

Titan Girls Take 7th at State

Wettstein delivers All-State performance; Roth grabs big PR

[OCTOBER 16, 2021] – After several days of rain, Saturday morning at the IESA State Finals turned out to be a beautiful autumn morning for a race. While weather was not an issue, the somewhat muddy course at Maxwell Park in Normal did not lend itself to particularly fast times. But the excitement of a State Finals event and the enthusiasm of the crowd were in full force.

The temperature was right at 50 degrees when the starter fired his pistol at 9:30am to start the Girls Class 2A race, and the EPG girls got out strong from their Box 3 position.

Caroline Wettstein (17th, 12.41) found her rhythm early, passing the half mile post in about 20th place. She hit the mile mark in 6 minutes 12 seconds, having moved up a couple spots, and at 1.5 miles was still in a pack of several runners but holding 17th and running strong. Wettstein brought it home down the final stretch to place 17th overall, earning All-State honors for her effort—also a 7-second lifetime best that moved her up to the #8 all-time runner for EPGXC.

Sophie Hinthorne (41st, 13.10) ran #2 for EPG, notching yet another strong race. Her time was a 16-second Parkside PR, and she closed out her XC season by running #1 or #2 for the Titans at 9 of 10 races. Piper Zimmerman (67th, 13.34) ran 40 seconds faster than her September Maxwell race, good for the second-best EPG placing for a #3 runner at State ever. Elly Huette (71st, 13.36) ran to a 50-second Parkside PR as she followed Zimmerman across the finish line. Huette has positioned herself as a Top 35 returning runner for the 2022 season with only two Titan girls ever placing better at State as a 7th grader – Julie James in 2007 and Jordyn Cannon in 2016.

Mya Griffin (164th, 14.38) got out strong. Heading into the muddy trail section shortly after the half mile, another competitor slipped and bumped into Griffin, who crashed to the ground. She bounced up quickly, recovered, and got back to work, running through the mile mark at 7.16. A strong second mile of 7.22 gave Griffin a 22-second Parkside best as she finished within 4 seconds of her big Sectional PR.

Alyie Roth (235th, 15.56) ran #6 for the Titans and Kiana Mayne (236th, 16.02) ran #7. Roth's splits of 7.50, 8.06 gave her a sub-16, crushing her lifetime PR set last week at Sectionals by 61 seconds as she ran exactly 2 minutes faster than her September Maxwell time.

Top 10 teams in the 28-team State field were Washington Central (43), Tolono Unity (126), Chicago St. Benedict (176), Channahon (221) Dunlap Middle (245), Rochester (246), El Paso-Gridley (269), Chicago Sacred Heart (290), Washington Middle (296), and Dunlap Valley (304).

The EPG Girls 7th place showing was their best team placing ever at State Finals.

Titan Boys Run in 6th Straight State Finals

Cooper leads boys; Cobbley runs lifetime best

[OCTOBER 16, 2021] – The fall weather was gorgeous, but course conditions were less than ideal after the previous week's rains. The muddy parts of the grass and trail course were even more of a hazard after the 240-runner field of Class 2A girls had splashed and splattered through the sloppy sections. Nevertheless, the excitement of the spectators carried the runners through to the finish line in the Boys Class 2A State Finals.

The starting gun fired at 10:15am, and EPG's Drew Cooper (38th, 11.54) found himself battling to get position as soon as he charged out of Box #30. Nevertheless, Cooper managed to put together back-to-back sub-6-minute miles, moving up from about 75th at the half mile to 38th at the finish. In addition, he doubled his margin from Sectional to State on Sectional Runner-Up Jace Cook from Channahon, beating him by 5 seconds for the Sectional Championship and 10 seconds on the Maxwell course at State. Cooper had finished 20 seconds behind Cook at the Parkside Invitational in September.

Israel Nowark (122nd, 12.42) and Eli Kibler (127th, 12.44) went through the mile together in 6 minutes 25 seconds, and both came back with a faster second mile. Zeke Gaddy (201st, 13.54) ran even splits as EPG's #4, while Marcus Wiegand (216th, 14.14) ran #5 for the Titans for the second straight meet.

Gage Cobbley (222nd, 14.21) and Dean Fletcher (234th, 16.08) ran #6 and #7 for EPG. Fletcher ran to his second-fastest time ever, while Cobbley clicked off splits of 7.09 and 7.12 for a 7-second lifetime best in his last EPGJH cross country race.

