

Three All-State Runners for Titan XC

Roth, Harms, Lartz shine at Championship Race

[OCTOBER 19, 2024] – The IESA State Cross Country State Championships at Maxwell Park were held on a sunny Saturday as temperatures climbed into the 70s by early afternoon. The El Paso-Gridley Titans had qualified both their Girls and Boys teams out of the Dunlap Valley Sectional and were slotted for the Class 3A races at 12:15pm and 1:00pm.

After five years in Class 1A (2007-2011) and twelve years in Class 2A (2012-2023), EPGMS moved up to Class 3A for cross country this season. Class 3A competition was intense. Of 894 boys spread across the 4 classes, only one bested 3A Dixon Reagan's Ethan Carter (10.14), while none of the 888 girls in any of the four Girls races were faster than 3A Prospect Heights MacArthur's Graceleen Mabry (11.25).

But the EPG Titans were not intimidated by the quality of the 3A field.

In the Girls Race, Audrey Roth (11th, 12.18) moved up 5 spots in the final mile to claim All-State honors with her Top 25 finish.

Emersyn Harms (17th, 12.26) gained 4 spots in the final half mile to place 17th overall, running a lifetime best to earn another EPG spot on the All-State podium.

Holly Nowark (53rd, 13.08) had the race of the day for the Titans, running splits of 6.35, 6.33 to grab a 2-mile lifetime PR. Nowark passed 42 runners in the final mile to place 53rd in the field of 223 State athletes.

Ellie Webster (103rd, 13.34) moved up 4 spots in the final mile as she ran within 10 seconds of her lifetime best set at the Sectional Meet one week ago. Hattie Meiss (144th, 13.57) was with Webster through the first mile and hung on to run her third fastest time ever. Molly Wiegand (172nd, 14.15) moved up 13 spots in the final mile, closing with a 3:30 800m. Harper Hall (185th, 14.30) ran splits of 7.11, 7.19 as EPG's #7 runner – and ahead of #5 runners from Highland, Clinton, Winnebago, Prophetstown, Rochester, and Springfield Lincoln.

Team scores in the Girls Race were extremely tight with only 93 points separating 1st from 10th. The Titans were among the best teams, with EPG's Top 5 average only 7 seconds per runner behind the State Champion Redbirds of Metamora and only 3 seconds per runner behind River Forest Roosevelt who picked up the 4th place trophy.

The 9th place Titans beat Peoria Limestone by 59 points at Sectionals last weekend and by a whopping 166 points at Saturday's Championship Race – the Rockets being a team that placed in front of the EPGMS girls at the first two contests of the year! The Titan girls closed out their 2024 season in impressive fashion at the State Finals.

In the Boys Race, Alex Lartz (4th, 10.52) opened with a 5.14 first mile and held strong to claim All-State honors, placing higher than any EPGXC boy in the history of Titan cross country.

Russell Erwin (69th, 11.49) ran back-to-back sub-6 miles and moved up 24 spots in the final mile.

Chance Price (72nd, 11.52) *also* ran back-to-back sub-6 miles and moved up 24 spots in the final mile.

Nate Kingdon (117th, 12.19) ran 24 seconds faster than his Sectional race and three-tenths of a second faster than he ran at the 2023 State Finals. Carter Buckley (146th, 12.32) ran splits of 6.19, 6.13 and closed with a 2.52 half, as he flew past 20 runners in the last 800m. Roman Hinthorne (162nd, 12.44) moved up a couple spots in the final mile, finishing as the tenth fastest #6 runner in the state. Dexter White (206th, 13.31) was the Titan's #7 with a time that would have earned him the #5 spot on two other State-qualifying teams.

The Boys Race could not have been closer at the top with Willow brook Westview Hills (107) edging Mt. Prospect River Trails (108) by one point for the State Championship trophy. If those two teams had tied through 5 runners, the championship would have been decided by each team's #6 runner, and those two runners were separated by just three-tenths of a second.

The Titan boys came through with a state-qualifying run at Sectionals and followed that performance by racing their way all the way up to the 11th best team in Class 3A – sandwiched right between two perennial powerhouses, Lindenhurst Millburn and Lockport Oak Prairie. And EPGMS almost knocked off Tri-Valley for the first time this season, with the Titans' #5 less than three seconds behind the Vikings' #5. Finally, after DV edged EPG by one point at Sectionals, the Titan boys came back at State and defeated Dunlap Valley by nearly 100 points. It was an exciting last couple of weeks as the Titan boys wrapped up a remarkable XC season.

Lartz Wins Sectional, Boys Team Advances to State!

Price delivers clutch performance at Sectional Meet

[OCTOBER 12, 2024] – The IESA Class 3A Sectional Meet hosted by Dunlap Valley took place on a sunny Saturday morning. A light breeze floated in from the east with temperatures around 70 at the start of the 10:45am Boys race.

