

Class AAA State Championship
University of Kentucky
5/23/15

The team finished on a high note, doing very well again this year. The coaches were very happy with how everyone stepped up, and even though we didn't necessarily always get the finishing places we hoped for, we will walk away from this meet very proud. There was something positive associated with every performer who competing at the meet.

Here is a link to overall results:

<http://khsaa.org/track/2015/3astate/index.htm>

Thanks to the girls who came out to support us and to everyone who supported the team. We appreciate it.

We'll go through each event below and highlite a little something about each relay or person.

4 x 800m relay: We entered the meet as the favorite, and left as State Champs. My biggest hope for this team was a win in what we'd all consider to be a true State Champion mark. We got that with a 9:38.18. This was the 8th best performance in school history and the top time in the entire State. If you go back to 2010, the year before we started pummeling the State with the fastest 4 x 800 times in State history, this mark would have won all but 6 State Meet 4 x 800s from the early 80s to 2010, and was faster than the State record that existed in the late 90s. Lisi ran her fastest 800 of the season and nearly ran a PR (while running solo). Sophie ran a PR, Maggie ran what was near her PR prior to this particular season, and Abbie ran a season-best anchor leg. When you consider they did this without anyone there to push them, it was a very strong performance. This also marks our 4th State Champion team in the 4 x 800 over the last 5 years.

100 hurdles: Keegan ran a personal best by nearly 0.4 seconds. It was an outstanding performance. On the basis of her Regional time, which seeds you in the State Meet, Keegan was ranked 23 out of 24, but ended up finishing 17th out of 24. We are significantly proud of this performance, as it was a metaphor for much of what we accomplished on Saturday.

4 x 200m relay: We took what was a very strong relay and dropped what was likely our two fastest legs, Taylor A and Emily, so that they could rest for their individual events, but for the 4 x 400 in particular. That left us with 2 new girls, Taylor M and Grace, to compete against the State's best. Relays can be a real question mark, especially the 4 x 200, because the exchanges are not very simple to figure out and the staggers can make it look like you are a lot further behind than you really are. In spite of all that, Amelia, Taylor M, Regina and Grace ran almost 2 seconds faster than last year's 4 x 200m relay, and within a second of our State Meet relay from 2013. It was a very solid performance for these girls.

1600: Meghan stepped up to run what amounted to one of her better times from the season. After Eastern Relays, we realized that we were not prepared to run well off really fast first laps. We worked out a strategy at the Dream Mile that allowed Meghan to run a big season best. Her first lap in last night's race was one of the fastest first laps she's ever run in her career, a 1:12.7. If we use Eastern Relays as our guide, then you'd assume she was doomed, because her first lap in that race was 1:13.4 and it did not go well thereafter. This is where Meghan showed great focus, because she basically settled in and ran very similar lap splits for the rest of the race, and managed to move really well in the process. Her 7th place finish was the result of a very good race in what amounted to a very fast field of girls. This marks the 8th straight year we've had a girl on the podium in the 1600, which is a testament to the effort and dedication of our girls.

400: Emily had one of her best races ever in the 400. She came through the 200 a bit fast, hitting the 200 at 26.5, but held on well to run 58.53 – the 5th fastest 400m time in school history and a new Sophomore class record in the 400. She finished 9th, only 0.08 seconds out of the medals, but it was a great race and we were extremely pleased. Emily is now the #3 performer in school history, and only a couple tenths of a second behind #1.

300 hurdles: Taylor didn't get out quite as well as we hoped over the first couple hurdles, but she had one of her best finishes and dropped a personal best time of 48.53, also for 9th. Taylor is the second 300m hurdler to finish 9th in the State Meet, the first being Abbie Wright. Taylor's mark makes her the #6 300m hurdle performer in school history, just a few tenths behind Abbie.

800: We opted to hold Lisi out of the 800 so that she could rest up for the 4 x 400, leaving Sophie as our only entrant. Sophie was seeded as the #24 runner in a field of 24, which is not exactly a confidence booster. Sophie struggled a little with consistency at times in second events this season, but really stepped up and ran one of the best races of the year. She didn't win her heat, but just missed winning it, and ran her fastest outdoor open 800 ever and was 12th overall. For those who've never struggled with consistency, let me say that it's a very difficult thing to overcome, so we are very proud of Sophie for doing what she did in this race. It was a huge performance for her.

3200: We also had one of our best events ever in the 3200 with Sydney Larkin and Sarah Crawford. Sydney finished 3rd and Sarah was 6th in what were very solid, very smart races. What most people don't realize is that this was only Sarah's 3rd or 4th 3200 ever, and only one of a handful for Sydney. We went in with what we thought was a solid race strategy, both girls executed it with near perfection and the results speak for themselves. Sydney has been one of the hardest working girls on our team, but then this season, Sarah has had to work hard at coming back after an injury closed out her Fall Cross Country season. For both of these girls to achieve on such a high level is as exciting as it gets, and we are very proud of them.

4 x 400m relay: Two years ago, our 4 x 400 missed out on a podium (top 8) finish because our anchor leg eased up at the end and we had a team from another heat beat us by 0.01 seconds.

Last year, we finished 9th again. That's remained on the mind of our girls, so the mission this year was to make the podium. They did just that by finishing 5th with the third best 4 x 400 relay performance in school history. It was a very solid effort for this group, as each girl ran at or near their best 400m relay split for the entire season, performances that deserve a lot of praise.

Triple Jump: Molly has spent the last two seasons working hard and improving at the triple jump, only to watch girls she knows she can compete against do better than her at season's end. Her resolve to improve has led to where she currently sits as the #2 triple jumper in school history, coming off a Regional jump that was the third best triple jump performance in school history. Molly followed up with the #8 performance in school history and one of our highest finishes ever at State in the triple jump, a huge 3rd place finish! We are extremely proud of Molly for all that she's accomplished and know that even better things are possible for her down the road.

Shot Put and Discus: Rachel Lancaster has gone from being a moderately decent thrower with no expectation of making it to State to qualifying for the State Meet, and now to being a potential favorite in the discus. With improvement like this, it's easy to be impatient and want everything to happen right away. Life doesn't always work out that way, and so we are often reminded that small steps are still good steps. Rachel has taken both small and large steps over the past year, and her effort over this time has now led to her getting on the podium in the discus. What everyone realizes who follows Rachel is that the question of whether Rachel is good enough to become a State Champion has been answered this year with a resounding yes. The next step in Rachel's path to continued success will be to prepare, not just to become the best, but to be the best on the right day. We're excited to see what lies ahead for her in that regard.

Overall, we finished (tied for) 6th as a team. This is a strong performance for our girls, and one that we can certainly build upon as we move forward.

Thanks again to everyone who supported the team, and we hope to see you all at the Banquet.