A week earlier, the EPG Boys Team edged Herscher Limestone by 5 points as both teams qualified for the IESA Class 2A State Meet. The Titans, running in their sixth straight State Finals, placed 23rd, two places and 27 points ahead of Herscher Limestone.

EPG Girls and Boys Teams Qualify for XC State Finals!

Individual Sectional Champions—EPG's Caroline Wettstein and Drew Cooper

[OCTOBER 9, 2021] – It was a long road that led to the IESA Class 2A Sectional E race for the EPG Titans. Throughout the 2021 season, challenges were met, obstacles overcome, synergy of a team discovered. The final journey was the 80-mile bus ride to Kankakee Community College where a 2-mile grass and limestone trail course awaited runners from 15 schools.

Temperatures were in the low 70s under mostly sunny skies as the Girls race got underway. Eighty-three athletes shot off the starting line as the IESA official fired his pistol, a rainbow of colors spilling out onto the course as the crowd cheered on their favorite runners.

EPG's Caroline Wettstein (1st, 12.50) was sharing the lead 1200 meters into the race, eventually pulling away and cruising to a 13-second victory over Channahon's Callie Hefner. Two seconds later Channahon's Paige Joachim crossed the finish line, and two seconds after Joachim came EPG's Sophie Hinthorne (4th, 13.07) flying through the finish. Four runners were into the chute, and things were looking good for Channahon and EPG.

Elly Huette (6th, 13.11) dueled Herscher-Limestone's Kelly O'Connor all the way to the finish line before O'Connor won the battle by a step, Huette earning a 10-second PR. After Manteno's #1 and a pair of Peotone individuals crossed the line, it was yet another Titan harrier claiming a top ten spot – EPG's Piper Zimmerman (10th, 13.21) with a 3-second PR. With Channahon's #3 and #4 following in 11th and 13th, the team score through 4 runners was EPG (21), Channahon (29).

Channahon showed their depth as they also claimed 14th, 16th, and 17th, getting all seven of their girls in under 14 minutes.

Mya Griffin (23rd, 14.34) came through for her team with a 26-second PR, ensuring the Titans would be making a team trip to State Finals on October 16. Channahon (37) and EPG (39) were

well in front of the rest of the competition, with the third qualifying spot going to Herscher-Limestone (120) who edged Paxton-Buckley-Loda (125).

Kiana Mayne (41st, 15.43) had a sensational race as EPG's #6, following last week's 50-second PR with a 42-second PR on the KCC course, finishing in the top half of the Sectional field. Alyie Roth (62nd, 16.57) got in on the fun as well, breaking the 17-minute barrier for the first time in her life.

At precisely 10:45am, the starter fired the pistol for the Boys race, and the Titan Boys set off on a quest of their own.

EPG's Drew Cooper (1st, 11.37) moved up over the first 800 meters, and at 1200 meters was sharing the lead. The script played out nearly step by step as in the Girls race, with Cooper opening a gap during the second mile and holding on for a 5-second victory over Channahon's Jace Cook.

Israel Nowark (5th, 12.06) was in 12th at the 1200-meter mark but moved up nicely to finish one second after Pontiac's #1 and one second ahead of Channahon's #2.

Eli Kibler (11th, 12.22) was also sandwiched between two runners—Bishop Mac's #1 and PBL's #1. With three runners in for both Channahon and EPG, the team score was knotted at Channahon (17), EPG (17).

Channahon again showed their strength by getting in all 7 of their runners before EPG's #4.

However, Zeke Gaddy (31st, 13.50) and Marcus Wiegand (40th, 14.20) both ran to their 3rd fastest times ever, which was enough to pull the Titans to an unexpected runner-up finish, punching a ticket to State for the entire Boys team. Top 3 teams advancing showed scores of Channahon (46), EPG (86), Herscher-Limestone (91). Host Bishop McNamara (104) placed 4th.

Gage Cobbley (45th, 14.33) and Dean Fletcher (73rd, 18.25) were the #6 and #7 runners for the Titans in the 87-runner field.

State Finals are scheduled for Saturday, October 16 at Normal's Maxwell Park. Class 2A Girls will run at 9:30, with the Class 2A Boys race following at 10:15.