Three of the 15 teams competing at this meet would advance to the State Championship race, but the DV Sectional was stacked with high-caliber athletes and several state-ranked teams. It would be tough to get out. Just a couple weeks ago, race projections had the Titans placing 8th at this meet with little hope of advancing to State Finals.

But EPG's race performances began catching up with their training, and suddenly the Titans appeared to have a slim chance of sneaking out. Pre-race projections showed that after an almost certain Dunlap Middle win, two qualifying spots would remain for four viable teams – Dunlap Valley, EPGMS, Eureka, and Washington Central. Dunlap Valley and Eureka had both beaten EPGMS in earlier competitions, including at the Titan's Furrow Farm home course. The Titans would need to beat Washington Central and either the Warriors who would be running on their home course, or the Hornets.

Alex Lartz (1st, 11.01) opened with a 5.22 mile and cruised in to capture the individual Sectional championship with an 8-second victory over Ty Gale of Stanford Olympia. Eureka's #1 placed 7th, so the EPG-Eureka matchup was in the Titans' favor at 1-7.

Chance Price (12th, 11.37) did not make the Sectional team last year. This year he floated around the 13-minute mark for the first three races, worked his way down into the 12's at the next three races, and then clocked an 11.58 PR on the super-fast Delavan course as the Titan's #4.

With his trainers laced up, Price opened with a 5.52 and then heard someone yell out that teammate Russell Erwin (13th, 11.38) was only 5 or 6 seconds ahead. Price honed in on that possibility. With about 600 meters to go, Erwin glanced back and saw that his lead over Price had shrunk to about two seconds. The two Titans kept pushing each other past competitors as the pair moved up in the 98-runner field, with Price passing Erwin and holding him off by one second as they flew across the finish line in 12th and 13th. It was a 21-second PR for Price.

Eureka's #2 had placed 8th, which narrowed the Titans' lead over the Hornets to two points through two runners, 13-15.

But with Price moving up from his usual #4 spot to #2, Erwin's #3 position in 13th was well ahead of Eureka's #3 who placed 26th. Through three runners, EPG widened their advantage, 26-41.

Roman Hinthorne (31st, 12.19) ran splits of 6.12, 6.07 to turn in a key performance as the Titans' #4. He was in the thick of the competition and near the front of a pack of 5 runners sprinting across the finish line together. Hinthorne, only the second sixth-grader to cross the line, was also ahead of Eureka's #4 by five places, helping the Titans' cause which now showed a score of 57-77.

Eureka's #5 placed 41st, so EPG's #5 would need to show up in 61st.

Carter Buckley (39th, 12.29) was up to the challenge, finishing ahead of Eureka's #5 with splits of 6.19, 6.10. Nate Kingdon (51st, 12.43) crossed seconds later to close out a historic day for the Titans.

Top 5 teams were Dunlap Middle (55), Dunlap Valley (95) EPG (96), Eureka (118), Washington Central (124).

The 2024 Titans continued the EPGMS run of qualifying their Boys XC team to State Finals every year since 2015. This year's squad will race at Normal's Maxwell Park on October 19. The Boys Championship race starts at 1pm.

XC Girls Team Advances to State!

Roth and Harms lead fastest EPGMS Sectional team ever

[OCTOBER 12, 2024] – Sunshine and a light breeze greeted the area's top middle school runners competing in the IESA Class 3A Sectional Meet hosted by Dunlap Valley. Athletes in the 2-mile race would be looping around a grassy field, past a couple ball diamonds, and into a cornfield tunnel before proceeding uphill into some wooded trails. The path through the trees would take a couple more moderate climbs before descending back into the cornfield tunnel and around the grassy field to the final straightaway.

Fifteen teams were assigned to the Dunlap Valley Sectional, with several of those teams state-ranked. What was on the line today? Three qualifying team spots for next week's State Championship.

The starter's pistol fired at 10am, and the girls shot down the field.

Audrey Roth (2nd, 12.14) chased after a fast field of runners. She methodically passed runner after runner, moving into 5th shortly after the 800m mark. Roth picked off Macomb's #1 Evelyn Goc, glided past Metamora's #1 Gianna Domenighini, and cruised past Limestone's #1 Kaia Hale as she moved into second place. By 1.5 miles Roth and Amilia Rebbe (1st, 12.08) of Olympia had gapped the field. Rebbe won by 6 seconds, with Roth crossing the line 13 seconds ahead of Hale (3rd, 12.27). Roth ran #3 for the Titans as a 6th grader at the 2022 Sectional Meet, #2 for the Titans at the 2023 Sectional Meet, and led her team this year. Her splits were 6.08, 6.06.

Emersyn Harms (4th, 12.29) opened with a 6.17 mile. Even splits would match her 12.34 PR, but she wanted more. With a focused second mile and an intense final 400 meters, she reeled in runner after runner all the way to the line, making for a sensational finish. With her final stride she edged out Metamora's #1 by half a heartbeat. Harms grabbed a 5-second lifetime best to go along with her spectacular racing.

