

# Wylie East and Plano East continue track and field season

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The Wylie East Raiders and Plano East Panthers were busy over the week continuing their track and field seasons.

Wylie East hosted the Mike Williams Invitational while Plano East traveled to Prosper to compete in the Prosper Dan Christie Relays.

## Mike Williams Invitational

In the boys 100-meter dash, Kory Boyd (11.21) and Jamal Olford (11.21) won the silver and the bronze, respectively. Kevin Brown finished in sixth (11.74).

Boyd finished in first in the boys 200-meter dash (21.73). His teammates Luis Ainsworth (22.33) and Olford (22.61) finished in third and fourth. Ainsworth also won the gold in the boys 400-meter dash (50.95).

Benjamin Geer (4:51.36), Logan Taber (4:52.01) and Keigan Trussell (4:55.71) finished in second, third and fourth in the boys 1600-meter run. Taber and Trussell also finished in third and fourth in the boys 3200-meter run (10:38.47; 10:40.88, respectively).

Celdon Gooch finished in fourth in the boys 110-meter hurdles (17.62).

Jake Kortcamp won the bronze in the boys 300-meter hurdles (42.68). Gooch finished in fourth (43.74).

Wylie East's boys 4x400-meter relay team won the silver (3:31.77).

Daniel Okonkwo won the bronze for Wylie East in the boys shot put (44'10.50").

Nash Chapman finished in fourth in the boys discus (117'04"). He was followed by his teammates Luke Allen (113'00") and Jordan Grogan (107'04") in fifth and sixth

place.

Howard Fisher finished in eighth place for Wylie East in the boys high jump (5'06").

Jaxson Gonzales won the gold in the boys pole vault (11'0").

Gooch finished in second in the boys long jump (20'05.50") with Aiden Ruiz finishing in fourth (20'01.25"). Gooch was also a third-place finisher in the boys triple jump (38'10").

In the girls 100-meter run, Maranata Tadesse finished in fifth to lead the Lady Raiders (13.09).

Shelby Jackson finished in seventh in the girls 200-meter (27.51).

Oluwabusayomi Ojo finished in fourth in the girls 800-meter run (2:38.61). She also finished in fifth in the girls 1600-meter run (5:53.87).

Layla Talbott led the Lady Raiders in the 3200-meter run with a fifth-place finish

(13:05.93). Alexis Schmidt was right behind her in sixth (13:08.18).

Kaylin Caruso won the silver in the girls 100-meter hurdles (15.34). Ava Bradshaw also won the silver in the girls 300-meter hurdles (49.02).

The Wylie East girls 4x100-meter relay team finished in second place (50.32) as well as in second in the 4x200-meter relay (1:47.37).

Kerbie Cash got fifth place in the girls shot put (30'04"). Cash also got fourth place in the girls discus (74'02"). Le'Aire Nicks finished in fifth in the girls discus, as well (73'05").

Maranata Tadesse finished in third in the girls long jump (16'04.75).

## Prosper Dan Christie Relays

Quincy Baggett won the bronze for Plano East in the boys 100-meter dash (11.13). Jaylon Hatcher won the gold

for the Panthers in the 200-meter dash (22.01). Bryce Dixon finished in fifth (23.04).

Donovan Bush finished in 13th in the boys 1600-meter run (4:39.70) to lead the Panthers.

Andrew Earls finished in fifth in the boys 300-meter hurdles (41.99).

The team of Ezra O'Neal III, Doryian Marshall, Baggett and Hatcher won the gold in the boys 4x100-meter relay (41.42).

Plano East's Noah Gonzales, Earls, Matthias Bessey and Bush finished in second place in the distance melody relay (11:16.53).

O'Neal III won the bronze in the boys long jump (21'06.25). Hatcher placed in fifth in the same event (21'03"). O'Neal was also a first-place finisher in the boys triple jump (44'11").

Janiya Richardson (12.26) and Athena Hayes (12.39) led

the way for the Lady Panthers in the girls 100-meter dash, finishing in second and fifth, respectively. Richardson (25.23) and Hayes (25.55) were also top-10 finishers in the girls 200-meter dash, this time in fourth and eighth, respectively. Those two also placed well in the girls 400-meter dash. Richardson got sixth (59.55) while Hayes finished in eighth (1:00.03).

