

## **GLORY DAYS GRILL INVITATIONAL MEET PREVIEW**

**by Pearl Watts**

We are once again pleased to welcome all the competitors, coaches, parents, friends and relatives, along with the numerous volunteer helpers and the usual long time supporters of high school cross country, to the 25th Annual Glory Days Grill Invitational to held at Bull Run Regional Park on Saturday, October 6, 2018.

Meet management, per usual, is looking forward to another fine day of competitive racing, with approximately 2,200 runners representing 60 different schools from Maryland, Virginia and D.C., who are scheduled to compete in the nine different races being offered at the Bull Run venue.

There have been a couple of times in the past years when the course has had to be altered a bit due to uncompromising weather conditions and also by virtue of various changes in the park landscape. The 5,000 meter course setup had been remained unchanged over the last few years, largely due to meet originator Mike Dobson, who had always tried to maintain the course as one of the most spectator friendly 5k venues in the area.

However, because of the tremendous amount of rainfall in the last month in the D.C.metro area in particular, and the Atlantic seaboard area in general which completely wiped out quite a few large local weekend invitationals, the course has had to be altered for a combination of water and safety issues.

The course this year will then be much closer to three miles than the usual reputed 5k layouts at other invitationals, although much of this year's course favors familiarity with previous years and the large percentage of the meet that has always been on view for spectators remains largely unchanged.

This meet, annually held on either the first or second Saturday in October, usually serves as a very good barometer for the top individuals and teams who are starting to gear toward their upcoming championship seasons beginning later this month. And the meet will once again try to fulfill much of the coaches and runners needs, with a variety of races scheduled to accommodate not just the top runners, but the various skill levels of all the participants.

For the technicality types out there, the first race of the day will be at 8:30 a.m. but is not of the high school version, and instead will be an "open" race for any and all who are not competing in the high school races later in the day. A chance for those willing to see how they handle the course at Bull Run, as they then get an early glimpse as to what the high schoolers will be tackling later in the day, and under much cooler conditions.

After the conclusion of the open race, the course will then be made available for review for the high school competitors at 9:00 a.m. Coaches can also pick up their team packets at that time at the finish line area tent. Included in the packets should be the chips for the runners, in

addition to the bib numbers, general meet information and who knows what little surprises possible from the Glory Days Grill people.

Final packet pickup is at 9:30 a.m. which coincides with the start of the all important coaches meeting, directed ably by GDG meet director Mike Kiernan. Always seem to be some last minute details to iron out a bit at that time and a good way to get answers to the inevitable last minute questions. Those teams that don't have a coaching representative show up for the meeting are usually then on disarray display as the meet plays out for the rest of the day.

The first high school race of the day will be the freshmen boys race at 10:30 a.m. and it will be followed by the freshmen girls race at 11:10 a.m. A nice perk from this meet is that each school is allowed an unlimited number of entries for the freshmen races, as these ninth graders get an important, relatively late season opportunity to race solely against their other ninth grade counterparts.

Unlike some of the other invites and championship meets, the different classes of these races will have each of the boys classes competing first, followed by the girls. The junior varsity races begin at 11:50 a.m. and greatly benefit the large number of hardworking youngsters who are very involved in their respective schools' distance running programs, and like the freshmen races, are generously set up by meet management with an unlimited amount of entries for each school.

Due to the large number of J.V. runners on the boys side, there will be two junior varsity races for them, which will be once again determined by a random draw of the schools involved.. The J.V. Division 1 boys race will begin at 11:50 a.m. and the Division 2 boys junior varsity race heads off at 12:30 p.m. They will be followed by what is usually the largest field of the day, the junior varsity girls, with that race scheduled to begin at 1:10 p.m.

The Varsity B boys race will start at 2:00 p.m. and the Varsity B girls will square off at 2:30 p.m. in races that pit many of the top runners from schools with smaller overall enrollments against mainly the second tiers of the larger enrollment schools entered.

The Varsity B races, as well as the Seeded Varsity races, will be limited in size for each school to a maximum number of seven individuals entered, as the possible scoring entries for their schools.

Highlighting the day for many attendees will be the Seeded Varsity races, with the boys scheduled for a 3:00 p.m. sendoff and the girls race set for a 3:30 p.m. start, as many of the top individuals and teams from the metropolitan area get a choice chance to square off against each other.

Finishing up the day will be the team awards presentation for the Varsity B and Seeded Varsity races for the top three schools on both the boys and girls side. In a change from the majority of the past years of the meet, the team awards will be this year in the open area flanked by a

couple of Glory Days Grill wind wavers between the finish line tent and the starting line area.

The Varsity B boys and girls team awards will be immediately following the Seeded Varsity Girls race. We will then go right to the Seeded Varsity boys individual and team awards, followed by the Seeded Varsity girls individual and team presentation.

Medals for the top 15 individuals in the freshmen and J.V. races will still be presented immediately following their races, just beyond the finish line area and the freshmen team awards will be during the J.V. boys race between the wind wavers, to help expedite the cause. Got all that ??

Glory Days Grill representatives will be on hand throughout the day to gladly help in the dispensation of the meet hardware. Glory Days Grill is now in its nineteenth year of sponsoring the meet and is once again greatly pleased to be involved in the myriad of activity and cooperation that is necessary to create this annually successful event.