Holly Nowark (14th, 13.13) ran a strong first mile, and then nailed a 6.29 final mile to come within one second of her PR as she ran #3 for the Titans. Nowark charged into the finish chute one second ahead of Limestone's #2.

Hattie Meiss (17th, 13.17) sliced another 9 seconds off her PR, running splits of 6.45, 6.32 and competing fiercely as she finished one second ahead of Eureka's #1.

Ellie Webster (22nd, 13.24) ran splits of 6.44, 6.40 to claim a 6-second PR. She ran 2 strong miles and closed out her race by rocketing past the Limestone Rockets' #3 runner just before the finish line.

Molly Wiegand (33rd, 13.53) ran 7.06, 6.47 on her way to a monster 26-second PR as EPG's #6.

Harper Hall (44th, 14.22) finished in the top half of the 98-runner Sectional field, running two minutes faster than her 2023 PR.

The Titans came through with a team race to remember. Not only did they punch a ticket to State, but they also earned Sectional runner-up honors for the 4th year in a row. And EPGMS gave #1 Metamora a scare as the Titans came within 10 points of knocking off the Redbirds.

Top 5 teams were Metamora (49), EPG (59), Peoria Limestone (108), Eureka (143), Canton Ingersoll (153).

The 2024 Titan girls are the fastest EPGMS Sectional team ever. Their 12.55 Top 5 average smashed the 2016 team's record of 13.03 per runner.

This talented Titan team heads to the IESA State Finals at Normal's Maxwell Park on October 19 for the 12:15pm Class 3A Championship race.

Lartz and Roth Lead Titan XC Teams at Dare Classic

Two trophies and 17 lifetime bests; Big PRs for Buckley and Hinthorne

[OCTOBER 5, 2024] – The 47th annual Delavan Dare Classic featured the usual grass loops around the cornfields and beanfields behind the Panthers' Junior-Senior High School. Thirty teams and 600 runners were competing. Race-time temperatures were around 70 with a light cover of clouds and a pleasant breeze. The clouds gave way to the full sun just as the final race of the day was finishing.

Three front-runners were out fast in the Girls Varsity race, with Illini Bluffs' Audrey Dickinson pulling away midway through the competition, winning with a time of 11 minutes 35 seconds.

EPG's Audrey Roth (4th, 12.09) hung on to a chase pack for the first half of the race, before passing runner after runner all the way up until the finish line, when she flew past Mossville's Elleigh Grochowsky. Roth's time of 12 minutes 9 seconds was a 31-second PR, moving her up to the #5 Titan runner of all-time.

Emersyn Harms (12th, 12.35) was in the Top 20 a half mile into the race, faded slightly as she approached the mile mark, then turned on the rockets to run her second mile 7 seconds faster than her first mile, powering past about a dozen runners to place 12th. She was the second 7th grader to cross the finish line and edged out Sectional favorite Metamora's #2 runner by one second.

EPG's #3-#4-#5 pack came through with some stellar performances. Holly Nowark (39th, 13.25), Hattie Meiss (41st, 13.27), and Ellie Webster (44th, 13.31) closed out the Titan scoring in the 139-runner Varsity field. Meiss clocked an impressive 32-second PR, and Webster crushed her lifetime best by 42 seconds.

Harper Hall (72nd, 14.04) and Molly Wiegand (80th, 14.20) also earned PRs. Wiegand took home a 26-second PR by running splits of 7.10, 7.10.

The Titan girls were 42 points behind Mossville at our first two-mile race in August and have been steadily gaining on them. Today EPG fought their way past the Warriors by 7 points to take home the runner-up team trophy. Top 5 team scores were Metamora (81), EPG (126), Mossville (133), Tri-Valley (167), Eureka (202).

In the 168-runner Girls Open race, all EPG athletes ran to PRs – Stella Meiss (35th, 14.48) clocked a 33-second lifetime best; Ryen Glacinski (56th, 15.22) grabbed a 42 second PR; and Pacey Wherry (84th, 16.14) crushed her lifetime best by 75 seconds.

Alex Lartz (1st, 10.42) had company for six-tenths of a mile, then dropped the competition and ran alone for the final 1.4 miles. He pushed himself to a 13-second lifetime best, securing his sixth Titan course record and coming with 2 seconds of the EPGMS school record – Asa Smith's 10.40 mark set at the 2017 IESA State Meet.

Russell Erwin (18th, 11.32) ran splits of 5.38, 5.54 and his 26-second PR earned him the #18 spot on EPG's all-time list of runners, right between Drew Cooper (2021, 11.31) and Payton Romersberger (2018, 11.33). Erwin placed a fraction of a second ahead of Eureka's #2 runner.

