

EPGXC Places 3rd, 3rd, 3rd, and 3rd at IESA Sectionals

Titans bring home 13 Season Bests and 6 medals from final event

[OCTOBER 13, 2020] – With State Finals canceled for 2020, the final IESA cross country meet of the 2020 season for the EPGJH Titans was hosted by Olympia Middle School on a sunny breezy Tuesday afternoon. Six schools were competing at the Class 2A Sectional Meet – Clinton, Dee-Mack, El Paso-Gridley, Heyworth, Olympia, and Tri-Valley. Scoring for the Girls Race turned out to be extremely close, with the top 3 teams separated by just 5 points. The Boys Race was even closer.

In the Girls Race, EPG's Myli Ehrhardt (3rd, 12.55) had set a goal of dropping her 13.18 PR into the 12's. She was already moving up through the field at the half-mile mark (3.04) and had moved into 4th place at the mile (6.19). Sliding into 3rd place shortly after the mile, she closed in 6.36, her clocking of 12 minutes 55 seconds making her the 16th fastest Titan girl of all time. Notably, she turned the tables on Heyworth's Danielle Struck and Kyra Denning. They had both beaten Ehrhardt at Furrow Farm 14 days earlier, but Ehrhardt finished 8 seconds and 23 seconds ahead of them at Sectionals.

Nellie Melick (6th, 13.20) had already found her way into the top 10 at the half mile, and continued to push the pace in her battle for a medal. She clocked 6.29 at the mile, moved up a couple positions, and lost one spot to Denning in the final sprint to the line, finishing with a 37-second season best time as the Titans' #2.

Piper Zimmerman (8th, 13.43) had one of the most exciting races of the day. She came through the half-mile mark with more than 20 runners ahead of her, but she continued to surge past competitors as she crossed the mile mark in 6.51. She didn't let up, and her aggressive second mile of 6.52 paid off as she moved into the top 10 and placed in the medals at 8th overall with the fastest time she had ever run.

McKayla Harms (16th, 15.12) had the race of the day for the Titans. Wearing spikes for the first time this season, she looked determined from the start. She clocked splits of 7.23, 7.49 as she powered her way to a 65-second PR, the biggest lifetime best of the day for any Titan.

Elise Brucker (18th, 15.42) cracked the 16-minute barrier for the first time with splits of 7.40, 8.02 as the Titans' #5, placing in the top half of the Sectional field. Aubrey Phillips (24th, 16.17) ran to a season best time and came within a whisper of a lifetime PR. And Ella Griffin (31st, 17.38) clocked an impressive 51-second season best.

With all 7 EPG girls running to SB times, the Titans made a surprise bid to upend heavy favorite Heyworth, as did Olympia whose #1 placed 7th followed by their #2-#7 packing it up in 9th through 14th. In the end, it was those 3 teams within 5 points of each other and more than 40 points ahead of the other teams. Final scores were Heyworth (46), Olympia (49), EPG (51), Tri-Valley (92), Dee-Mack (121), Clinton (167).

In the Boys Race, the Titans' Pierson Romersberger (3rd, 12.13) opened with a 5.53 and then polished off his fastest 2-mile race of the season, 13 seconds faster than his Ewing Park victory 12 days earlier.

Owen Bergquist (4th, 12.21) dropped 39 seconds off his PR with splits of 6.00, 6.21, six-and-a-half seconds ahead of Dee-Mack's #1. Drew Cooper (9th, 12.42) found his way into the top 10 by six-and-a-half seconds as the 10th Titan runner to cross the finish line with a season-best time.

With their 3-4-9 finishes, the Titans had a 2-point advantage through 3 runners over Dee-Mack's 5-6-7 placing. But it was Olympia's #4 and Tri-Valley's #4 who both crossed the blue finish mats in front of Dee-Mack's #4. Flying through the finish line 3 seconds later was EPG's #4 Isaac Porzelius (19th, 13.27) as he surged past Clinton's #4—fifth-grader Cayden Bostic. Things had just gotten extremely interesting.

The EPG #5-#6-#7 pack of Ethan Krugger (31st, 14.10), Nolan Kent (32nd, 14.10), and Eli Kibler (33rd, 14.10) ran to respective season bests of 56, 69, and 57 seconds.

Despite six season best times and a season-best top 5 average of 12 minutes 59 seconds, it was not quite enough to beat a strong Dee-Mack team. With their Sectional squad composed entirely of sixth and seventh graders, the young Braves finished 5 points ahead of the Titans, and 5 teams finished within 12 points. Final scores were Dee-Mack (61), Olympia (64), EPG (66), Clinton (68), Tri-Valley (73), Heyworth (185).