Meghan Ledoux finished in eighth in the girls 3200-meter run (12:18.33).

Heather Waters finished in 11th in the girls 100-meter hurdles (18.63). She also finished in ninth in the girls 300-meter hurdles (49.92).

Dyan Tecuatl, Ava Arvizu, Callie Willis and Ledoux won the bronze in the distance melody relay (14:01.67).

Hayes won the gold in the girls high jump, continuing her impressive meet (5'02").



Courtesy Photo

**Avery Quiroga** qualified for state as the most outstanding lifter in the light platform for the Wylie Pirates powerlifting team.



Courtesy Photo

**Emily Phillips** was named the most outstanding lifter for the Wylie Pirates at the regional meet on Wednesday, March 1.

## Pirates continue powerlifting dominance

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She set a regional record with a 300-pound bench press, also winning the outstanding bench press award. Mitchell also

qualified for state last season, placing second at state.

Lizzie Ayala won the 97-pound weight class for Wylie East, lifting 540 total pounds and qualifying for state as well.

Other state qualifiers, who

either finished top two in their respective weight classes or reached the benchmark qualifying weight, included Natalie Crim, Jaedyn Smith, Alexandra Nichols, Averee Bontrager, Grace Kalu, Mia Kelly, Ailaynee Rodriguez, Mackenzie Lark, Tracy To, Kaitlyn Garcia-Allen, Kendall Nalley, Briana Webb and Emilie Guggenberger all qualified for the state meet.

Fallon Sanders, Naomi Williams Abigail Scoble and

Samantha Schwarz won their respective weight classes to qualify, along with Phillips and Quiroga. The Pirates 22 qualifiers in 2023 is an increase from the 16 competitors they sent last season, where they placed third overall in the state meet. In 2021, the team also had 16 qualifiers and finished second overall.

Wylie hopes to win its first powerlifting state championship this season.

## Lady Raiders unbeaten with five games remaining

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quickly," Striker said. "We were ready to go from the moment the goal went in, and we knew we would score again. It was just one goal and we knew it wasn't going to set us all the way back. We're confident in what we can do."

Striker has been in the Lady Raiders program for several years now, as one of the most experienced players on the team. She knew this team was talented but didn't realize how special the defense could be this season.

"It's something we haven't really seen before," defender Alyssa Striker said. "We communicate really well, and we have a great connection on the field. There's no split between us. I don't think it's just our defense that allows us to be this good. We're not afraid to score or shoot on offense, which allows us to be aggressive on both sides of the ball and it helps us win games."

Wylie East took a new approach this offseason to training, hoping it will help the product on the field. Despite being one of the best programs in the area for the last few years, Christensen said he wanted to create a system that would allow players to occupy almost any position on the field. As he moved players around the field and had them develop their games, it's only made them better soccer players.

"This is my first year on defense and for a lot of people it's been their year at a new position," Kayla Martinez said. "It's allowed us all to see the game a different way and practice rounding out our game and improving every day. It's challenged me to explore how to grow and be better."



Tina Lopez/C&S Media

**Kylee Kuykendall** protects the ball in Wylie East's 10-0 win over Garland on Tuesday, Feb. 28.

While the defense is putting up record-setting numbers, many of the players were quick to credit the offense for a lot of their success. The team is averaging 6.4 goals per game, holding the ball for long stretches of time. While they have been able to dominate stretches of the game, the defense is always prepared to help the offense out as well.

"It's always about being on our toes no matter what," defender Alyssa Cano said. "Nobody is perfect and the ball is eventually going to come back our way at least once a game, so we have to be prepared for those moments and capitalize when they come our way."

Moving the players around the field has also built solid team chemistry within the roster. Everyone understands each other's assignments, and it makes work-

ing together easier as a team.

"I think the main part of it is the communication between the backline," Kylee Kuykendall said. "Every day, whether in practice or a game we work to win and work relentlessly to be better on the field."

With Wylie East set to travel to North Garland this Friday before hosting Lakeview Centennial next Tuesday, March 14, the Lady Raiders can clinch the district championship by winning their next two games. To finish the season undefeated, they have just three more games remaining. The team is focused on that goal, plus a run toward a state championship.

"We have to continue to go into every game like we're playing the best team ever," Lani Em said. "We must continue to play our best and prepare the right way."

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