

Photography by: Mike Hughes and Rashed Alshargi



Go the Distance

Girls' Track and Field

On your mark, get set, go! Feet hit the ground as soon as the starting shot booms throughout the stadium. The Waukee Girls' Track and Field Team had a banner year with various records broken and a third consecutive state championship. "We qualified for 14 out of 16 events at the Drake Relays and all 19 events at state," stated head coach Jesse Hunt, Des Moines Register's girls' track coach of the year. "We set the state record for a 4A school with 122 points, which is incredible," added Hunt. "Everyone had a championship mindset that helped the team work even harder to capture the state title," said senior Sydney Winger. Waukee has taken home the state title six of the past ten years.

The girls' track and field season kicks off in February with practices every day of the week, leading up to big meets such as Drake Relays or the state championships. This was the first year Waukee won the Hy-Vee Relays Cup at the Drake Relays. "The quantity of practices isn't necessarily larger, but the quality is improved," explained Hunt. The girls' hard work played a huge factor in their success. "Everyone is putting out their best effort. Every day at practice, I don't hear any complaints or anything," stated junior Janjay Peters.

As state approaches, the intensity heightens. "A lot more preparation into [state], we prepare the whole week before instead of just a day before," junior Delaney Taylor explained, "A lot of us run a lot faster times at state because we know that more is on the line."

Working together for so long every day, the track team grew a strong bond together. "I remember we were going to a meet and we were waiting for the buses to get here, but none of the charter buses showed up. Everyone was standing around freaking out! We had to call parents to come help take everyone to the meet," stated Peters, "I thought it was really cool that even though everyone was nervous we still went out there and dominated that meet." The relationships built through the sport grew more dynamic as time went on.

"We're like a big family," said Winger "Everyone has a place on Waukee's track team and all the individuals work towards the same goal."

As the three year state champions, Waukee girls' track and field team hopes to carry the momentum into next year's season. "Even in the off season this team [will] do great things," senior Logan Akason explained "So many girls were training and working out which gives me a really good feeling about the season to come."

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By: Rashed Alshargi





GOLDEN MOMENTS:

1. Waukee runners at state huddle around their 2018 state championship trophy. To earn its third consecutive championship at state for girls' track and field, the team set an all time record for a 4A school with 122 team points.

2. Senior Elma Vojic cheers on her teammate junior Delaney Taylor during the 4x100 at the Drake Relays finishing 3rd. Vojic and Taylor ran the same race the year before at Drake placing 2nd.

3. Sophomore Sydney Schaffer and freshman Peyton Kelderman pump their arms in unison as they try to keep a steady pace during the 3000 meter race at the state championship.

"[The best part of state is] being able to watch everyone and see how it all came together after all the hard work," stated Schaffer

4. Freshman Carly Olney watches, ready to exchange batons, as her teammate junior Megan Groathouse approaches her. Groathouse later went on to run the 4x800 at state. "We won 4x800 back-to-back years and this year we set a school record," Groathouse explained.

5. Junior Carly Boss leaps over a cross bar at 5'1" during the state qualifying meet. Boss went on to state for high jump and tied for second at 5'3", a personal record for her.

6. Senior Logan Akason smiles as she passes her competitor during the distance medley at state, winning second place. "The team connected really well and that was a huge key to our success," Akason said.

7. With her baton in hand, senior Lily Campbell controls her breath as she takes the lead during the 4x800 race at the Drake Relays. After breaking the school and state record for the 4x800 at state, Campbell commented "It was really exciting to walk away with Drake and state championships this year."

8. Seniors Anna Keplinger and Sydney Winger excitedly hug their teammates Janjay Peters, junior, and Addelinn Drees, sophomore, after winning first place at state in the shuttle hurdle relay. "I knew they'd be fast. I was not expecting that fast. They improved so much through the course of the season," commented hurdle coach Erica Douglas.

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RECORDS

Waukee Relays	1st
Ames meet	1st
Iowa City Invitational	1st
Marshalltown meet	1st
Adel meet	3rd
Drake Relays - Hy-Vee Relay Cup	1st
Central Conference Meet	1st
State Championship	1st