Nate Kingdon (30th, 11.58) and Chance Price (32nd, 11.59) had big races for the Titans, both breaking the 12-minute barrier for the first time. Kingdon and Price placed 10 seconds ahead of Eureka's #4 and #5 runners.

Roman Hinthorne (47th, 12.13) and Carter Buckley (49th, 12.14) shared in race of the day honors for the Titan boys, as they chased in Eureka's #5 runner. Hinthorne ran a 57-second PR and Buckley blazed to a 76-second lifetime best. Dexter White (73rd, 12.42) was the #7 Varsity runner for EPG, running his best two-mile ever by 41 seconds.

EPGMS came into the race picked 8th based on times, but the Titan boys sliced 25 seconds per runner off their Top 5 average and left with a trophy. Top 6 team places were Dunlap Middle (60), Tri-Valley (76), EPG (126), Tremont (138), Eureka (142), Dunlap Valley (149).

In the 198-runner Boys Open race, Drew Kingdon (35th, 13.32) ran a 17-second PR, and was followed by Andrew Quam (76th, 14.51).

The Titans will be competing at the IESA Sectional Meet hosted by Dunlap Valley on Saturday at 10am.

14 Years and Running: Another Quadrangular Win for Girls

Titan girls sweep top 5 spots, Russell Erwin wins boys' race in 12.22

[SEPTEMBER 30, 2024] – EPGMS hosted its annual Quadrangular with Peoria Academy, Pontiac, and Tremont. Seventy-two runners celebrated the last day of September by taking a two-mile tour of Furrow Farm on foot. They crossed creeks, climbed hills, and enjoyed rustling fields of bronze before making their way through the apple trees and up to the red barn.

Emersyn Harms (1st, 14.28) and Holly Nowark (2nd, 14.33) ran together most of the race, with Harms pulling ahead at the end for the victory. Audrey Roth (4th, 14.57) paced Ellie Webster (3rd, 14.55) to a 24-second Furrow best. Hattie Meiss (5th, 15.14) completed the sweep for the Titans, who scored a perfect 15 to Tremont's 42. Peoria Academy and Pontiac did not field full teams.

Molly Wiegand (10th, 16.07) and Stella Meiss (11th, 16.08) ran #6 and #7 for the Titans, both running Furrow bests. Ryen Glacinski (14th, 16.49) and Pacey Wherry (18th, 18.18) also ran their fastest times on

the Furrow course, with Glacinski slicing off exactly 100 seconds from her previous best at Furrow. 31 runners were competing in the Girls Race.

The win marked the 14th year in a row that the Titan girls have earned the Quadrangular team victory. The closest matchup was back in 2012, when EPG edged Pontiac by 3 points. Today was the first time the Titans have swept this meet.

Russell Erwin (1st, 12.22) and Alex Lartz (2nd, 12.22) paired up to take the top two spots, with Nate Kingdon (3rd, 12.50) and Chance Price (4th, 12.50) following.

Carter Buckley (9th, 13.49), Dexter White (11th, 13.54), and Roman Hinthorne (12th, 14.02) ran #5, #6, and #7 for the Titans. Drew Kingdon (17th, 14.33), Andrew Quam (19th, 15.00), and Logan Feit (22nd, 15.47) closed out the day for the EPG runners in the 41-athlete race.

Eight boys grabbed Furrow bests, with the biggest time drops earned by Buckley (96 seconds), Feit (66 seconds) and Kingdon (53 seconds).

The Titan boys won the Quadrangular for the seventh year in a row. Peoria Academy had just three runners and did not figure in the team scoring, with official results showing EPG (19), Tremont (48), Pontiac (69).

PR Collection Continues at Dunlap Invite

Holly Nowark, Harper Hall, and Stella Meiss earn big PRs

[SEPTEMBER 27, 2024] – Dunlap Middle School hosted a 52-team invitational at Detweiller's hallowed cross country course on a breezy Friday afternoon. Over 1,500 runners completed the 2.1-mile course.

The first 3 Titan girls ran PRs. Audrey Roth (21st, 13.11) ran a 2-mile adjusted time of 12.33 to get seven seconds under her previous lifetime best set at Delavan on September 30, 2023. Emersyn Harms (26th, 13.18) clocked a 2-mile adjusted time of 12.40 to move up to #10 all-time for EPGMS. Holly Nowark (52nd, 13.52) had the biggest Titan PR of the day with a 36-second breakthrough of 13.12 for two miles.

Roth, Harms, and Nowark, along with varsity teammates Hattie Meiss (112th, 14.47), Harper Hall (119th, 14.51), Ellie Webster (135th, 15.06), and Molly Wiegand (164th, 15.34) combined to earn 10th place for EPGMS. Hall (14.09) blew past her previous PR by 29 seconds

Stella Meiss (91st, 16.07) and Ryen Glacinski (140th, 16.59) competed in the 397-runner Girls Open. Meiss (15.21) opened with a 7.16 first mile and held on for a 32-second two-mile PR.

