

MCHS TRACK AND FIELD—WEEK IN REVIEW—2/20/22

Mustangs Show Little Rust in First Week of Competition

Week one of the 2022 track season got off to a very successful start for the Mira Costa Track and Field family, with medal-winning performances at two venues: the Zamperini Invitational at Torrance High School and the Crescenta Valley Distance Invite.

Crescenta Valley Distance Invite

In a dominating display, the Mustangs headed up to the San Gabriel foothills and won **seven of the nine** events that we entered. The meet started with the 3200 meters (2-mile). Freshman Isaac Faynsod (10:17) and sophomore Max Ramos-Judge (10:20) spearheaded a 1-2 finish in the boys frosh-soph event. The girls event was combined varsity and frosh-soph, and was won by junior Heather Jensen (11:30). Then the boys varsity, in a performance that is simply awesome for this early in the season, put four athletes in the top ten, with all four running 10:03 or better: Drew Martin (9:39), Parker Stickney (9:42), Owen Franck (9:59), and Sean Alliegro (10:03).

After our performance in the 3200, we followed up with an equally impressive set of performances in the 800 meters. In boys frosh soph, Jack Barrera (2:10) notched a second place finish in his first high school race. Charlie Staszgow (2:18) also landed in the top ten in his debut. Then the girls took to the track and placed four athletes in the top seven. Leading was a familiar face, Duke University commit Dalia Frias, who won the event with a time of 2:17. Also placing in the top seven were juniors Anna Chittenden (2:32) and Nicole Murch (2:35), with freshman Caitlin Haley (2:37) right in contact. Varsity boys closed the event, and were paced by senior Max Levin, who won the event in a personal best (1:58). Jude Graham finished in sixth place (2:12).

The Mustangs then capped off the day with a sweep in the 1600 meters. Freshman Ian Hansen (4:46) opened up the winning streak with a resounding 12-second win in the boys frosh soph. Sophomore Casey Atkinson (5:08) finished sixth. Then, Dalia Frias (4:57) won the girls event, with teammate Anna Chittenden doubling back as well to finish third. Then, senior Seamus O'Meara (4:35) completed the sweep with a win in the boys varsity 1600.

All in all, a total of 22 personal records. And all of this despite unseasonably hot conditions that made for a tough day on the track.

Zamperini Invitational—Torrance HS

The only thing that slowed the Mustangs speed and field event crew in their season opener was a series of delays that led to the Mustangs being forced to scratch their second relay event of the day (the Sprint Medley Relay) as the meet was over two hours behind schedule. And, let me be clear to both parents and athletes alike, **that is extremely not normal**. Even longer meets (like CIF prelims), run on schedule. It was a confluence of events (slow starters, teams not checking in on time) that took us to the point where we had to call it a day before our runners got their second (and in a few cases, most regrettably, their first) running event of the day.

Before that, however, the Mustangs made sure that the overflow crowd at Zamperini Stadium knew we were there, notching three heat wins, and a host of top five finishes in the field events.

The Mustangs speed crew (sprinters/hurdles/jumpers) competed in just one relay: the rarely contested 8x200 relay. The event rewards depth, and the Mustangs had a ton of it. In the opener, the boys frosh soph ran tenth overall with all but one athletes running in their first-ever high school race. They were followed by the girls frosh soph, who crushed the field with a nine second victory. The girls varsity then dominated their heat, finishing second overall in their season debut. The boys varsity then held off a strong challenge from the host school to claim their division with a victory of just over a second.

BOYS FS—Colin Layden, Joaquin Orquiola, Bennett Lauer, Henry Michael, Owen Spencer, Nico de la Cruz, Kyle Simkin, and Keenan Ward

GIRLS FS—Luisa Cervantes, Lauren Crotty, Shelby Wallis, McLean Grimes, Devan Moriarty, Sophie Guitron, Bella Rawitz, and Lucy Jacobs

GIRLS VARSITY—Ella Dvorchak, Candace Harding, Jacqueline Hoover, Jenna Ahmed, Allie Davis-Libiano, Jordan Karambelas, Lauren Gilhooly, and Avana Zenner

BOYS VARSITY—Dario Garrett, Cole Crotty, Devin Benitez, Dylan Karr, Owen Spencer, Matthew Kraskouskas, Roi Clinton, and Levi Laden

The field events, meanwhile, had a great season debut.

In boys frosh soph, sophomore Drew Spencer scored a 3rd place finish with a personal best of 19-7. In his debut, Khai Rizkalla finished 8th (17-0). In high jump, freshman Henry Michael scored an 8th place finish, clearing 4-08 in his career debut. Over in the shot put, sophomore Jacob Goldberg claimed a 6th place finish with a best effort of 31 feet.

Girls frosh soph claimed victories in two of the six field events. In long jump, freshman Stella Traylor won the event with a best jump of 14-11. Fellow 9th graders Devan Moriarty (13-09; 4th place), and Sadie Jun (12-04; 10th place) also finished in the top ten. We also claimed the Girls FS pole vault, with Lauren Crotty clearing 8-06 to take the win.. In that event, we took three of the top four, with Shelby Wallis (8-00) running third and Mia Langstein (7-01) running fourth. Crotty and Wallis (both clearing 4-2) also took another top ten, tying for fourth in their first-ever effort in the high jump.

In the girls varsity, the Mustangs claimed five top-ten finishes in huge fields (the invitational had over 20 schools participating). Junior Claire Knollenberg claimed fifth in the pole vault, clearing 9 feet. Senior Savannah Stroyke finished fourth in the triple jump (30-01) and sixth in the long jump (13-6). Senior Kyra-Harada Alcantara also notched a top ten in the triple jump, finishing seventh (27-10). Lastly, in the shot put, senior Candace Harding (25-06) and junior Ella Mead (24-09) placed 9th and 10th in the event, respectively.

In boys varsity, one veteran and one rookie turned in monster season debuts to score top finishes. In the jumps, senior leader Owen Spencer cleared the all-important 20 and 40-foot thresholds in the long and triple jump for the first time in his career, scoring a third-place finish in the long jump (20-06) and a second-place finish in the triple jump (41-02). Meanwhile, in the throws, first-year competitor Murphy Glasgow took a fourth-place finish in the discus (112-08) and a fifth-place finish in the shot put (43-09). The Mustangs also saw a pair of PRs in the pole vault from two varsity veterans, with junior Zane Ward taking fifth clearing 11-06, and junior Ben Rothhammer finishing seventh at 11 feet.

The squads will split again next weekend, with much of the team heading down to Trabuco Hills for the “Mustang Roundup” cluster meet, featuring a dozen of the best track and field programs in Southern California. Some distance athletes will also be heading up to Palos Verdes High School for their “distance day” invitational.

Week one is in the books, and it gives our program IMMENSE cause for optimism.

-The MCHS Track and Field Coaching Staff