With EPGXC running to 13 season bests on the 13th of October, earning more medals than any other team, and coming within 5 points of claiming both the Girls Team Championship and Boys Team Championship, it was evident that this was a Sectional and a season that the Titans should be very proud of.

Girls XC Team Wins Furrow Triangular

Romersberger wins for boys; Girls put 5 in top 9

[OCTOBER 6, 2020] – EPG hosted its second triangular meet of the season, with warmer and windier conditions than the week before. Nevertheless, the Titans ran to 10 Furrow Best times. Cornerstone Christian Academy (CCA) and Dee-Mack runners joined EPG for a fall run through the creeks and sunshine.

EPG's Myli Ehrhardt (1st, 13.40) took the lead just after the mile mark and won the 22-runner Girls Race by 21 seconds over runner-up Aubree Kinzinger of CCA. Only 3 EPG girls have ever run faster on the 3200-meter Furrow Farm course.

Nellie Melick (3rd, 14.21) clocked a time on her home course that was 21 seconds faster than the week before, while Piper Zimmerman (4th, 14.41) slashed 49 seconds from her Furrow best time.

McKayla Harms (8th, 16.58) and Elise Brucker (9th, 17.01) chased down a pack of Dee-Mack competitors and almost caught the Braves' #1 runner. Running #6 for the Titans was Aubrey Phillips (16th, 18.30), placing 13 seconds ahead of CCA's #4. Ella Griffin (19th, 19.43) was #7 for EPG and 11 seconds in front of CCA's #5.

In team scoring, EPG came away with a 24-point victory—EPG (25), CCA (49), Dee-Mack (53).

Pierson Romersberger (1st, 12.47) is starting to develop a racing style: start strong, be patient, take the lead, and win. That's how his last two races have played out, and his 12-second victory over CCA's Aaron Webb was another textbook example of Titan racing strategy.

Owen Bergquist (5th, 13.26) and Drew Cooper (6th, 13.29) split Dee-Mack's #2 and #3 runners, but the Braves took four of the next five spots.

Ethan Krugger (12th, 15.21) bested Dee-Mack's #7 by one second. Nolan Kent (15th, 15.29) crossed the finish line 62 seconds faster than one week earlier and was the Titan's final scorer. Isaac Porzelius (16th, 15.30) and Eli Kibler (17th, 15.33) were close behind.

Gage Cobbley (19th, 15.59) found himself reaching his goal for the day as he crossed the line in 15.59—a lifetime best by 3 seconds. It's no small feat to earn a PR while battling the creeks and hills of Furrow Farm.

After EPG's Zeke Gaddy (20th, 16.18) concluded his 3200-meter race, it was a replay of last week's Titan trio dueling all the way to the finish line, with the final results showing Jack Gramm (23rd, 17.26), Hayden Tipler (24th, 17.27), and Roman Zimmerman (25th, 17.28) tightly grouped in the 34-runner event.

The Dee-Mack boys edged the Titans by putting 7 Braves in the top 13. The final score was Dee-Mack (33), EPG (39), CCA (61).

The Titans will be competing against Clinton, Dee-Mack, Heyworth, Olympia, and Tri-Valley at the October 13 Sectional Meet hosted by Olympia. The course is behind Olympia High School, and the races are at 4:00pm (girls) and 5:00pm (boys).

Close Contests at Corpus Christi Ehrhardt, Romersberger win, EPGXC brings home 18 SBs

[OCTOBER 1, 2020] – EPG traveled to Ewing Park in Bloomington for an afternoon dual meet with Corpus Christi. Thursday's occasional rain showers ended about an hour before race time, the skies cleared, and it turned out to be a gorgeous day for cross country running. The Titans always seem to compete well on the Ewing course, and that tradition continued as EPG opened October racing in spectacular fashion, bringing home two individual wins, a team win, and 18 season-best times.

Trailing the Saints' Sophia Yaklich and Lauren Emm early in the race, EPG's Myli Ehrhardt (1st, 13.18) overtook Emm by the half mile and was closing on Yaklich as runners crossed the bridge and began climbing the big hill at the 1000-meter mark. As Ehrhardt passed the mile mark in 6.40, she moved around Yaklich and cruised through mile two in 6.38 to earn an 11-second victory, running to the 3rd fastest Titan time ever on the Ewing course.

Nellie Melick (3rd, 13.57) broke the 14-minute barrier for the first time this season, moving up throughout the race to place 3rd, clocking splits of 6.58, 6.59.