Alex Lartz (2nd, 11.29) chased after individual champion Owen Riesberg (1st, 11.25) for the entire race. After matching his 2023 PR of 10.55 two days ago, he banked another sub-11 with a two-mile adjusted time of 10.56. Russell Erwin (59th, 12.34) matched his 11.58 two-mile PR set two days ago, while Nate Kingdon (81st, 12.12) and Chance Price (82nd, 12.12) both ran lifetime bests.

Roman Hinthorne (192nd, 13.49), Andrew Quam (220th, 14.04), and Carter Buckley (239th, 14.24) ran #5, #6, and #7 for the Titans, with Hinthorne tying his 13.10 PR and Quam earning an 8-second lifetime best with his two-mile clocking of 13.24. The Titan boys placed 12th.

Dexter White (69th, 14.03) and Logan Feit (325th, 16.32) ran in the 547-runner Boys Open. White ran to an 11-second PR of 13.23.

After running 16 PRs at Ewing Park two days ago, the Titans chalked up 9 more PRs on the Detweiller course.

EPGXC Girls Win Corpus Christi Invitational

Titans collect 16 PRs, 13 medals, and 2 trophies at Ewing Park

[SEPTEMBER 25, 2024] – After a 10-day break from racing, the Titans traveled to Ewing Park on a sunny Wednesday afternoon to compete in a 200-runner invitational hosted by Bloomington Corpus Christi. Runners wove through the park, up and down hills, across bridges, and along wooded paths before finishing the 2-mile route with a sprint down a football field.

Emersyn Harms (3rd, 12.51) and Audrey Roth (4th, 12.52) ran side by side for the entire race, with Harms edging Roth by two-tenths of a second at the finish line. Holly Nowark (12th, 13.49) ran two sub-7 miles, surging to place 1 second ahead of Metcalf's #4 runner.

Hattie Meiss (16th, 13.59) ran splits of 7.00, 6.59 for a 32-second PR. Meiss has run to a lifetime best at every meet this season. Ellie Webster (18th, 14.13) stepped into the #5 spot for the Titans with a 35-second PR. Finishing just behind Webster were Normal Epiphany's #3, #4, #5, and #6.

Harper Hall (24th, 14.38) and Molly Wiegand (27th, 14.46) both earned PRs as EPG's #6 and #7.

Even though Epiphany went 1-2 in the race, and Metcalf put three runners in front of EPG's #3, the Titans put their #5 in front of every team's #5 to win the team competition. Final scores for the top 3 teams were El Paso-Gridley (47), Metcalf (55), Epiphany (57).

The Titans' top 5 – Harms, Roth, Nowark, Meiss, and Webster – ran the fastest EPG team time ever on the Ewing course, breaking the record set last year by 6 seconds per runner.

Alex Lartz (1st, 10.55) and Metcalf's Greyson Ince met for the fourth and final time this season, with Ince having the opportunity to even the score. Ince won the opening 2-mile duel at Three Sisters Park in August, but Lartz came back convincingly to beat Ince at Furrow and Parkside. At Ewing, Lartz caught Ince before the half mile and the pair continued to surge and counter-surge for the next mile and a half, as the race played out like a perfectly scripted epic battle. Lartz had a half stride lead as they sprinted down the football field before he finally started to pull ahead of Ince with about 40 meters to go. Lartz crossed the line with a 1.2-second hard-fought victory.

When Russell Erwin (9th, 11.58) came through the mile and heard 5.58 called out, he knew that if he could deliver a 6-minute mile to close, he would break the 12-minute barrier. And that's exactly what he did – running 6 minutes flat for his second mile on his way to a 32-second PR and with a time of 11:58.5.

Chance Price (16th, 12.22) had a breakthrough race of his own, slicing 21 seconds off his previous best. Nate Kingdon (19th, 12.35) mustered some strength for a final push on his way to a season-best time. Carter Buckley (39th, 13.30) ran negative splits for a 19-second PR as EPG's #5.

Dexter White (42nd, 13.34) clocked splits of 6.48, 6.46 to turn in a 28-second lifetime best, with Drew Kingdon (45th, 13.53) following him across the line 19 seconds later.

The Titan boys snagged the 3rd place trophy, with top 3 team scores showing Tri-Valley (48), Trinity Lutheran (73), El Paso-Gridley (81).

The Titan five open runners took home four PRs and four awards. Stella Meiss (9th, 15.53) and Ryen Glacinski (11th, 16.04) both ran to PRs and earned Top 20 awards, while Andrew Quam (4th, 13.32) and Roman Hinthorne (6th, 13.33) both ran negative splits and placed in the Top 10, with Logan Feit (35th, 15.12) claiming the biggest Titan PR of the day as he crushed his previous PR by 61 seconds.

