

# Track and field sets records at CSL invite

Girls track proves to be well-rounded and a fierce competitor in latest meet

by Alyssa Pak

On Mar. 16, at the CSL South Conference Invite, New Trier's girls track and field team had one of their best meets this season, leading the conference by a total of 33 points.

The team walked away with many conference championships, and several personal records.

"That night was all business by the Trevians. We competed extremely well in all four areas of the meet, which are distance, mid-distance, sprints, and field events," coach of 27 years, Robert Spagnoli said.

New Trier competed against four other schools, including Glenbrook South, Maine South, Niles North, and Niles West.

Senior captain sprinter Kate Holly, a seasoned varsity track member, has been on the team since her freshman year.

"I was really happy with how I ran. I was sick a lot during February so my times weren't where I wanted them to be, but at conference I was fully recovered and ready to run my best," she said.

Holly won three events at the invite: the 50M dash, 200M dash,

and the 4x1 lap relay.

The only obstacle of the night was when senior Grace Fagan, one of the fastest distance athletes on the team, got sick and wasn't able to run.

Despite this last minute change, the team worked together to take yet another win. For the 1600M, senior Caroline Fix took Fagan's place. Fix ran a time of 5:13.76.

This not only made her the conference champion in the event, but also set her new personal record.

"Caroline really stood out as a leader. She stepped up and absolutely killed it, winning the mile with a personal record," junior Rachel Weix said.

Holly acknowledged that although some athletes were out sick or injured, it didn't stop everyone from giving their 110 percent.

Running the 3200 M for the first time was sophomore Ellie Finnegan who was the conference champion with over three seconds between her, and the second place finisher.

In the field events, sophomore Sydney Kunkler stayed several inches in front of other competitors, and took the title of conference champion in both the long jump and triple jump.

Senior Yegi An ran a new personal record of 34'4.5", coming in at second place in the shotput.

"The overall atmosphere of the meet was awesome," Weix said. "It was our last indoor meet, so everyone was ready to go out there and push

themselves as hard as they could."

"The environment was super competitive, but also supportive," Holly said. "Each team wants to win the meet on both the varsity and junior varsity levels, but across all schools, you'll also see incredible amounts of support from teammates."

Weix, who often runs the 4x800 M relay said that she didn't have her best race, but teammates Fix, sophomore Caroline Trukenbrod, and junior Savannah Noethlich kept them in the game, fighting for first against Glenbrook South.

They were only 2.27 seconds behind, and ended up second out of five teams. Spagnoli noted that Glenbrook South is one of their closest competitors.

"I was amazed by how hard my teammates ran and how overall we were able to work together and support each other throughout the whole meet," sophomore Paige Tangney said.

At the conference, Tangney broke the New Trier junior varsity record for the 800 M run with a time of 2:31.34

Sophomore Leah Ulrich ran with Tangney, Tommy Solberg, and Katelyn Cody in the other 4x800 M relay. "Everyone ran like gazelles. It was a great race, and I'm very happy with how we did as a team," Ulrich said.

This conference made it apparent that the girls' hard work



Seniors Amanda Stiffler and Chloe Keywell running at track practice | Josellis

during the week is paying off.

They train six days out of the seven, working on a variety of skills, including training and weightlifting. Another one of their keys to success is their support of one another.

Holly said that whether it's an athlete cheering on her teammate during a race, or congratulating an opponent after crossing the finish line, there is always support from the girls on the team.

Sophomore Cassie Fix and senior Natalie Marsh ran the junior varsity mile together and came in first and second, respectively.

"They ran together the entire time, and finished with great times. I thought it was cool to see them push themselves and persevere throughout

the whole race," said Tangney.

"I was super happy with my run because it was a new personal record for me. I was a little nervous because it was my first time running at a conference, but my nerves went away once the race started," Cassie Fix said.

Cassie Fix finished the mile in 5:34.07, both her and Marsh ahead of other competitors by over 25 seconds.

"We all worked together, and many people got personal records," Weix said. "Spagnoli said in our meeting that we earned points in every single event, showing how much of a well-rounded team we are."

## Weighing on the benefits of athlete specialization vs. multi-sport athletes

Some question if playing multiple sports raises risk of injury

by Jack Soble

Athlete specialization - playing only one sport - has become a hot topic.

Is it more beneficial to focus on the athletic activity that you either like best or are best at, or should student athletes broaden their spectrum and play two or three sports?

The subject has come under scrutiny recently, with JJ Watt, star Defensive End for the Houston Texans, taking to the best place to add fuel to the fire: Twitter.

"If someone encourages your child to specialize in a single sport, that person generally does not have your child's best interests in mind," he tweeted on March 6. It created a storm of opinions, some agreeing and some dissenting.

To be clear, Watt was not stating that specializing in one sport is inherently bad. He was merely encouraging the athletes themselves, and not coaches or parents, to make the decision on how many sports to play.