Piper Zimmerman (4th, 14.12) ran to the biggest Titan PR of the day, shattering her previous best by 78 seconds. Elise Brucker (11th, 16.00) ran #4 for the Titans and came home with a 46-second PR. Both Zimmerman and Brucker ran their splits to precision – Zimmerman at 7.06, 7.06 and Brucker at 8.00, 8.00.

McKayla Harms (13th, 16.17) sliced 30 seconds off per PR to run #5 for EPG. The third time was the charm for Aubrey Phillips (14th, 16.23) as she crushed her previous two efforts on the Ewing Park course. Phillips ran to a season best by 72 seconds and closed to within 8 seconds of her lifetime best. Ella Griffin (16th, 18.29) earned an 18-second season best in the 24-runner event.

Although the EPG girls put three runners in the top four, Corpus Christi's #2-3-4-5-6-7 runners managed to stay ahead of EPG's #4 as they came away with a 3-point victory by a score of Corpus Christi (28), EPG (31).

In the Boys Race, Corpus Christi's Eoin Kohn took a commanding early lead. But by the time the race had moved across the bridge and runners were approaching the big hill, you could sense that EPG's Pierson Romersberger (1st, 12.26) was patiently chasing down his prey. Kohn still led at the mile, but Romersberger kept gaining and the two athletes were together with just a half mile to go. As the runners exited the second of three trail sections, Romersberger pulled ahead for good, and held strong to win by 7 seconds.

Owen Bergquist (3rd, 13.00), fresh off his Furrow Triangular victory, placed 3rd with another Titan season best time. Drew Cooper (4th, 13.01) earned a 44-second lifetime best, as the EPG boys repeated the Titan Girls' feat of capturing 1st, 3rd, and 4th.

Isaac Porzelius (8th, 13.25) and Zeke Gaddy (10th, 14.46) both had breakthrough races as they ran #4 and #5 for EPG. Porzelius set a season best by 40 seconds, and Gaddy by 50 seconds, with Porzelius taking down his previous lifetime PR set October 5, 2019 at Delavan by 7 seconds.

Seven Titans followed Gaddy across the finish line in the 23-runner race—Ethan Krugger (11th, 15.06), Eli Kibler (12th, 15.07), Nolan Kent (13th, 15.19), Gage Cobbley (14th, 16.02), Hayden Tipler (15th, 16.53), Roman Zimmerman (16th, 16.53), and Jack Gramm (17th, 16.55). Kent had the biggest season best of the day for the boys, trimming 72 seconds off his previous best. Zimmerman is up to his old tricks again – just like in 2019 – as he ran to his third lifetime PR in a row. His time was 8 minutes 41 seconds faster than his first race last season.

Through 3 runners the Titans held a 5-point edge over the Saints, but Corpus Christi put their #4 ahead of our #4 by 6 seconds to close the gap to 4 points. The Saints #5 took the next spot, but Gaddy followed 7 seconds later to clinch the win for EPG, 26-29.

The Titans will be hosting their second triangular of the season on Tuesday, October 6 at Furrow Farm. Participating teams will be Cornerstone, Dee-Mack, and EPG. The first race will begin at 4:15pm.

11 Season Bests for Titan XC

Boys Team wins triangular by 20 points

[SEPTEMBER 28, 2020] – EPG hosted its first meet of the season at Furrow Farm Tuesday afternoon. It was a cool breezy day with a few sprinkles mixed in with some splashes of sunshine. With the previous night adding some water to the creeks, it was a fun day at the farm as Heyworth and Pontiac joined the Titans for two races on the 3200-meter hilly course.

Heyworth's Natalie Bierbaum (1st, 13.03) took an early lead in the Girls Race, running the entire 3200 meters with just the gator to keep her company. She won the race over teammate Danielle Strunk (2nd, 14.00) by 57 seconds. EPG's Myli Ehrhardt (4th, 14.29) crossed the finish line sandwiched between Heyworth's #3 (14.24) and Pontiac's #1 (14.35).

Nellie Melick (6th, 14.42) went out in 7.19 and came back with a 7.23, running to her best Furrow time ever. Piper Zimmerman (8th, 15.30) ran negative splits of 7.47, 7.43 to earn a 23-second lifetime best. McKayla Harms (16th, 16.47) also earned a lifetime PR, with Elise Brucker (17th, 17.05) running #5 for the Titans.

Abi Kelly (20th, 17.23) doubled up for a Furrow best and season best, while Aubrey Phillips (23rd, 17.58), crossed the finish line a full 76 seconds ahead of her previous fastest at the farm. The only girl who could top that was Ella Griffin (24th, 18.47) who ran nearly 4 minutes faster than she did at Furrow in 2019.