EPG's Alex Lartz Runner-Up at Parkside Invite

Titan Girls place highest in school history at 62-team meet

[SEPTEMBER 14, 2024] – Parkside Junior High hosted a huge middle school cross country event on a sunny September Saturday morning. Over 1900 competitors from across Illinois had the opportunity to preview the IESA State Finals course during one of four races. Sunshine and 72 degrees greeted the first runners before temperatures climbed over the 80-degree mark at the start of the Boys Open race. However, there were several sizzling Titan performances that unfolded as soon as the starter's pistol fired for the first race of the day.

Audrey Roth (12th, 13.02) missed hearing the starter's whistle intended to bring the 357 Varsity girls to a motionless pause as the race was about to begin. So, she was a bit surprised at the gun firing and had to adjust to her slow start off the line. But by the half mile she had moved into the top 50 and continued pushing through a 6.28 opening mile as she moved into 26th. She continued to pass runner after runner, finishing in 12th place and six-tenths of a second ahead of Olympia's Mili Rebbe who was 2.1 seconds ahead of Roth at Furrow Farm four days earlier. It was a 14-second season-best time for Roth.

Emersyn Harms (47th, 13.41) ran fantastic splits of 6.51 and 6.50, clocking a 69-second improvement from her 2023 time at this race. Harms finished 1.7 seconds ahead of defending State Champion Brimfield's #2 runner.

Holly Nowark (53rd, 13.48) ran to plan, following Harms through the mile at 6.55, and then dropping down to a 6.53 for her second mile, earning Nowark a 12-second lifetime best as she broke the 14-minute barrier for the first time. She placed one second ahead of Germantown Hills' #1 runner.

Hattie Meiss (123rd, 14.31) notched a 22-second PR on top of her 52-second PR from four days ago. Running #4 for the Titans, Meiss placed 1.4 seconds ahead of Normal Kingsley's #4 and #5 runners.

EPG's #5 Ellie Webster (146th, 14.48) and #6 Harper Hall (14.51) worked together for the entire race. Webster cracked 15 minutes for the first time with a 22-second lifetime best as she finished nine-tenths of a second ahead of Tolono Unity's #5. Hall scorched a 3 minute 16 second course best. Stella Meiss (272nd, 16.31) also earned a course best time.

The Titan Girls Varsity team of Roth, Harms, Nowark, Meiss, Webster, Hall, and Meiss placed higher than any other Titan Girls team at this meet – 7th. The previous best team placing was 11th in 2016. Team scores for the top 10 teams were Mahomet-Seymour (103), Edwardsville Lincoln (118), Dixon Reagan (216), Normal Metcalf (318), Metamora (333), Channahon (350), El Paso-Gridley (375), Normal Kingsley (387), Bloomington (387), Normal Parkside (388).

There were 52 full teams in the Girls Varsity race.

Alex Lartz (2nd, 11.00) acknowledged the heat and then moved on, quickly blazing to the front of the 381-runner field. Dixon Reagan's Ethan Carter opened a gap on the field before the 800m mark, while Lartz found himself in the chase pack. Lartz stayed close to Champaign Edison's Samuel Garrison through a 5.15 opening mile, then after some back and forth, Garrison dropped back. Normal Metcalf's Greyson Ince continued to give chase all the way to the finish, with Lartz holding off Ince by 2.6 seconds, crossing the line in an official time of 11:00.1.

Russell Erwin (88th, 12.30) ran even splits of 6.12, 6.18 as he ran in the 12's for the third time this season. His mark of 12 minutes 30 seconds eclipsed his previous lifetime best by 5 seconds.

Nate Kingdon (128th, 12.47) found the 12's for the first time this season, as he notched a 17-second season best time. Chance Price (154th, 13.02) ran a course best by 50 seconds and was just 4 seconds off his season best.

Titan girls running in the Open races were Molly Wiegand (76th, 15.54), Ryen Glacinski (237th, 18.15) and Pacey Wherry (365th, 20.41). Titan boys running in the Open races were Drew Kingdon (64th, 14.03), Dexter White (89th, 14.07), Andrew Quam (105th, 14.21), Carter Buckley (89th, 14.30), and Logan Feit (356th, 16.50). Kingdon and Feit ran course bests by over a minute.

Over 500 girls and nearly 700 boys were competing in the open races.

On Wednesday, September 25 the Titans will head to Bloomington's Ewing Park for a small invitational hosted by Corpus Christi. The four races will begin at 4pm.

Titan Girls Take Second at 24-Team Home Invitational

EPG's Alex Lartz runs to record-setting victory

[SEPTEMBER 10, 2024] – The record books required a rewrite after the conclusion of the 2024 EPGMS Invitational races. For the second straight year, a record number of runners crossed the finish line at Furrow Farm, with 725 athletes completing the tough 3200-meter course. Sunny skies, 80 degrees, and a southerly September breeze greeted the 24 teams.

