

Freshmen

We finished 10th out of 18 teams today. Five out of the 12 of you PR'd. Today was a good day. **Devin Gibbons** came to run today. Gibbons led the charge for the Aztecs this week. I think he learned some very valuable lessons. It's not easy taking charge of the race, but he is learning. A lot of the varsity guys are commenting about him as he has now joined the front pack on some of the longer runs during the week. Devin had two good speed workouts this week, ran 8 miles on Thursday with the varsity guys, and he finds himself leading the freshmen team. Either he ran out of steam or zoned out at the top of the 2nd hill...He set a good pace early on and led the squad for 2.5 miles before fading to third man. A personal record with his performance. Nice work Devin. He knows he could have run faster, as he almost made a wrong turn that cost him a few seconds. That won't ever happen again on this course, right?

Nathan Wilch and **David Tecker** continue to represent the Aztecs well. David is a little banged up, and has a knee that's a little achy most days, but there was no way he was missing this race. Especially in his new Kilkennys. He's a tough competitor, and he knows his team needs him. He ran the 2nd fastest time of his life, and missed a PR by 1 second. He was also within 5 seconds of earning the last medal. There have been runners in Esperanza school history who have gone from not medaling freshmen year, to medaling at the sophomore level, to medaling at the varsity level, and finally leading the team to a top ten finish in county.

Nathan Wilch continues to run smart races, as he conserved his energy and pushed the last half of the course. He turned it on big at the end to finish in 30th place, 18:55. An 8 second Pr. First freshmen under 19 minutes. Who's next?

Parker Shapen is starting to put two and two together. It's very easy to run a personal best when your Pr going into the race is 24:11. Parker has been hanging on longer in practice, and the

turnover is starting to show in the speed workouts. He just ran 23:31 for a 40 second PR. Keep working hard, and don't settle for back of the pack. Keep moving up. Who knows where you may be 3 years from now on this team.

Anthony Robert continues to break barriers. The last time Anthony was at Irvine Park, he dropped BIG TIME breaking 30 minutes, Anthony ran 28:01. Well today, Anthony ended up crossing the line in 27:41. A 20 second PR. Anthony, your goal at Apache Invite is run that first mile at 9:00 minute pace, and if you feel good, I want you to press a little more and try and pick people off. Great work today!

Sophomores

Blake Harris is the real deal. I gave him a race plan before the race, and he took it to heart. Two minutes in, Blake was on the shoulders of two Servite runners who quickly found themselves swallowed up by the pack before the mile mark. But not Queen Blake. With his signature Blonde mop bouncing up and down, Blake came off the hill hot, leading the race. Wow.

I'm glad you had the opportunity to run in the front of the race for once. Chasing the bike is something not a lot of runners get to experience. For next time, sit back, observe your competition. Respect the Brea uniform, Mattern has a good thing going over there and his runners are strong competitors. I would have much rather you sat back, waiting a little patiently. Sit on the Brea kid's shoulder for a few minutes, test him, if he goes with you, just run with him, or right off of him, having him break the wind for you. Leading the race uses more energy. Running is all about the rhythm. It's much easier to take the lead later in the race than leading from the start. Sit and wait next time. Break the runners in the last half of the race. I bet if you had run a little more conservative in the beginning,

emerging to the front at the mile mark?...you wouldn't have been passed by those final two runners down the home stretch. Great race nonetheless, Blake.

Andrew Chapin runs another PR. He was our 5th man 2 minutes in, but midway through the race he emerged as our 2nd man, running two-a-breast with teammate **Tim Romero**. Andrew's superior build and natural leg speed helped him put 20 seconds on Tim Romero in the last mile. However, Tim still has Andrew by 20 seconds, as he's run 18:27 this season. I hope the two face each other again this season.

Varsity

It's about time! We held off on the speed workouts and we killed ourselves with the cross fit. We're starting to look good in workouts. More importantly, we're looking like a team. We came to race today. First place. BIG-A\$\$ trophy. We got momentum now. So many good things happened out there today. Where to start.....