Heyworth put their #5 in front of EPG's #4 and Pontiac's #3 to claim the victory with team scores of Heyworth (23), EPG (47), Pontiac (64).

In the Boys race, Pierson Romersberger (2nd, 13.07) and Owen Bergquist (1st, 13.05) dropped Pontiac's #1 shortly after the first creek crossing and fronted the race for the remaining 1.5 miles. Bergquist took a slight lead as the pair ran through the apple trees, holding off a charging Romersberger up the final hill. Drew Cooper (3rd, 13.45) moved into 3rd with a little over a half mile to go and increased that gap over Pontiac's #1 to 10 seconds by the time he arrived at the barn. Bergquist and Cooper both ran to lifetime PRs—Bergquist by 44 seconds. Romersberger earned a Furrow best by 16 seconds.

Isaac Porzelius (5th, 14.57) also earned a Furrow best time, slicing 104 seconds off his 2019 time. The next three runners to cross the line were wearing Pontiac jerseys, and the Titans and Warriors both had 4 runners in before Heyworth's #1. Now it was just a matter of which team's #5 would close out the scoring.

A pair of Heyworth runners crossed in 9th and 10th, before a trio of Titans sealed the deal for a Titan victory. Ethan Krugger (11th, 15.33), Eli Kibler (12th, 15.33) and Zeke Gaddy (13th, 15.48) all ran evenly paced races as EPG's #5, #6, and #7 runners.

The final 5 runners for EPG were Gage Cobbley (15th, 16.26), Nolan Kent (17th, 16.31), Jack Gramm (19th, 16.52), Roman Zimmerman (22nd, 17.33), and Hayden Tipler (24th, 17.42). Kent ran to a season best by 41 seconds, while Cobbley, Gramm, and Zimmerman all earned lifetime PRs.

The final tally for the boys scoring was EPG (22), Pontiac (42), Heyworth (64).

The Titans will travel to Bloomington's Ewing Park on Thursday for a 4:30pm meet hosted by Corpus Christi.

Turning Up the Heat

Ehrhardt wins, Titans capture 9 season bests

[SEPTEMBER 15, 2020] – Eureka hosted the EPGJH Titans for a dual meet at Eureka Lake on a sunny September afternoon. Athletes followed the shoreline for a third of a mile, turned north for a grassy quarter mile up a slight incline, entered the woods for some single-track trail running, and returned to finish near the lake.

The Titans were running low on numbers, but effort levels were turned on high. Really high, like “set the volume at 11” high. EPG's 5 girls and 5 boys brought home 9 season bests, including 4 lifetime bests, as well as an overall victory and an EPG course record.

Myli Ehrhardt (1st, 13.30) started things off with a bang by taking an early lead on two Hornets, and the trio soon broke the rest of the field. Ehrhardt's lead was still slim as she led the Eureka girls into the woods, but a gap was becoming evident as she cruised through the mile in 6.43. Ehrhardt was in control as she exited the woods, and continued on to a 28-second win. Her 13.30 clocking allowed her to grab the EPG course record from Jordyn Cannon (2016) by 2 seconds.

Piper Zimmerman (6th, 15.57) ran #2 for EPG and just missed a PR by 4 seconds. With splits of 8.20/8:26, Elise Brucker (10th, 16.46) ran to an 81-second lifetime best. Aubrey Phillips (13th, 17:35) crushed her season best by 107 seconds as she powered up the final hill fighting her way past a Hornet just before the line. Abi Kelly (15th, 17.43) kept gaining on Phillips during the race, finishing within just 8 seconds of her while notching a 100-second season best.

In the Boys Race, it was Pierson Romersberger (4th, 12.40) leading the Titans as he chased a pack of three Eureka runners for much of the race. With a half mile remaining, he was still right in the mix, hanging just a couple steps back from the lead pack. He faded slightly at the end, but still within 12 seconds of the winning time. Romersberger's 12.40 was a season best by over a minute, and a Eureka best by over two minutes.

Isaac Porzelius (7th, 14.15) found the zone as he clocked his fastest mile of the year (7.01) and promptly followed that with his second-fastest mile of the year (7.14) to earn a 110-second season best. Porzelius ran 3 minutes 22 seconds faster than he did in 2019 on this same course. Zeke Gaddy (12th, 15.46) earned a lifetime PR as he ran 2 minutes 33 seconds faster than he did just 12 days ago at Metamora. Hayden Tipler (14th, 17.14) ran #4 for the Titans, knocking 48 seconds off his season best. And Roman Zimmerman (16th, 17.41) was fired up and running strong as he dropped over a minute from his Metamora time on his way to claiming a 14-second lifetime best.