Titans Run to 11 PRs at Delavan Dare Classic

Drew Cooper runner-up in 158-athlete varsity race

[OCTOBER 2, 2021] – The Delavan Panther's hosted the 44th Annual Delavan Dare Classic on a cloudy Saturday morning. A total of nearly 600 runners crossed the finish line in the 4 races.

EPG's Caroline Wettstein (8th, 12.48) ran yet another smart race, running strong and moving up through the field. She broke into the 12's for the first time this season. Following just 7 seconds after Wettstein was Sophie Hinthorne (12th, 12.55) with an impressive 25-second PR. Piper Zimmerman (27th, 13.25) and Ellie Huette (29th, 13.33) ran #3 and #4 for the Titans, as Zimmerman ran to within one second of her lifetime best. Mya Griffin (87th, 15.00) clocked a time of 15-flat, good for a 2-second PR. And big PRs were earned by the Titan #6 and #7 runners, Kiana Mayne (123rd, 16.25) and Alyie Roth (130th, 17.01).

The EPG girls (152) placed 5th of 21 full teams, one point ahead of Elmwood (153).

Drew Cooper (2nd, 11.31) was on a mission to compete, and compete he did. By the half mile, he was eyeing the leader and pulled to within just a couple seconds of Delavan's Coriell Green before Green opened a bigger gap near the end of the race, winning by 6 seconds over Cooper. Israel Nowark (17th, 11.55) came through with a 28-second PR to dip under the 12-minute barrier. Eli Kibler (27th, 12.07) crushed his PR by 43 seconds. Zeke Gaddy (68th, 13.14) ran #4 for the Titans with an equally impressive 33-second PR for a two-week time drop of 91 seconds. Jack Gramm (83rd, 13.33) set the course on fire early, then held on for a 7-second PR. Marcus Wiegand (96th, 13.54) missed a lifetime best by just 2 seconds, while Gage Cobbley (130th, 15.02) ran to his second fastest time ever. In the Boys Open Race, Dean Fletcher (73rd, 15.44) ran to an 86-second PR.

The EPG boys (193) placed 7th of 22 full teams with a 1-5 average time that was 41 seconds per runner faster than their previous best.

Next up for Titan XC is the IESA Sectional Meet at Kankakee Community College on Saturday, October 9. The Varsity Girls Race is at 10:00 and the Varsity Boys Race is at 10:45.

Wettstein Sets Furrow Farm Course Record

Titan Girls, Boys Win Quadrangular

[SEPTEMBER 27, 2021] – El Paso-Gridley hosted the 11th Annual Quadrangular Meet on Monday afternoon. Heyworth, Pontiac, and Tremont joined EPG at Furrow Farm on a warm, sunny, breezy afternoon with 69 runners crossing creeks and attacking hills.

The EPG girls put 5 runners in the top 9 with the top 3 Titans running to Furrow best times.

Caroline Wettstein (1st, 13.20) set a torrid pace early and continued to separate herself from the field and into a class of her own, winning by 52 seconds over Pontiac's Scout Minneart. In doing so, Wettstein recorded the fastest EPG girls time ever on the Furrow course, 8 seconds faster than Ruby Slightom's previous record set in 2017.

Piper Zimmerman (3rd, 14.13) and Elly Huette (4th, 14.17) stepped up with big races, both clocking 28-second Furrow best times. Sophie Hinthorne (5th, 14.40) placed 5th as EPG's #4, and Mya Griffin (9th, 16.03) completed the scoring for the Titans (18), who won the Quadrangular for the 11th year in a row, 33 points ahead of runner-up Tremont (51).

Kiana Mayne (18th, 19.46) and Alyie Roth (20th, 20.00) placed ahead of every other team's #6 and #7 runners.

Drew Cooper (1st, 12.31) came through with a big win on the boys' side with a 37-second victory over runner-up Payton Beebe of Pontiac. Five of the top six EPG boys ran to Furrow best times, including Cooper's 27-second course PR.

Israel Nowark (3rd, 13.29) and Eli Kibler (4th, 13.32) both finished well ahead of Pontiac's #2 with Kibler cutting 36 seconds off his previous Furrow best. Jack Gramm (9th, 14.30) destroyed his Furrow PR by a whopping 142 seconds. Zeke Gaddy (14th, 15.12) and Marcus Wiegand (16th, 15.59) also ran to Furrow best times. Gage Cobbley (24th, 16.33) and Dean Fletcher (34th, 20.09) wrapped things up for Titans in the 43-runner boys' field.

