



Ellie McCuskey-Hay of St Ignatius, third from left, stands on the podium while wearing her medal after winning the long jump during the CIF State Track & Field Championships at Veterans Memorial Stadium in Clovis on Saturday. PHOTOS BY GARY KAZANJIAN

St. Ignatius' McCuskey-Hay wins girls long jump crown

By Marisa Ingemi
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CLOVIS — Ellie McCuskey-Hay of St. Ignatius, a highly decorated athlete during her four-year varsity career, reached the mountaintop Saturday.

She won the gold medal in the girls long jump at the CIF state championships. McCuskey-Hay's winning jump was 20 feet, 3 1/2 inches, which she reached on her second of six attempts.

Moorpark's Gianna Gonzalez matched the mark, but on her fifth try. McCuskey-Hay took first, and Gonzalez was second.

McCuskey-Hay also anchored St. Ignatius' fourth-place finish in the 4x100-meter relay race before returning to the jumping pit to finish her final two jumps.

She was one of five athletes from the Bay Area News Group's coverage area to finish first, a group that includes Harker's Brady Tse (boys 300 hurdles), Monta Vista's Lelani Laruelle (girls high jump), Los Altos' Daniela Hughes (girls triple jump) and St. Francis' Case Jacobson (boys shot put).

In the girls long jump, St. Mary's-Berkeley's Corrine Jones finished third with AB Hernandez, a transgender athlete from Jurupa Valley in Southern California. Since last season, the CIF has mandated that a cisgender athlete who would have medaled if a transgender athlete were not in the competition would share the podium with the transgender athlete.



Daniela Hughes of Los Altos won the CIF girls state championship in the triple jump at Veterans Memorial Stadium in Clovis.

Hernandez's top mark was 20-2 1/4 while Jones jumped 19-9 1/2.

Hughes finished with a first-place medal in the girls triple jump with a leap of 41-1, tying with Hernandez because of the CIF rule. Hernandez jumped 42-8 3/4.

"My goal was to be a state champion," Hughes said. "I'm really happy with that."

Hughes said she set a clap for the crowd on her last jump, just the second time she had done so all season.

"It was my last jump and my best jump, so that was a highlight for me," she said. "I think that

helped me jump further."

Defending champion Kira Gant Hatcher of St. Mary's-Berkeley was fourth (39-11 3/4) in that event.

Laruelle finished in first in the girls high jump (5-8), sharing the podium with Hernandez (5-10). Last year, Laruelle tied Hernandez and Long Beach Wilson's Jillene Wetteland for first.

Tse won Harker's first-ever track and field state championship with a time of 36.23 in the boys 300 hurdles, the fourth-fastest result in the country this year.

"It's been three years and I never got podium until today," Tse

said. "It feels amazing. I knew at the end when I had two hurdles to go I could get a good kick. I had the same thing in prelims yesterday, so I just believed in myself."

Tse also finished in second in the boys 110 high hurdles at 13.46.

Jacobson won the boys shot put with a mark of 60-11 1/4, finishing just ahead of runner-up Maxime Morelle of Sacred Heart Prep (60-10). San Mateo's Yianni Fitzgerald took fifth in 57-8 3/4.

Carondelet's Gretchen Yakaitis finished third in the girls 1,600-meter run with a time of 4:44.31. St. Ignatius senior Soleil Warner finished in second in the girls 300 hurdles, setting a personal best time of 40.97.

In the girls 200, Pittsburg's Amirat Temi Aganju ran a career-best of 23.52, trailing only Long Beach Wilson's Clara Adams (23.40) to finish second in the event.

Adams, a former North Salinas star who was stripped of a gold medal in the 400 at the state meet last season for celebrating with a fire extinguisher, won three events Saturday. She took first in the 400 in 52.28 and the 4x400 relay in 3:36.17.

El Cerrito finished second in the boys 4x400 in 3:11.75. Servite-Anaheim won in 3:07.62.

De La Salle sophomore Damari Dean, who finished with the top prelim result on Friday, led for the first five jumps of the boys long jump, but Clovis West's Julius Sanders reached 24-5 1/4 in his final attempt to take the victory. Dean's mark was 24-1.