The Titans will be looking to take on Heyworth and Pontiac at a home meet on Monday, September 28th. The first race at Furrow Farm will begin at 4:15pm.

EPGJH XC Season Opens at Black Partridge Park

Ehrhardt, Romersberger lead Titans

[SEPTEMBER 3, 2020] – Metamora hosted a 3-team meet at Black Partridge Park on a pleasant sunny afternoon. El Paso-Gridley and Peoria Christian were the visiting teams. After a decade of fluctuating between courses of 2.18 and 2.10 miles, the new 2019 two-mile course remained the same for 2020. The weather was also a repeat of 2019—pleasant, sunny, and breezy. A total of 82 runners toured a grassy route around Black Partridge Park, ran past the 1836 Lee Cabin into some wooded trails, and finished down a 150-meter straightaway.

Metamora's standout All-State athlete Addy Elwell took an early lead and extended it through the finish, placing 48 seconds ahead of runner-up Myli Ehrhardt (2nd, 14.26) who was making her XC debut as a Titan. Nellie Melick (4th, 15.08) looked strong throughout her race with a finishing time that was 42 seconds faster than she ran this course last year. Like Ehrhardt, EPG's #3, #4, and #5 runners were all making their cross country debuts—Piper Zimmerman (11th, 15.53), McKayla Harms (15th, 16.56), and Elise Brucker (17th, 18.07). Rounding out the Titans competing in the Girls Varsity Race were Aubrey Phillips (19th, 19.22), Abi Kelly (20th, 19.23), and Ella Griffin (21st, 21.49)

In the Boys Varsity Race, the Redbirds took the first three spots, followed by three Titan athletes. Pierson Romersberger (4th, 13.45) led EPG with a time that was 20 seconds faster than his 2019

race at Black Partridge Park. Just a couple ticks later, 7th graders Drew Cooper (5th, 13.48) and Owen Bergquist flashed across the line, having pushed each other from start to finish. Running #4 and #5 for EPG were two more 7th graders—Eli Kibler (15th, 15.20) and Ethan Krugger (17th, 15.30). Kibler clocked negative splits of 7.43, 7.37 as he moved up in the field for the entire race.

Isaac Porzelius (19th, 16.05) and Gage Cobbley (20th, 17.11) ran #6 and #7 for EPG. Cobbley edged out Nolan Kent (21st, 17.12) by one second, with Hayden Tipler (22nd, 18.02), and Zeke Gaddy (23rd, 18.19) the final Titan finishers in the Boys Varsity Race.

The final race of the day was a Combined Open. Among the 38 runners battling in this race were Jack Gramm (15th, 18.41) and Roman Zimmerman (16th, 18.44). Zimmerman knocked nearly 2½ minutes off his Metamora race last year as he ran to his 3rd fastest time ever.

EPG placed 2nd in both Varsity races. With Melick and Romersberger each being joined by 4 new runners in EPG's top 5 at the first race of the season, there's potential for team times to drop substantially over the course of the season. The Girls got off to a fine start by dipping under last year's team time at Black Partridge Park by 7 seconds per runner despite this race being the 4th of the season last year. And the boys were only 19 seconds per runner back from the Titans 2019 State-qualifying team's opener at Dee-Mack.

The first of three EPGJH Triangular Meets will be Tuesday, September 8 at Furrow Farm. The Titans will host Olympia and Tri-Valley, with races kicking off at 4:15pm.

Welcome to the 2020 EPGXC Season!

EPGJH Titan Cross Country is underway

[AUGUST 14, 2020] – Our Titan runners began practice earlier this week. Thunder, lightning, and strong winds blew through the area on Monday, delaying the start of our season. But Tuesday brought a torrent of twenty athletes who have been storming their way through our first week of practice.

Practice will be at South Pointe Park through Tuesday, August 18. Once school begins on August 19, practices will be after school at Westview Park in Gridley, with a 5:45pm Gridley-to-El Paso shuttle picking up at the EPGJH Activity Entrance and providing service to the EPGHS Link.

Athletic packets should be turned into the JH Office as soon as possible. All paperwork must be on file prior to our first competition.

Our opening meet will be at Metamora's Black Partridge Park on Thursday, September 3. Races begin at 4 p.m.

Best wishes to all 2020 Titan runners! Let's make it a fun season!