The EPG boys (31) scored a 13-point team win over runner-up Tremont (44).

EPG Runners Pile on More PRs

Cobbley cuts 44 seconds, Roth slashes 29

[SEPTEMBER 24, 2021] – El Paso-Gridley Junior High XC crossed the Illinois River and headed north to Detweiller Park, home of the IHSA State Finals course for the past 50 years. Dunlap Middle School was hosting a 48-team meet and the Titans threw down 8 more PRs on top of the 9 PRs they had just snagged two days earlier.

The EPG girls were not intimidated by the 289-runner field, with the top four Titans all running to 2-mile adjusted PRs on the 2.1-mile course. Caroline Wettstein (36th, 13.40), Sophie Hinthorne (60th, 14.00), Elly Huette (63rd, 14.01), and Piper Zimmerman (65th, 14.04) tightened their 1-4 pack time to 24 seconds. Mya Griffin (233rd, 16.28), Kiana Mayne (270th, 18.11), and Alyie Roth (273rd, 18.19) followed as the #5-6-7 Titan runners with Roth notching a 29-second PR. The girls placed 16th of 39 full teams.

In the Boys Varsity Race, Drew Cooper (41st, 12.39) and Eli Kibler (114th, 13.29) both collected PRs in the 274-runner field. Cooper edged even closer to the 12-minute barrier with his 2-mile adjusted time of 12 minutes 3 seconds. Israel Nowark (147th, 13.47) and Jack Gramm (195th, 14.35) ran #3 and #4 for the Titans, with Zeke Gaddy (202nd, 14.42) and Marcus Wiegand (218th, 15.00) following. Gage Cobbley (226th, 15.11) had the biggest Titan PR of the day, slicing 44 seconds off his previous time as he clocked a 2-mile adjusted time of 14 minutes 28 seconds. The boys team placed 24th of 39 full teams.

Monday's Quadrangular at Furrow Farm is next up for Titan XC.

Titans Run to Combined Team Championship

Girls sweep top 4 spots at Corpus Christi Invitational

[SEPTEMBER 22, 2021] – Corpus Christi hosted an 8-team cross country meet at Bloomington's Ewing Park Wednesday afternoon. It was a pleasant first day of autumn with temperatures in the 60's under partly sunny skies. 200 runners navigated the twists, turns, trails, and bridges on the 2-mile course.

As the 49 Varsity girls crossed a narrow bridge and powered up a 200-meter hill, it was four Titans fronting the field. 600 meters later the EPG foursome were extending their lead on the rest of the field as they reached the mile mark in 6.34, 6.40, 6.47, and 6.50. The Titans followed each other through the final mile in the same order to claim the top 4 spots at the finish—Caroline Wettstein (1st, 13.10), Sophie Hinthorne (2nd, 13.24), Piper Zimmerman (3rd, 13.33), and Elly Huette (4th, 13.36) all running to lifetime bests. Wettstein ran to the second fastest EPG clocking on the course (14 seconds behind 2017 All-State XC runner Ruby Slightom) and jumped onto the All-Time XC Records Board at #19, Zimmerman took down her previous PR set at the 2020 Sectional race and Huette ran to a 50-second PR, the biggest on the day for the girls.

Mya Griffin (16th, 15.06) ran strong, just missing out on both a Top 15 medal and a PR. Alyie Roth (49th, 18.06) came within 10 seconds of earning a PR.

The EPG Girls Team ran to the Titan team course record and grabbed the first-place trophy, topping the six full teams that were competing. Final team scores were EPG (25), Metcalf (50), Corpus Christi (63), Trinity Lutheran (96), Tri-Valley (112), Normal Epiphany (150).

In the Boys Varsity Race, EPG's Drew Cooper (3rd, 12.10) cruised through the first half mile with quiet authority, then began picking off runners one by one. He moved into the Top 10 one thousand meters into the race and cruised through the mile exactly on PR pace at 6.13. He then dropped a 5.57 second mile to finish 3rd with a 17-second PR.

Eli Kibler (11th, 12.51) earned an 18-second PR by running wildly negative splits of 6.44, 6.07. Israel Nowark (15th, 13.03) cranked up the intensity on the finishing straightaway to nab the final Varsity medal of the day by less than half a second over Nolan Lowe of Metcalf.

