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Tradition continues at the 53RD Annual Bob Warren/Charlie Eaton Invitational

By Jon Kingdon



Long distance runner Logan Farzan Photo
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Thirty-one teams and over 500 track athletes descended on Acalanes High School April 14 and 15 to compete in the 53rd annual Bob Warren/Charlie Eaton Invitational track meet. Unlike a regular meet, there are no divisions. It's an open and the athletes are seeded, trying to get as many kids as they can to set their personal records. Everyone's in a heat competing against runners whose times are very close to theirs so that everyone has the best chance to run faster than they did the last time.

Acalanes

The Dons have had a lot of success so far this season. "The strength of the team is due to the number of returners we had this year; we didn't lose anybody," head coach Joe Escobar said. "We're very strong in the sprints, jumps and throws and we have a lot of freshmen I'm excited about. It also helped that most of our kids do other sports like football, girls' basketball and boys' and girls' soccer."

Leading the boys' teams have been Paul Kuhner (sprints), Kyle Bielawski (sprints/LJ), Luca Mathias (sprints), River Lockwood (sprints/hurdles) and Alex Vasicek (shot and discus).

The girls' team has been led by Carly Youn Harriman (sprints/HJ), Portia Seymour (sprints/HJ/TJ), Natalie Lyons (Long jump), Tori Hyatt (sprints), Sophia Chinn (sprints/hurdles) and Appollonia Walton (shot/discus).

Leaders at the meet for Alameda were Benjamin Brekke (1st in 1600 meters and 4th in 800 meters), Logan Farzan (1st in 3200 meters), River Lockwood (2nd in 110 hurdles), Kyle Bielawski, Luca Mathias, Trevor Rogers and Ethan Torres (2nd in 4x100 relay), Lockwood, Colin Glick, Jacob Boselli, and Tyler Hunt (1st in 4x400 relay), Torres (2nd in long jump), Andrew McKenzie, Christopher Copeland, and Justin Zegarowski (3rd, 4th and 5th in triple jump), Megan Yee (1st in 800 meters), Portia Seymour and Carly Young Harriman (tied for 3rd in high jump), Osanna Deng (3rd in pole vault).

Miramonte

Miramonte alumnus and head coach Andrew Lewis is also familiar with this meet, having graduated in 2015 and was a distance runner.

"We've had a good season so far," Lewis said. "We have a lot of people on board really early, starting workouts in January, so we got a good, strong start and the team has been putting in a lot of great individual performances on the distance side throughout the season."

Junior Asher Patel, who had a great cross-country season, is the Matadors top runner. "Last year Asher ran a 4:18 in the 1600 meters and this year he has improved to 4:14 at the Stanford Invitational," Lewis said. "He's gotten healthy and has been able to be more consistent in training this year."

Grace Bell and Victoria Chatter have been the top runners for the girls' team. "Grace has had some of her best marks this season and she's hoping to advance to the Tri-Valley finals," Lewis said. "Victor is our 100-200-400-meter runner. She went to the state meet last year and she's having another great year."

Ravi Sandhu and Jessica Youn were both undefeated in the pole vault and each won again with Sandhu reach 12'0" and Young 9'0".

Bell would finish second at Acalanes with a 5:36.22 in the 1600 meters and freshman Alana Jardine would finish in sixth with a time of 5:49.01. Logan Letulle finished third in the 3200 meters with a time of 9:55.06.

Campolindo

With the exception of the pole vaulters who competed at Acalanes, the majority of the Cougars track team competed in the Mt. Sac Invitational in Walnut, California. The leading pole vaulters for the girls were Delaney Joyce and Sarah Worster, with both reaching 7'0". Freshman Malik Li led the boys with a personal best of 9'6".

"For the boys' team, our sprinters Josh Meyers, Garrett Nelson, Brendan Commerford, and Kyle Fossen have been really strong for us," said assistant coach Andy Lindquist. "Those four are on our 4x100 meter relay and they've all been running impressive times in the 100 and 200 as well. Josh broke the 53-year-old school record in the 100 meters earlier this year."

The distance runners are led by Alex Thomasson, Alex Lodewick, Blake Webster and Conner McGhee. At the Mt. Sac Invitational, the team finished seventh in the 4x1600 relay and set a new school record. The girls won the 4x1600 relay with Ellie Buckley, Shea Volkmer, Quinn Guthrie, and Kate Kabenina.

"Pinkie Schnayer did well in the shot (33') and discus (111'2") and Mari Testa, is a returning state finalist in the 100-meter hurdles and has also been running in the 100 meters," Lindquist said. "Earlier this

year Mari set a school record time of 11.99."

The original name of the meet was the Foothill Athletic Relays. It was intended to be a floating meet among all the schools and was meant to be used as a fundraiser with the money to be divided by all of the schools that competed. At one point, the meet had been held at Miramonte and Campolindo.

Tim Bruder, who was the head coach at Alhambra High School took the meet over but soon discovered that it could not be held at Alhambra so at that point, Acalanes agreed to hold it at their facility, and it's been there ever since the late 1980s.

The responsibility for running these meets has fallen upon Coach Escobar who was in charge of every aspect of the meet. Escobar, who graduated from Acalanes in 2010, was a sprinter for the track team. Without missing a beat Escobar has picked up the torch, appreciating the responsibility of continuing the standards set by those that came before him. "It's a legacy that I take very seriously, and I want us to put on a meet that you want to come back to every year," Escobar said. "Even with 30 volunteers, plus a staff and 10 coaches, it took a lot of work to set up all the seeding, scheduling and vendors along with all of the things that go into putting on a successful meet."

The first coach to run the meet at Acalanes was Charlie Eaton followed by Bob Warren. Manny Myers, who was third in line after Warren, appreciates how special this meet had become: "I taught and coached at Acalanes in the 1990s and was witness to the standards that Charlie and Bob had set. Charlie was one of the great names in track at the high school level and the naming of the meet originally honored him alone. When he retired in the 1960s, Bob took his place, and it was in 1995 when his name was added to the meet next to Charlie's."

The Acalanes track is named after Warren, an Acalanes graduate who was a teacher and coach for 35 years. "Bob was well deserving of having his name next to Charlie's," said Myers. "He was Charlie's acolyte and continued in the same vein where coaching was kid-centered and track and field was basically your next class. It was more than just an activity; it was a place that you still taught things."

For Myers, the tradition that was passed down from coach to coach has been a key factor in the success of the meet down through the years. "It's the coaching lineage we've had," Myers said. "Charlie gave it to Bob; Bob gave it to me, and I gave it to Joe. Charlie and Bob were exemplary in that they were about the kids and learning about life through track. Track is a sport but there were things that they taught about morality and humanity. Giving back was always a part of what they believed in."



Long jumper Natalie Lyons Photo Jon Kingdon



High jumper Portia Seymour Photo provided



Hurdler River Lockwood Photo www.alexandramathias.com

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