For instance, an athlete wants to play basketball in addition to football and a coach preventing him from doing so to focus on solely football should not happen.

However, that hasn't stopped the debate that has come from it, both on the internet and in person. New Trier athletes and coaches have lots to say on the subject as well.

"It's become more common," Strength and Conditioning coordinator Jim Davis. "As a strength and conditioning coach, I think you should play a wide variety of sports.

If they could make the team, I think it would be great for a football player to play basketball and then go run track, assuming they could keep up with their strength and conditioning along side all of that.

There's something about being part of a team, that if maintained through a year, makes you a better competitor."

Most coaches generally encourage multi sport athletes, but stress that if a player isn't participating in another sport, he or she is required to participate in an offseason strength and conditioning program.

Some players agree that specialization isn't the best route, like one member of the soccer, swimming, and water polo teams. "I like to play sports, it keeps me busy, and it keeps me in shape," Sophomore Bo Barrett said about why he chooses to be a three sport athlete.

However, the opinion that playing only one sport is bad is not shared by all New Trier athletes. Two football players shared their side of the story. "Football is the only thing I'm passionate about," said Sophomore Ben Matuska.

"Football is the sport I love the most. It's the one thing I can do and train for all the time, without taking up all my time when I could be doing schoolwork otherwise," agreed fellow Sophomore Sam Palmer.

Some coaches, though, are starting to see a link between specialization and injuries.

While a couple of one-sport athletes disagree, there may be a relation between playing one sport and getting hurt.

"I don't want to over-assume, but the best way to become resilient to injury is intentional strength and conditioning and continuous play," said Davis. "We have more lower leg injuries now than probably we

ever have, and I think that might be due in part to specialization, hypothetically."

On the other hand, some believe participating in a high volume of activities can also increase the risk of injury.

"All I know is that for me, I've never been particularly injury prone, and maybe playing just one sport helps," Matuska said.

*'We have more lower leg injuries now than probably we ever have, and I think that might be due in part to specialization.'*

"I feel like with one sport there's less chance of injury because you spend more time training [in the offseason] to prevent injury," said Palmer.

According to a January 2017 study by the National Federation of High School Associations and printed by the Washington Post, High School athletes are 70% more likely to suffer an in-season injury than ones who play multiple sports, confirming Davis's suspicions and the suspicions of others who see a link between specialization and injury.

Davis stresses that above all, the important thing is to have fun, and that the student-athlete is happy with his or her decision to specialize or not.

In the end, it's their decision, and parents and coaches have to respect that.

## Boys tennis starts on a high note with first match

First match brings high hopes for boys tennis future run at state

by Olivia Stensberg

New Trier varsity boys tennis started their season with a 8-4 win against Edwardsville on Friday Mar 17.

Team members either cheered on their teammates or played from about 5:30PM until 11PM at night on Friday. 13 of New Trier's 14 players participated in the event; 8 new Varsity players as well as two freshman.

Freshman, Dylan Drier, played alongside senior Nathan Friedman in doubles on Friday. They lost their individual games but team members helped keep moral up during the game by cheering for motivation.

Friedman said, "It was the first match of the season so there was definitely room for improvement. My partner, Drier, and I have a couple strategies to work on."

Drier took a more positive note, saying, "Even though I wasn't happy to lose, I still knew it was a good learning experience for me. It's not good loosing a 2+ hour match, but it's a good experience to play in matches like that."

*'We are just really focused on defending our state championship from last year.'*

While the freshman-senior duo took a loss, other doubles teams found success on Friday. One team in particular was that of juniors Reed

Bianucci and Peter Leutz. Both players have been on Varsity since Freshman year.

The duo won with scores of 6-1 and 6-3. Leutz only dropped one point on his serve.

Leutz explained that, "We have a lot of work left to do and we're not where we want to be but it was a good start to the season and all around a clean match."

Both Bianucci and Leutz plan to put in more work in preparation to defend the teams state champion title in May.

"We are just really focused on defending our state championship from last year," Bianucci said.

Since Friday's match was the first of the season the pressure was light, and focused mostly on team bonding and knowing what to work on for May.

"We are all out there working as hard as we can and it's great knowing the whole team is with you. So far our team already has the brotherhood feel to it," Friedman said.

Since the first day of practice, a brotherly atmosphere has been present on the court. Despite all the new faces, the consistent coaching staff, which has proved best in the state, helped ensure that the team motivates one another.

"Playing for your teammates is so much more fun than just playing for yourself," Leutz said.

Though tennis is be played in singles or doubles, the end result of a players match effects the whole team and their score. This is why bonding and cheering on your teammates is so important.

Friedman summed up their first game as a team and concluded, "It feels great to be back on court with a hard working and great group of kids and overall the match went pretty well for the team."