Zeke Gaddy (24th, 13.47) and Marcus Wiegand (27th, 13.52) notched huge PRs by 58 and 111 seconds, respectively, as EPG's #4 and #5 runners. Gage Cobbley (50th, 15.12) also claimed a PR, while Dean Fletcher (58th, 18.42) finished things up for the Titans in the 59-runner field.

The Boys Team was just 6 points behind 1st-place Metcalf and in a 3-way tie for second, that tie being broken by each team's #6 runner, which placed our Titan boys at 4th of 8 full teams. Final scores were Metcalf (74), Corpus Christi (80), Epiphany (80), EPG (80), Trinity Lutheran (95), Tri-Valley (108), St. Mary's (175), Heyworth (178).

With 9 PRs leading to strong team finishes, Titan XC was awarded the Combined Team Championship, 19 points ahead of runner-up Metcalf. The top 3 teams were EPG (105), Metcalf (124), Corpus Christi (143).

EPGJH Invitational, Take Two

Wettstein, Cooper lead Titans to 2 trophies at make-up meet

[SEPTEMBER 13, 2021] – The 21-team EPGJH Invitational at Furrow Farm originally scheduled for September 7 was postponed due to lightning, and 13 teams returned for the redo on September 13. It was warm and windy for the second take. The course remained the traditional 3200-meter route through two creek crossings and up several challenging hills. 275 runners met the challenge, powering up the final hill and crossing the finish line in front of the barn.

Caroline Wettstein (2nd, 14.00) attacked the hills, as well as the competition, passing runner after runner in the Girls Varsity race until she had just Annabelle LaFary of Delavan to chase across the line. The pair finished 1-2 separated by a mere 11 seconds. Wettstein is closing the gap on LaFary, as two and a half weeks ago she trailed LaFary by 86 seconds. Wettstein's 14-flat (7.03, 6.57) is the fastest Titan time at this invitational since Ruby Slightom's 13.28 course record in 2017.

Sophie Hinthorne (4th, 14.16) placed 4th in the field of 71 varsity runners, and 3 seconds ahead of Delavan's #2. Elly Huette (11th, 14.45) ran #3 for the Titans, clocking a time that was just 19 seconds off her PR set two days earlier on the flat and fast Maxwell Park course. Huette had a gutsy finish up the final hill, coming within a tenth of a second of Delavan's #4. Piper Zimmerman was able to reel in Eureka's #2-3-4 pack mid-race, as the Eureka team went out fast, eventually opening up a 25-second lead over the trio of Hornets.

Mya Griffin (18th, 15.34) earned a Varsity medal for her efforts, running #5 for EPG. Griffin had a blazing uphill finish to edge Delavan's #5 Annelise Clendenny by a blink of an eye (they both recorded identical times). Kiana Mayne (49th, 18.07) ran to her second-fastest 2-mile ever, despite the hills, heat, and creek crossings. Aylie Roth (61st, 19.08) was the final Titan to conquer the Furrow course.

While Delavan and Eureka both looked like they would run away with the team scoring at the beginning of the race, the Titans reeled in Eureka and almost surprised team champion Delavan. Top 5 team scores were Delavan (41), EPG (44), Eureka (62), St. Jude (74), Corpus Christi (144).

Drew Cooper (4th, 12.58) started conservatively in the Boys Varsity race, and then picked off about 45 runners on his way to a Top 5 placing in the 71-runner field, clocking his best Furrow time by 31 seconds. Israel Nowark (9th, 13.18) ran splits of 6.45, 6.33 to earn a Top 10 placing. Nowark ran 2 seconds faster on the tough Furrow course than he did two days earlier at Parkside. Eli Kibler (20th, 14.08) ran splits of 7.04, 7.04 on his way to an 85-second Furrow best, collecting a Varsity medal for his effort. Kibler was just ahead of Trinity Lutheran's #2 and well ahead of Dee-Mack's #3.

Zeke Gaddy (37th, 15.13) ran #4 for the Titans, opening with a 7.43 first mile, and bringing it home in 7.30 for a 35-second Furrow best. Gage Cobbley (51st, 16.24) stepped up to run as EPG's #5, securing a 4th place team finish and first trophy of the season for the EPG boys as they edged Dunlap Valley by 3 points.

Marcus Wiegand (53rd, 16.43) finished 19 seconds after Cobbley, and Dean Fletcher (41st, 19.23) clocked a sub-20 to finish 41st in the field of 81 athletes in the Boys Open race.