Audrey Roth (4th, 13.25) moved into the top five after the second creek crossing and passed the mile mark in 6 minutes 41 seconds. She clocked 6 minutes 44 seconds for mile 2, locked in a battle with several girls, including 3rd-place finisher Mili Rebbe from Olympia and 5th-place finisher Bailey Salzer from Dee-Mack. Roth joined an elite group of Titans by running the 3rd fastest EPG time ever on the Furrow course.

Emersyn Harms (16th, 13.55) ran negative splits to notch a 2-minute Furrow best, pulling along teammate Holly Nowark (20th, 14.00) who also grabbed a Varsity medal. Nowark somehow ran to a 9-second PR on the challenging course.

Hattie Meiss (35th, 14.53) had the race of the day for the EPG girls, running to an amazing 52-second lifetime best as the #4 Titan. Normal Epiphany's #3 and #4 runners finished within eight-tenths of a second of each other, with Meiss right between them.

Harper Hall (39th, 14.58) had the biggest Furrow best of any Titan, slicing over 3 minutes off her time from last year as EPG's #5 runner.

Ellie Webster (48th, 15.19) ran took down Dee-Mack's #3 and #4 runners by one and two seconds, respectively. Molly Wiegand (94th, 17.01) was the final Titan to cross the line in the 116-runner Varsity race.

Normal Metcalf's Harper Funk won with a time of 13.06.

Team scores were tight. Even with Normal Metcalf taking the top two individual spots, the Wildcats won by just 20 points, with the next 4 teams separated by only 25 points. The Top 5 teams were Metcalf (88), EPG (108), Epiphany (117), Kingsley (120), and Eureka (133).

Alex Lartz (1st, 11.23) worked his way to the front by the half mile mark, then gradually opened up a gap over runner-up Greyson Ince of Metcalf, eventually winning by 14 seconds. Lartz matched Roth's Furrow best, both clocking their fastest time on the course by 42 seconds. And one year after EPG's Verity

Nowark was declared Varsity Champion at Furrow in an EPG record time, Lartz followed suit, as he broke the previous record jointly held by Sam Bushert (2018) and Asa Smith (2017) by 13 seconds.

Russell Erwin (30th, 12.57) ran a 48-second Furrow best as EPG's #2, but almost got chased down by Chance Price (33rd, 12.58) in a furious finish up the final hill that included two other runners. Price earned a 93-second Furrow best and 3-second season best for his efforts.

Nate Kingdon (57th, 13.45) was just two seconds off his Furrow best, and was followed by EPG's #5 Dexter White (94th, 14.41).

The top 5 team scores in the Boys Varsity race were Dunlap MS (53), Kingsley (117), Tri-Valley (117), Dunlap Valley (183), and Epiphany (184). With scores tied through 5 runners, the runner-up team trophy was decided by the 6th runner, while the battle for the 4th place trophy was extremely competitive between 4 teams separated by just 4 points. EPG placed 8th.

In the Open races, Titan finishers were Stella Meiss (25th, 16.45), Pacey Wherry (69th, 18.25), and Ryen Glacinski (71st, 18.29) for the girls, with Meiss clocking a 35-second Furrow best. EPG boys were Drew Kingdon (49th, 15.08), Andrew Quam (53rd, 15.12), Carter Buckley (61st, 15.25), and Logan Feit (124th, 16.53). Kingdon and Feit both ran Furrow bests.

The largest meet of the season for the Titans is Saturday morning at Maxwell Park. Normal Parkside will be hosting a 62-team meet with races beginning at 9:30am.

EPGXC Runs to Success at Michele Stewart Invite

Titans collect 10 course bests, 5 lifetime PRs, and a team trophy

[AUGUST 31, 2024] – The Mossville Warriors hosted a 30-team meet at Three Sisters Park in Chillicothe on a sunny Saturday morning. Twenty Titans were among the 566 runners who charged through a two-mile course consisting of an open grassy field and sandy dirt trails in the woods.

Audrey Roth (12th, 13.16) started things on the right foot in the Girls Varsity race with a strong 6.43 opening mile, then dropped ten seconds and ten runners with a 6.33 closing mile to earn a Varsity medal. Seventh-grader Emersyn Harms (25th, 13.37) also ran negative splits and took down her sixth-grade Three Sisters Park time by over 4 minutes.

Holly Nowark (36th, 14.09) turned in a 6.56 second mile to run #3 for the Titans in her first 2-mile cross country race. Harper Hall (56th, 14.45) ran 5 minutes 43 seconds faster than last August, earning a 100-second lifetime PR as EPG's #4. Ellie Webster (70th, 15.10) ran 20-second negative splits to run #5.

