

Inside Sports: Maryvale's indoor and outdoor track teams attract most student athletes



About 85, or one-third, of Maryvale Preparatory School students participate on both indoor and outdoor track teams. (Tom McCarthy Jr. | CR Staff)

By Elizabeth Lowe

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LUTHERVILLE - The spirit of Maryvale Prep's outdoor track and field team was on display at practice April 28.

"Good job," "keep pushing it" and "keep it up" were among the encouraging words some members of Maryvale's outdoor team shouted to one another from the side of the turf field as girls ran around the six-lane, 400-meter track.

"There's a lot of spirit," said Gabby Lago, a Maryvale senior. "We're supportive, all the time. It's a good atmosphere. I didn't get that team feeling on any other teams."

Maryvale has about 225 girls in grades 9-12, and about 85, or one-third, participate on both the indoor and outdoor track teams, according to Jason Miller, Maryvale's head track coach and a 2000 graduate of Calvert Hall. For now, the program has a no-cut policy.

"It affords kids who may not have made a team to be on another team," said Marce Hughes, Maryvale's assistant athletic director, who estimates that 80 percent of students participate in athletics. "It shows the love for the school."

Watch a video of the team in action.

The roster size allows upperclassmen to lead and help groom underclassmen, Miller said.

"We try to find the next future high-jumper," he said.

The program isn't just about quantity, but quality.

Elizabeth Shuman, from the class of 2010, set Interscholastic Athletic Association of Maryland records in the high jump, and is a senior at N.C. State, with a career best of 5 feet, 10¾ inches. Maggie Rampolla, '12, had similar accomplishments in the

pole vault, and is a Towson University sophomore, with a best of 12-6.

At practice April 28, Miller instructed a handful of his fastest distance runners before they began a two-mile tempo run.

"It's not a race," Miller said. "It can't be sub-12 (minutes). You've got to work on the pacing."

Lago, a distance runner and team captain, has been a member of the indoor team since her sophomore year and the outdoor team since her junior year. A varsity field hockey player for four years, she initially joined track just to stay in shape.

"I fell in love with the sport and the team," she said.

Lago's teammates include underclassmen, such as freshman Bryana Chambers, who played junior varsity volleyball last fall, then joined the indoor and outdoor teams "to try something different."

"I enjoyed learning how to do hurdles and (the) long jump," said Chambers, who noted she has improved with help from her teammates. "At one point they were at the same level I was."

Junior Kennedy Hunke joined the indoor team her freshman year and the outdoor team her sophomore year, following friends.

Hunke said if one of her events, shot put and discus, comes at the end of a meet, she can count on her teammates for encouragement.

"The whole team comes over to cheer you on," she said.

The season ends May 10, at the IAAM championships at Archbishop Spalding.

"We try to get as many girls as we can involved," Miller said.

"Jason makes sure everyone participates," Lago said. "He makes sure you get a fair chance."

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