Top 5 teams in the Boys Varsity race were St. Jude (71), Eureka (88), Dee-Mack (109), EPG (114), Dunlap Valley (117).

Next up for Titan XC is the Corpus Christi Invitational at Bloomington's Ewing Park II. Races begin at 4pm on Wednesday, September 22.

EPGXC = 11 x PR

Titans run strong at 1,500-runner Parkside Invite

[SEPTEMBER 11, 2021] – Parkside Junior High hosted a 50-team meet Saturday morning under sunny skies. The colorful crowd cheered on runners from East St. Louis, the Chicago suburbs and everywhere in between. The fast flat grass route winds through Normal's Maxwell Park and serves as the IESA State Finals XC course.

Sophie Hinthorne (37th, 13.26) clocked back-to-back sub-7 miles to place 37th, the best EPG showing since Ruby Slightom grabbed 18th place in 2017. Hinthorne also climbed into the #24 spot on the All-Time Records Board, 4 seconds ahead of Molly Holt (2015) and Alana Halvorsen (2011).

Caroline Wettstein (71st, 14.08) and Piper Zimmerman (78th, 14.14) both ran negative splits but were just shy of a PR. Elly Huetter (93rd, 14.26) finished a half second ahead of Channahon's #4 and #5 runners, earning a 16-second lifetime best. Mya Griffin (143rd, 15.02) went out strong and stayed strong, running even splits to a 17-second PR.

Kiana Mayne (249th, 17.15) fought hard and brought home a 93-second PR. And Alyie Roth (264th, 17.56), not to be outdone, scored a 94-second lifetime best. 292 athletes were competing in the Girls Varsity 2-mile race.

The Titan girls placed 14th of 42 full teams.

Drew Cooper (49th, 12.27) notched a Top 50 placing as he ran to a lifetime best, 15 seconds faster than his 2020 Sectional time.

Eli Kibler (108th, 13.09) almost found his way into the Top 100 and almost dropped into the 12's. Kibler did grab the biggest PR of the top 5 Titan boys and top 5 Titan girls—a 27-second lifetime best. Israel Nowark (132nd, 13.20) got tripped up 200 meters into the race and went down hard but recovered well enough to run #3 for the Titans.

Zeke Gaddy (238th, 14.45) stepped into the #4 spot for EPG with a 20-second season best, just managing to get under his previous lifetime best (set October 1, 2020) by half a second. Gage Cobbley (277th, 15.42) cranked out a 31-second season best which was 17 seconds faster than he had ever run in his life. Marcus Wiegand (278th, 15.43) was one second and one place behind Cobbley, earning a 32-second PR for his efforts. Dean Fletcher (297th, 17.10) wrapped things up for the Titans by bringing home the biggest PR of the day: 105 seconds.

The Titan boys placed 31st of 43 full teams.

All in all, the EPGJH athletes turned in some strong performances, with 11 of 14 runners running their best times ever.

The Titans will be hosting the annual EPGJH Invitational at Furrow Farm Monday, September 13. This is the make-up date for the originally scheduled Invitational which was cancelled due to thunderstorms.

Girls 1st, Boys 3rd at Metamora Meet

Hinthorne sets EPG course record; big PRs for Mayne, Cobbley

[SEPTEMBER 2, 2021] – 137 runners from 7 schools snaked around Black Partridge Park at Thursday afternoon's cross country meet hosted by Metamora Grade School. The course winds through the park, into and out of several rolling wooded trail sections, past the 1836 Lee Cabin, finishing on a flat stretch of grass. Race time temperatures were in the upper 70s under sunny skies.

EPG's Sophie Hinthorne (2nd, 14.06) was in 5th at the 800-meter mark, 3rd at the mile, and closing the gap on second at the 1.5-mile mark. She made a strong move and was on the shoulder of Metamora's #1 runner with 400 meters left, then kicked it in with 300 meters to go. The Metamora girl matched her stride and the pair sped through the spectators lining the finish, with Hinthorne just edging out the other girl by a step to claim second overall in the field of 58.

Piper Zimmerman (4th, 14.45) and Caroline Wettstein (5th, 14.46) teamed up again for a beautiful race as they steadily moved up from 12th and 13th at the half mile to sprint past Blessed Sacramento's #1 runner in the final stretch to claim 4th and 5th overall. Elly Huetter (7th, 14.53) had a fantastic race as she hung with Zimmerman and Wettstein for 1.9 miles and finished just ahead of Metamora's #2.

