

Mount de Sales finishes strong to take another track and field title; Gilmore shines on boys' side

SEVERN - Prior to the 1,600-meter relay at the Interscholastic Athletic Association of Maryland track and field championships, the Mount de Sales Academy quartet of Grace Flynn, Jordan Harris, Sydney Parsons and Bella Whittaker each placed a hand around the baton and said a Hail Mary.

The prayer is part of the program's routine rather than an act of athletic desperation, as the Sailors had already clinched another IAAM A Conference championship.

Mount de Sales nonetheless went out with another first-place finish, to cap a 195-175 victory over McDonogh at the championship meet at Archbishop Spalding High School May 11.

The competition was not without suspense, as the Sailors trailed after 12 events. Over the last six, however, as a couple of injuries kept McDonogh from holding form, Mount de Sales pretty much met expectations for co-coaches Steve Weber and Gene Williams.

"I showed him the figures (projections) when we were down, which had us winning, but he didn't believe it," Weber said of his coaching partner. "I've been accused of being an 'outright dreamer.' I prefer 'possibilist,' if that's a word. However you describe what happened, we became a powerhouse in those last six events."

In order, here's what the girls from De Sales did:

- Seeded third in the 400 relay, the Sailors saw senior Edeline Davies go from fourth to first on the anchor to win in 50.30.
- Third-fastest in the prelims of the open 400, Whittaker, a junior, broke a 14-year-old meet record with a personal best of 54.71.
- In the 300 hurdles, an event McDonogh expected to win, it settled for a fifth

place while Alexis Boyko, Lexi Hamilton and Keelin Becker went 2-3-4 for the Sailors.

- Freshman Juliette Whittaker, Bella's sister, won the 800 in 2:10.16, breaking the meet record set by the Sailors' Jessica Harris (now at Notre Dame) in 2014. Samantha Facius finished fourth. (The two had already delivered maximum points in the 1,600 and 3,200, trading victories, and teaming on the 3,200 relay.
- Bella Whittaker and Davies went 2-3 in the 200, where the Sailors surprisingly outscored McDonogh.
- Finally, on the 1,600 relay, Whittaker got the baton in third but delivered a 56-second split to bring de Sales home in 4:03.24, completing a sweep of the relays.

"Our girls did a great job," Williams said.

How deep is Mount de Sales?

It scored in every event, no small feat for a program which doesn't have a track and has to shuttle to Mount St. Joseph High School for many of its workouts. The Sailors aren't just deep, they are good, as Juliette Whittaker's seasonal best of 2:07.96 in the 800 was the nation's third-fastest at the time.

In other girls' events, Suzie Alborno of Notre Dame Preparatory won the pole vault with a clearance of 10 feet, 6 inches.

Day two of the IAAM championships was run concurrently with the boys' Maryland Interscholastic Athletic Association meet, which saw Loyola Blakefield senior Camden Gilmore sweep the distance races.

Two days after he had won the 3,200 in 9:18.65, the Georgetown University-bound senior took the 1,600 in 4:14.66 and the 800 in 1:54.27, both personal bests. Both races were highly competitive, as four boys went under 4:19 in the 1,600 and five broke 1:58 in the 800. Matt Jablonski executed the same triple for the Dons in 2010.

Calvert Hall, Mount St. Joseph and Loyola Blakefield followed Gilman in the team standings. For the Cardinals, Amondo Lemmon won the 400 in 50.29, Thomas Smith took the 300 hurdles in 39.18 and the two teamed on the victorious 1,600 relay.

Teammate Luke Whitty won the discus with a toss of 143-9.

Mount St. Joseph got wins from juniors Teddy Wimberly in the 100 (11.01) and Donte Thornton in the long jump (22-2¾), and the two teamed on the winning 400 relay. Loyola Blakefield's Aaron Ray took the 200 in 22.73.

Archbishop Curley junior Ian Hoffman cleared 13-9 in the pole vault to best Brandon Shin of Spalding, who went 13-6.

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Email Paul McMullen at pmcmullen@CatholicReview.org

Kevin J. Parks contributed to this article.