How about **Brandon Powell**. Sportin' some brand new kicks, given a race plan, he executed it beautifully. Steven helped Brandon out a lot. He pulled him up and down that first set of hills, forcing Brandon to go with him. We had 3 runners in the top 6 coming off the hill. THIS IS WHAT WE NEED. We need all three of you working together, pushing and pulling. We need to run in this pack every day. In both workouts and races. The three of you need to run together the first half of the remaining races. After that we go with whoever feels good on that particular day takes the lead. I need the three of you focused on Foothill's top runners, and Villa Park's 2nd man.

Imagine as if we're a train. The guys in the front are pulling the guys in the back. The train moves forward at a faster rate with the guys in the back pushing. League Finals is a few weeks away. This was a nice win. **Steven Mosqueda** took Brandon up the first hill. Both were around 20th-30th at the start of the climb, but less than a minute later they emerged into the top 10. That is how you run a downhill.

Josh Park knows how important he is to this team. It's hard to lead up front but Josh thrives at taking on the burden. He knows what he needs to do to keep himself healthy. After visiting Hands On Chiropractic on Monday evening after a failed Monday workout (knee pain), Josh had no pain on Wednesday's speed workout and killed it. Even though Brandon edged Josh right in the final moments of the race, I know Josh is happy for him. It means our team just got stronger, as we now have three guys who have

Logan Fry latched on to the train and kept Brandon and Steven in sight. It's a matter of sticking with them from the start and hanging on. Logan was in the top 20 the entire race, finishing as our 4th man. It will come. I yelled "ONE MORE", and Logan got another one right as he crossed the finish line. That is how you finish a race.

We need a 5th man to emerge. Is it 16:24 man Dakota? Will it be sophomore Blake Harris? Or will C Harris, A.K.A. "The Manimal", run confident on Logan's shoulder like he did all last year. You're where you need to be Chris. Put yourself in the mix from the start. Believe.

Junior Varsity

Yes. I was very pleased with how we ran today. We had three of you medal, and we finished 5th out of 20 teams. I made a comment earlier today about how every single runner on the JV squad has a PR in the 17 minute range (with the exception of Jeong who has run 18:00s on several occasions).

Logan Welty ran strong. I think he likes this course. This was his second time this season under 17:30. At one point Logan was in 9th/10th place. He ended up finishing 14th and there was no way Logan was going to give in. The last three races Logan has finished first, sixth, and first. Logan, you gotta believe you can run fast on other courses. In all honesty, you should be thinking sub 17:30 at Mt. Sac. If you can do that, you got 16:40s in the tank on a fast course. Just do it. I think you have your pre-race

ritual figured out. I'm going to let you do what you need to do to get as mentally prepared as you were today. Excellent job.

Nico Magana. The funny thing about this sport, is that you really have no idea how you are doing until it's over. There is no half time. There are no potty breaks. The crack of the gun, the commotion of the race and the rhythm of the crowd. Nico found out that he finished 41st place, less than a second away from the last medal. I bet if I had told him that top 40 medal, and that if he just pressed a little sooner, he could have done it. That's the downside of this sport. There is no time out. You put your faith in your coach and your training, and you just try and do your best on race day. I bet Nico can think of a handful of places where he could have made up that single second throughout the race. That thought is fresh in his head, and I hope it makes him hungry. Mt. Sac is a great course. I think you will enjoy it.

Last but not least, Maxwell Ellington. He too was sporting a new pair of kicks. He's back. Max had a weird breathing thing come on at the tail end of summer, and while he was running with varsity, his times were way off the back. Max hasn't stopped pressing. If anything, this is a great sign for our JV team as Max finished as the #1 man numerous times last year as a junior. Max worked his way back into the top 5 today and busted a huge season PR, running 18:03. I believe this is a course PR for him, and this is the 3rd fastest time of his career. 3 weeks and 3 more races. Make it happen.

Athlete of Meet

Freshmen Devin Gibbons for running with guts? Sophomore Blake Harris for learning his 4th place finish? What about Logan Welty and another solid performance? Athlete of the Meet has to be Brandon Powell. We took a step forward in the right direction today. Let's keep it moving.