

SPORTS



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Surpassing expectations lead to pleasant surprises at CCS meet

by Glenn Reeves/Palo Alto Online Sports

The idea, a step-like progression, is to continue improving each time you step on the track and register your all-time best at the section finals. That effort, which in an ideal world catapults you to the state meet, is the ultimate goal of every high school track and field athlete.

But that storybook ending doesn't always happen. Heartbreak is often the more common occurrence.

That's what made it all the more amazing how many local athletes came through with huge personal-bests Friday on the big stage of the Central Coast Section finals at Gilroy High.

Menlo School's Robert Miranda and Palo Alto's Kent Slaney, two of the top local distance runners, both decided to drop the 1,600 and focus on the 3,200. For the majority of the race the two followed pre-race favorite and pacesetter Meika Beaudoin-Rousseau of Bellarmine.

Late in the seventh lap, Slaney made his move, going from third place to take over the lead. That spurred Miranda, suddenly in third place, to take action.

The junior unleashed a powerful kick on the backstretch to move into first place, a position he maintained the remainder of the race to win in 9:10.26.

"You just have to go for it," said Miranda, who came in with a personal-best of 9:12.12. "It's what you work for all season. Give it all you have. I am so happy that my work all season carried me through."

Slaney, who made it to the state meet a year ago in the 1,600, held on to take second in a huge PR of 9:11.78. His previous best was 9:21.63.

"The mile was loaded, I knew it would be a kicker's race," Slaney said. "I thought I could make it in the two mile if I could just hold on. It came out spectacular."

Palo Alto sophomore Henry Saul finished strong and came in fourth in 9:19.64, a nice ending to a season in which he brought his personal-best down by 15 seconds.

"He's going to kill it next year," Slaney said.



Titilola Bolarinwa qualified for the state meet in both the 400 and 1,600 relay.



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