Mya Griffin (15th, 16.20) moved up nicely during the 2-mile run, outrunning Metamora's #4 and #5 by 9 seconds to secure a Titan victory. Kiana Mayne (33rd, 18.48) knocked 2 minutes off her PR set just 5 days earlier. Alyie Roth (42nd, 20.19) closed out the race for EPG.

Hinthorne ran to an EPG course record at Black Partridge, 15 seconds faster than Lauren Shaffer's 2019 time. Team scores showed the Titans (27) well in front of 2nd-place Metamora (50) and 3rd-place Blessed Sacrament (73).

Drew Cooper (4th, 12.55) had another solid race for the Titans as he paced teammate Israel Nowark (2nd, 12.50) for most of the race. The two Titans were in a pack running 10th to 15th place 800 meters into the race. They had moved up nicely by the mile as Cooper cruised through at 6 minutes 20 seconds and Nowark followed 3 seconds back. In the end, Nowark took off after Blessed Sacrament's top runner, having to make up a ton of ground in the final 300 meters. He somehow managed to do so and beat his man by less than a second to grab 2nd place overall in the field of 79 runners. Cooper followed 5 seconds later in 4th place.

Jack Gramm (12th, 13.40) and Eli Kibler (13th, 13.40) ran well and placed about one second behind Blessed Sacrament's #5 runner. Gramm matched his time from Three Sisters Park.

Zeke Gaddy (26th, 15.05), Gage Cobbley (37th, 16.13), and Marcus Wiegand (38th, 16.15) all ran season best times—Cobbley slicing 64 seconds off his time from just a few days ago. Dean Fletcher (59th, 18.55) notched a quality first-ever cross country race.

There were 6 full teams for the Boys race. Top 3 teams were well ahead of the rest of the field, with scores of Blessed Sacrament (37), Metamora (47), and EPG (53).

The Titans will be hosting their annual EPGJH Invitational at Furrow Farm Tuesday, September 7 with races beginning at 4pm.

Titan Girls Team 3rd at Michele Stewart Invitational

Hinthorne leads EPG girls, Nowark places 5th in Varsity Boys race

[AUGUST 28, 2021] – Nineteen schools were invited to Three Sisters Park north of Chillicothe for the Michele Stewart Invitational. The usual course through the woods had been adjusted due to the rescheduled summer music festival. Athletes ran through open fields except for a brief section along a sandy trail which circled an island of trees from Mile 1 to Mile 1.3. Four races were held—two varsity races and two open races—with 447 runners crossing the finish line.

The Titan girls all moved up nicely in the second half of the Varsity Girls race. Sophie Hinthorne (12th, 13.41) was first through the mile for EPG as she battled her way into the Top 20. She remained focused through the last half of the race as well, closing with the fastest second mile of all the Titan girls and picking up 8 more spots to place 12th.

Piper Zimmerman (17th, 13.54) and Caroline Wettstein (18th, 13.55) found each other early and cruised through the mile in 27th and 28th place. The Titan duo remained side by side all the way to the end of the race where Zimmerman edged Wettstein by half a stride. Both Titans picked up 10 spots in the final mile and finished a fraction of a second ahead of Elmwood's #1 runner.

Elly Huette (30th, 14.42) ran #4 for the Titans and placed 4 seconds ahead of Brimfield's #4, while Mya Griffin (38th, 15.19) had a breakthrough race to run #5 for EPG, finishing 4 seconds ahead of 4th place Canton Ingersoll's #4.

Alyie Roth (81st, 19.30) hit the mile at 10-flat and came back strong to finish her 2-mile debut. Kiana Mayne (83rd, 20.50) had a strong finish, passing Tremont's #7 runner in the final 200 meters.

Canton Ingersoll's top trio were each 4 places ahead of EPG's counterparts giving the Little Giants a 12-point edge through the first 3 runners. EPG's #4 gained 9 of those points back, slicing Ingersoll's gap over the Titans to 3 points. With EPG's #5 placing 38th to Canton's 43rd, the Titans (115) placed 2 points ahead of the Little Giants (117) to earn the 3rd place trophy. 19 schools and 15 teams were competing. Dunlap Valley won with 73 points.

The EPG boys almost matched the girls with six of seven running negative splits. Israel Nowark (5th, 12.23) ran to a spectacular 2-mile debut, moving up from about 20th at the mile to 10th at the mile and a half to 5th at the finish, almost catching Dee-Mack's #1 runner.

