka's Alexi Fogo won in 13 minutes 12 seconds, with the Titans taking the next 3 spots. Jordyn Cannon (2nd, 13.32), Tristyn Grube (3rd, 13.44) and Sami Allen (4th, 13.44) all ran to season-best times by about a minute.

Also placing in the Top 10 were Tori Witzig (6th, 14.37), Ruby Slightom (9th, 14.49), and Charlene Hamilton (10th, 15.26). Slightom and Hamilton were making their cross country debuts. Jenna Kent (14th, 15.30) was EPG's #7 runner and sliced 1 minute 11 seconds off her PR.

Haley Uphoff (24th, 16.27) notched the biggest Titan season-best on the day by running 3 minutes 47 seconds faster than at Heyworth and closed to within 47 seconds of her lifetime best. Allison Probst (27th, 16.41) ran to a 97-second PR, while Amelia Miller (30th, 16.55) ran 82 seconds than last week and closed to within a minute of her lifetime best. Lindsey Price (35th, 18.10) ran even splits and notched a 41-second PR, despite just coming back from a sore knee. Lexi Keating (40th, 19.47) ran to a huge 3 minute 18 second PR, while Gracie Skolek (43rd, 23.25) held off Delavan's #7 runner by 11 seconds.

The Girls team won by 20 points with team scores of EPG (24), Eureka (44), Delavan (84), Tremont (89).

In the Boys race, EPG's Nathan DeMarb battled with Eureka's Aden Sears for the entire race, with Sears edging DeMarb (2nd, 11.39) by one second at the finish. The Titan top 5 made their presence known with strong races from Asa Smith (3rd, 11.52), Mason Ringger (4th, 11.56), Maison DePauw (7th, 12.21), and Sebastian Meyer (8th, 12.28). All 5 boys ran to season-best times, with DePauw turning in a dramatic 70-second improvement.

Noah Ludy (18th, 14.18) ran #6 for EPG, cruising to a 45-second improvement. He was followed by the Titans' #7-8-9 runners who turned in huge PR's. Conner Betts (21st, 14.50), Grant Morrison (23rd, 14.52), and Gunner Cobbley (17.11) cranked out PR's of 2 minutes, 2 minutes 40 seconds, and 3 minutes 24 seconds, respectively. Celestino Duley (49th, 25.01) upped the season-best count to 21 for the Titans with his 5-second PR.

The Boys team bested a strong Eureka team by 17 points, with team scores of EPG (24), Eureka (41), Tremont (55), Delavan (117).

The next meet for EPGJH Cross Country will be at Metamora's Black Partridge Park on Thursday, September 1st. Races begin at 4:15 PM.

Two Wins for EPGJH Cross Country Pack running carries XC Girls, Boys to victory at Heyworth

[AUGUST 16, 2016] – Success often comes to those who respond appropriately to change, and our Titan Cross Country runners responded positively to a last-minute change at Tuesday's opening meet. Arriving at Heyworth's Centennial Park, the athletes began walking through the park along the 1.95-mile running course. Moments later, they were informed that the race route had been changed to a two-mile, two-loop trail run through the woods with two turnarounds.

The Girls team did not let that news distract them from their task at hand. The top 4 girls stayed with their race plan of running as a pack, moving up throughout the race to place 4-5-6-7. Seventh-grader Jordyn Cannon (4th, 15.05) locked in on eighth-graders Sami Allen (5th, 15.06), Tori Witzig (6th, 15.08), and Tristyn Grube (7th, 15.09) for the entire race. Seventh-grader Jenna Kent (15th, 17.15) came up with a big race as the Titans' #5 runner to secure the win for El Paso-Gridley (37) by just 2 points over Normal Epiphany (39). Corpus Christi (44) was right there as well.

Other finishers for the girls were Amelia Miller (23rd, 18.54), Allison Probst (24th, 18.54), Lindsey Price (25th, 19.31), Haley Uphoff (28th, 20.50), Gracie Skolek (30th, 23.24), and Lexi Keating (31st, 23.48).

The Boys team formed a pack of their own, taking the top 4 individual spots in the 4-team meet. Nathan DeMarb (1st, 12.35) led from start to finish, while Asa Smith (2nd, 12.59), Mason Ringger (3rd, 13.07), and Sebastian Meyer (4th, 13.13) cruised across the finish line next. The only runner to break up the Titan's top 5 was Corpus Christi's Josh Vogel in 13.39. Maison DePauw (6th, 13.58) contributed to the Titans best team score ever as EPG (16) won over Corpus Christi (48), Heyworth (73) and Normal Epiphany (73).

Other finishers for the boys were Noah Ludy (14th, 15.34), Conner Betts (18th, 17.22), Grant Morrison (19th, 18.04), Gunner Cobbley (26th, 21.12), and Celestino Duley (42nd, 26.00).

Titan XC travels to Little Galilee Campground this Saturday to tackle the course with the "big hill". The Clinton Maroons host a 10-team invitational on Saturday with races beginning at 9:00 AM. There will be separate events for Girls Varsity, Boys Varsity, Girls Open, and Boys Open.

First 2016 Practice is August 1st

[JULY 17, 2016] – EPGJH Cross Country opens its tenth season with our first scheduled practice set for Monday, August 1st at South Pointe Park in El Paso. Athletes should meet near the pond at 5:30pm.

A current sports physical must be on file before practicing. Completed physicals can be turned in at the Junior High office in Gridley or to Coach Heffron prior to participating. A Gridley-to-El Paso shuttle will be available to transport cross country athletes from Gridley to El Paso during the first two weeks of practice. The shuttle will depart from Gridley Grade School at approximately 5:05pm and arrive at South Pointe Park at approximately 5:20pm.

Parents, please plan to pick up athletes after practice at 7:30pm.

Athletes, please bring the following items to practice on Monday:

- (1) Comfortable running shoes
- (2) Water
- (3) Current sports physical (if not already on file at the EPGJH office)

Both the Girls XC Team and the Boys XC Team are coming off appearances at the State Finals last season, and will be looking to qualify again this fall. The Girls Team will be aiming for their 3rd straight trip to State.

Best wishes to all 2016 Titan runners! It's going to be a fun season!