Jeff, Bob and Rich, along with Gary Cohen, Charissa Costa, Katie Easterbrook, Jim Rafferty and the rest of the Glory Days Grill staff, would also like to give a big thank you, in advance, to all of the volunteers involved in concessions, parking, results compilation, marshaling of the start and finish line areas and of the race course itself, and also all of the other forms of meet management.

G-Days would especially like to thank, Mike Kiernan, Scott Raczko, Matt Gilchrist, Dan Woolley, Steve Johnson, Gale Faulkner, Joe Belkoski, George Siragusa, Mark Stripe, Charlie Lihn, Tom Cook, Annie Lutz, Moise Joseph, and Mike Dobson, and an extra special thanks to Potomac River Running ("PR") for all of the extra time and help they donate each year.

## **FURTHER REMINDERS**

Will once again be using the Ipico chip timing system. Coaches will be requested to turn in their team chips as promptly as possible upon the conclusion of their team's final race of the day.

Concessions will be sold throughout the meet behind the press box area and there will also be a tent set up for tee shirt sales near the concession area, along with the always entertaining Glory Days Grill prize wheel, etc.

With the number of runners competing throughout the day expected to number about 2,200; that will also mean plenty of motorized vehicles entering and exiting the park. All drivers need to obey all the parking signs and especially adhere to all directions on where to park, as designated by the parking attendants.

Those parking attendants have a plan, and will be sticking to it. Some of it will involve preventive maintenance that cannot be foreseen by some of you hurriedly arriving spectators

and Murphy's Law can also show up as a factor. We want to ensure that nobody is needlessly blocked in by someone else and especially that no vehicles have any chance of blocking any part of the cross country course, or interfere with any of the race participants.

First call for each race will be twenty minutes before the start of each of those races. Coaches are greatly encouraged to tell their runners to check in at first call. Better early, rather than late. No extra stress wanted or needed.

Coaches, athletes and parents are reminded once again that although the team awards timing and site have changed, the individual awards for the freshmen and J.V. races for the top fifteen in each of those races will still be given out just beyond the finish line area a few minutes after the conclusion of each of those races. and that it is also a nice photo opportunity for those award winners at that time with their relatives and friends.

Please do not impede the progress of the runners during any part of the race by being too close to the course's race line, and be sure to heed any instructions doled out during the races by the course marshals.

This is important at all times and especially along and near the finish line straightaway, where sometimes spectators invariably display different degrees of knowing exuberance and unknowing overexuberance.

Team and individual results will be posted during the meet along the walls of the Press Box as soon as they have been compiled for each race category. It should be a fairly quick turnaround from the finish of each race to the posting of the results for each race, since the same Ipico chip timing system will be in use for the tenth consecutive time.

Immediately following the meet, full results will be sent to and then posted very quickly at [www.milestat.com](http://www.milestat.com) as they continue to keep everyone informed on the running activities and happenings for each week, from around the commonwealth and beyond, and there could also be additional photos and videos put up by the milestat staff from the meet on their site during the next week.

Thanks to everyone, in advance, and good luck to all of the racing participants.

## **BOYS AND GIRLS SEEDED VARSITY PREVIEW**

### **Boys:**

The top returnee from the boys 2017 boys race is senior Max Greczyn of Bishop O'Connell, who finished seventh overall. Thus far this season, Greczyn placed third at the Monroe Parker Invite and was the winner of the senior division on the DCXC Invite last Saturday.

Others placing in the top ten from last years GDG meet are junior Mikyas Sahl of Annandale and Patriot senior Justin Sriver. Sahl finished just behind Greczyn at Monroe Parker in fourth place and Sriver paced Patriot to a second place team finish at Great Meadow in late August with his fifth place individual showing.

Others on the boys side to watch include Dominion senior Omar Aougab and Patriot senior Ryan Hamacher,,juniors Sean Stuck of West Springfield and Luke Tewalt from Washington Latin and seniors Edward Cerne from Lake Braddock, Mount Vernon's Hunter Fowlie and O'Connell's Aidan Smyth.

### **Girls:**

Teams to watch include Great Meadow runnerup Patriot and Monroe Parker second place finisher West Springfield along with Monroe Parker champ W.T. Woodson, which also had the individual winner of the seeded race in senior Jackson Leech and the always strong Dulaney squad from Timonium, Md. who won the event in 2016 and were second last year, dominated the 36th Annual Barnhart Memorial Invite last weekend and has a firm front four of seniors Drew Dailey and Alex Whatley, junior Zak Audia and freshman Sam Merng.

The top returnee on the girls side and in second place from last year's meet is sophomore Julia Ghiselli of Annandale. Ghiselli has continued on from her fine freshman season of last year with a second place at Great Meadow and a large margin of victory at the Monroe Parker Invite.

George C. Marshall has the duo of senior Natalie Bardach and junior Sophie Tedesco; Washinton Latin's Zoe Edelman was the winner of the sophomore division at DCXC with Yorktown's Piper Dean second in the same diviision and Chantilly's Nicole Re is a factor off of her fifth place finish at last year's meet.

Washington-Lee looks like one of the teams to beat with senior Eva Arnade along with senior classmate Eva Smith, who was fourth at Parker and won the senior diviision at DCXC.