Drew Cooper (17th, 12.45) grabbed a Top 20 medal and was just 3 seconds shy of his lifetime PR. Eli Kibler (34th, 13.36) and Jack Gramm (35th, 13.40) ran through mile 1 together, but Kibler eased ahead during the second mile. Gramm surged past several runners down the finishing stretch to finish one place back of Kibler. Both Kibler (34 seconds) and Gramm (3 minutes 12 seconds) set big lifetime PRs in their first 2-mile race of the season. Zeke Gaddy (65th, 15.28) rounded out the Titan scoring.

Marcus Wiegand (78th, 16.30) and Gage Cobbley (84th, 17.17) closed out the day for the Titans.

The EPG Boys team placed in the top half of the 19-team field (13 full teams). Pre-race favorites Blessed Sacrament (70) came away with a big win, followed by five teams that were relatively close in the standings – Tremont (110), Elmwood (122), Dunlap Valley (138), Dee-Mack (149), and EPG (152).

Titan XC will be running at Metamora's Black Partridge Park on Thursday with the first race at 4:15pm.

Titans Open Season at Relay-Style XC Meet

EPG Girls Team places 3rd in 14-team event

[AUGUST 17, 2021] – Peoria St. Jude hosted its 3rd Annual Holy Hokum Karem at Peoria's Donovan Park Tuesday afternoon under sunny August skies. A rolling 800-meter course was waiting for 228 runners to pair up and take turns running three times each around the grass trail.

The EPG girls got out strong with Sophie Hinthorne (11.07) handing the baton to Elly Huette (10.18) at 3 minutes 8 seconds. Piper Zimmerman (10.05) was close behind at 3 minutes 15 seconds as she handed off to Caroline Wettstein (9.39). Mya Griffin (12.43) was next into the exchange zone at 3 minutes 50 seconds for the Titans as Kiana Mayne (12.47) took the baton and ran 3 minutes 38 seconds for her first leg. Alyie Roth (13.44) was paired with a St. Thomas runner and tallied a first split of 4 minutes 17 seconds.

Zimmerman backed up her opening 3.15 with a 3.16 on her second split and hung tough to clock 3.34 on her last 800m, while her partner Wettstein ran a 3.18 middle split and had a stellar finish at 3.12, making a bid for the overall win. But Limestone's pair took the win, less than 4 seconds ahead of the Titan pair.

Hinthorne followed her opening run with a 3.40 and 4.19, while partner Elly Huette ran back-to-back 3.33's to finish out her set. The Hinthorne-Huette pair placed 7th, less than a second behind Elmwood's top pair.

Cross country is a funny thing. A 15- or 20-minute race sometimes comes down to hundredths of a second when results are tabulated. That was the case Tuesday for the Titans, as the Girls team missed the second-place team trophy by the narrowest of margins. Top 3 teams in the 14-team meet were Limestone (26), Elmwood (29), and El Paso-Gridley (30). Host St. Jude (39) placed 4th, and Corpus Christi (49) placed 5th.

The EPG boys ran strong and steady, with the Israel Nowark (9.14) / Eli Kibler (9.31) pair battling back and forth with the Drew Cooper (9.18) / Jack Gramm (9.21) duo. Nowark clocked a 3.07, 3.01, 3.06 while his partner Kibler came through with 3.05, 3.14, 3.12 timings. Cooper had the most consistent splits of the day at 3.05, 3.06, 3.07 and his partner Gramm had the fastest opening and closing splits at 3.03, 3.14, 3.04. At the finish line it was Cooper/Gramm in 9th and Nowark/Kibler in 10th. A total of 58 pairs of boys were competing.

Meanwhile, Zeke Gaddy (10:32) notched 3.24, 3.30, and 3.38 for a fine day. He teamed up with Marcus Wiegand (12.02) for a 28th place finish to claim one of the last spots in the top half of the field. Gage Cobbley (13.01) and Dean Fletcher (13.42) ran well and kept all six of their splits between 3.48 and 4.50.

The top 5 Boys teams were Blessed Sacrament (14), St. Jude (29), Elmwood (34), Corpus Christi (37), and El Paso-Gridley (40).

It was an all-around solid start for the Titan runners. Next Tuesday EPG heads to their second meet of the season when the Eureka Hornets host a meet on their 1.95-mile course at Eureka Lake.