

SPORTS



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Few surprises as local athletes qualify for CCS track finals

For 18 local individuals, the 2016 track and field season includes at least one more meet -- the Central Coast Section Championships on Friday at Gilroy High.

Those athletes -- representing Palo Alto, Gunn, Menlo-Atherton, Castilleja, Sacred Heart Prep and Menlo School -- earned at least one more week of practice following qualifying efforts at the CCS semifinals on Saturday at Gilroy High.

In most cases, those advancing were expected to do just that.

The Palo Alto for example, advanced five individuals and two relays. The only surprise, perhaps, was Michel-Ange Siaba advancing in the triple jump with a leap of 42-7. Everything else was true to form.

Senior Eli Givens was the overall winner in the 200 at 22.14 and qualified third in the 100 in a windy 10.95. He also ran the second leg of the 400 relay (with Austin Cox, Thorin Haussecker and Dami Bolarinwa) that won in 42.77 in addition to running a leg on the 1,600 relay that grabbed the final qualifying spot in 3:26.81. That team also included Neal Verwillow, Tanner Newell and Cox.

Junior Kent Slaney continued his solid season by qualifying in both the 1,600 (4:21.01) and 3,200 (9:26.78). In the metric mile, Slaney wanted to avenge an earlier loss to Roman Munoz of King City and did so, but failed to notice Matthew Richardson of Bellarmine coming up on his outside. Richardson got the overall win with Slaney taking second and gaining his revenge.

Palo Alto senior Catherine Yu also continued her strong late-season push and qualified fourth overall in the 100 hurdles in 15.82.

"Definitely a solid day," said Paly coach Kelsey Feeley. "Even those who did not qualify to finals showed up and ran, jumped and threw their hearts out. Our girls' 4x100 ran a season-best time of 49.97 (but did not advance) and our boys ran with authority (and did).

"We were also happily surprised with the performance of the boys' 4x400 relay, a team that we more or less threw together as injuries came about throughout the long day of competition."

Added Feeley: "My young trio of distance runners -- Sam Craig (sophomore) and Reed Foster (sophomore) competed in the 1,600 and Henry Saul (freshman) in the 3,200 -- were all coming off their best performances at last week's SCVAL meet, but unfortunately felt the effects of both a long cross country and track season, however. I cannot express how proud of these young men I am. The times they have posted this season, as well as the poise they've shown, is absolutely incredible."

Feeley also singled out the contributions of Givens and Slaney, who have produced the bulk of the points this season while running 3-4 events each week.

"Kent and Eli both showed up and ran at the level that has become expected of them," Feeley said. "That being said, as a coach, I am incredibly lucky to have athletes who do not only care about their individual achievements, but who also care about their teammates and how much they can contribute to the team."



Gunn senior Maya Miklos was the No. 2 qualifier in the 400 meters at the CCS semifinals. Photo by Mark Foster.



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