Historic Success

Boys & Girls Track and Field Teams Win State Titles on the Same Day

Coming into the 2023 season, the Saint George's track and field team had massive expectations for the upcoming campaign. With an unprecedented turnout there was hope for the rare double of boys' and girls' team State Championships. Regular season highlights included Josie McLaughlin winning the 1600 meters at both the Pasco Invite and the Legends Invite in Walla Walla, as well as sophomore Shawn Jones breaking a 19-year-old SGS record in the 800m with a run of 1:54.68 at Walla Walla. The Dragon girls won the District Championship in Colfax while the Dragon boys finished 3rd. Both teams were ready for State.

As the bus pulled into the Zaepfel Stadium parking lot in Yakima on Thursday afternoon, May 25, hopes were riding high for both the SGS girls' and boys' teams. The meet got off to a flying start for the Dragons with the 1600m race. In one of the closest races in SGS history, junior Ben Morales dueled with Chewelah's Cole Foster down the home stretch with the lead changing several times. Morales emerged victorious with a final lunge at the tape beating Foster by eight one thousandths of a second (3:24.381 to 3:24.389).

Then the Dragon girls flexed their muscles. It was a 1-2-3 sweep in the 1600m as Josie McLaughlin won in a time of 5:19.34, followed by 8th grader Bella Buckner and Freshman Regan Thomas. Scoring significant points also for the Dragons on that 1st day were junior Henri Osborne, placing 5th in the Shot Put, and senior Ben Sudlow garnering 3rd in the Triple Jump. Morale was sky high in the Dragons camp. The page now turned to Friday.

The second day of the State Championship is mostly about qualifying for finals on Saturday. In this the Dragons were largely successful. Only the boys 4x100m Relay and sophomore Savvy Briceno in the 400m, who suffered a quadriceps injury, did not qualify. There were two scoring events on Friday. Senior Margreit Galow finished 2nd in the Long Jump. She was joined on the podium by sophomore Kaylee Clark, who only started jumping in earnest this season, finishing 5th. In the Boys Long Jump, Ben Sudlow and junior Robby Witmer earned 4 valuable points for the Dragons with 6th and 8th Place respectively. Now it was time to see what Trophy Day held in store for the Dragons.

Shawn Jones gets ready to add the 400m win to his 800m title

Combined Boys & Girls State Champions with their medals and big trophies in Yakima

The Dragon girls got off to a slow start on Saturday morning, finishing 8th in the 4x200m Relay. Josie McLaughlin and senior Kala Reaves got the Dragons back on the right foot as Josie won the 800m for the 2nd consecutive year, and Kala ran a personal best to finish 6th. In the 100m race, Margreit Galow scored 5 valuable points with a 4th place finish. Then in the Girls 3200m, Bella Buckner endured the late morning heat to win with a time of 11:52.29. She was joined on the podium by Regan Thomas, who finished 3rd, giving the Dragons 16 more points. The 4x100m quartet of sophomores Audra Gliniak, Andee West, Kaylee Clark, and 8th grader Berkeley Hestdalen produced 5 priceless points with a 4th place finish.

In the Boys 800m, Shawn Jones won in resounding fashion, giving the Dragons 10 huge points with a time of 1:57.60. Shawn completed the 800m/400m double by winning the 400m with a PR of 50.15 to add to the boys' total. In the boys 3200m, Ben Morales, fighting allergies, placed 5th to give the Dragons 4 more points.

Josie came back to run the 400m, finishing 3rd. Then in the 300m Hurdles, Margreit and Berkeley placed 4th and 5th respectively, both with personal bests, to collect 9 more points for the Dragons. Margreit also returned to the track to get 4th in the 200m.

With only one event left for the boys, the 4x400m Relay, the Dragons had to beat Chewelah in order to win the State Championship. Running the opening leg was Ben Sudlow, the second leg was freshman Per Sande, the third leg was Ben Morales, fresh off the 3200m. Morales handed the baton to Shawn Jones running the anchor leg with Chewelah significantly ahead. Shawn chased down the Chewelah runner in the home stretch to secure the Dragon boys their 1st team State Championship. The final boys team score was Dragons 52 and Chewelah 48.

For the girls with two events left, the team score stood at SGS 100, Okanogan 95.3. In an amazing effort, improving her personal best by nearly 2 ½ feet, Kaylee Clark gave the Dragons an improbable 2nd place in the Triple Jump. Then to wrap up the team State Championship, the girls won the 4x400m Relay for the 7th consecutive State Meet. Kala Reeves was the opening leg, Bella Buckner ran the second leg, Regan Thomas the third leg, and Josie McLaughlin the anchor in her third finals of the day, winning with a time of 4:12.73. The Dragon girls' defeated Okanogan 116 to 111.3.

This was only the third time in the history of the 1B/2B State Meet that one school had won both team championships. For the girls, it was the second highest point total in 1B/2B meet history.

Thus concluded the most successful season in SGS track and field history. The SGS track season, to quote Shakespeare, was "such stuff as dreams are made on."

— Robert Tyllia, Class of 1994,
"The Voice of the Dragons"

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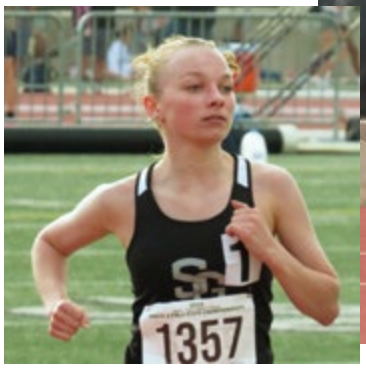
Girls 4x400 Relay State Champions for the State record 7th straight time!



Josie McLaughlin on her way to 800m and 1,600m State wins

Margreit Galow goes airborne in the Long Jump for 2nd place