The Meiss sisters closed out the Varsity race for the Titan girls – Hattie Meiss (93rd, 15.45) running in her first 2-mile cross country race, and Stella Meiss (97th, 15.58) running two minutes faster than last year and breaking the 16-minute barrier for the first time.

Glasford Illini Bluffs' Audrey Dickinson won the race in a course-record time of 12 minutes 21 seconds.

The Titan girls beat the defending State Champion Brimfield Indians by 55 points, placing 7th. The Top seven teams were separated by just 41 points. Those top seven teams were Mossville (151), Elmwood (167), Bloomington (173), Tremont (175), Limestone (176), Metcalf (189), and El Paso-Gridley (192).

In the Boys Varsity race, Alex Lartz (2nd, 11.16) chased after Normal Metcalf's Greyson Ince for two miles, with Ince earning the victory by 11 seconds. But chasing after Ince had its rewards for Lartz, as he smashed Luke Hinthorne's 2022 EPG course record by 27 seconds, running splits of 5.35, 5.41.

Russell Erwin (25th, 12.35) ran negative splits on his way to earning a 23-second lifetime PR. Chance Price (42nd, 13.01) and Nate Kingdon (43rd, 13.04) worked together while both clocking times significantly faster than last year.

Roman Hinthorne (48th, 13.10) ran #5 for the Titan boys in his first 2-mile team competition, looking strong and confident while running splits of 6.43, 6.27. Drew Kingdon (72nd, 13:49.5) and Carter Buckley (73rd, 13:49.9) ran through the mile together at 7.17 before shifting gears to run a 6.32 second mile.

The Titan boys picked up their second trophy of the young season, earning 3rd place behind Tremont and a very talented Brimfield team who put all five of their scorers in the Top 20. The Top 5 team scores were Brimfield (56), Tremont (114), El Paso-Gridley (152), Bloomington (157), Dunlap Valley (175).

Molly Wiegand (5th, 14.59) had the race of the day for the Titan girls as she clocked splits of 7.27, 7.32 to place 5th of 105 girls in the Open race. Sixth-grader Ryen Glacinski (27th, 16.20) kept getting stronger throughout the race, opening with an 8.30, then blazing a 7.50 second mile. Pacey Wherry (47th, 17.29) placed in the top half of the field with an outstanding two-mile debut.

The three Titan boys entered in the Open race closed out the day's running events with plenty of competitive fire. Sixth-grader Dexter White (10th, 14.02) was a terror on the course, clocking perfectly even splits of 7.01, 7.01. After opening with a 7.29 first mile, Andrew Quam (13th, 14.14) almost chased down White as he turned on the rockets for a 6.45 second mile. Logan Feit (64th, 16.13) finished things off for the Titans by running a 2 minute 21 second course best and a 4-second lifetime best.

The next race for the Titans will be the 18th running of the EPGMS Invitational at Furrow Farms on Tuesday, September 10. This 24-team event features creek crossings, hills, a cattle chute, and the 'W'. Races begin at 4pm.

Boys Win, Records Fall at Titan XC Opener

Roth and Lartz set all-time EPG records at relay meet

[AUGUST 20, 2024] – Peoria St. Jude hosted a 19-school meet at Donovan Park on a sunny 75-degree Tuesday. A record field was on hand to compete in the 6th annual Hokum Karem Relay Race, with 356 runners poised to dash through the 800m rolling course. Athletes paired up with a teammate to alternate running an oval trail loop 3 times each, handing off a baton after each loop and then waiting for their partner to return and hand the baton back.

Audrey Roth (9.06) took down Verity Nowark's all-time EPG record by 12 seconds, running splits of 3:02.7, 2:58.4, and 3:05.6. The top two Titan girls' pairs finished within one-tenth of a second, with Harper Hall (9.52) and Holly Nowark (9.46) edging Emersyn Harms (9.25) and Ellie Webster (10.13) at the line by half a baton. Those two Titan teams both finished just six seconds (one second per 800m) off the EPG course record of 19.32 (2023) run by Verity Nowark and Adalyn Solomonson.

The Titan girls placed 4th as a team, with overall placings of the top 3 pairs being added to calculate team scores. Top 5 scores were Mossville (21), Elmwood (33), Limestone (35), EPG (43), St. Patrick (47).

Alex Lartz (7.40) bested Luke Hinthorne's all-time EPG record by 11 seconds, as he blazed a 2:26.1 opening 800m, then closed out his day with a 2:37.0 and 2:36.8. Lartz teamed up with Russell Erwin (8.46) to slice 35 seconds off the previous Titan record on this course, clocking a team time of 16 minutes 25 seconds for 3 miles.

The EPG boys defended their Hokum Karem title, winning a close team competition by six points. Team scores were EPG (28), Limestone (34), St. Jude (35), Princeville (49), St. Phils (57).

Next up for Titan XC is a meet at Eureka Lake on Monday, August 26.