

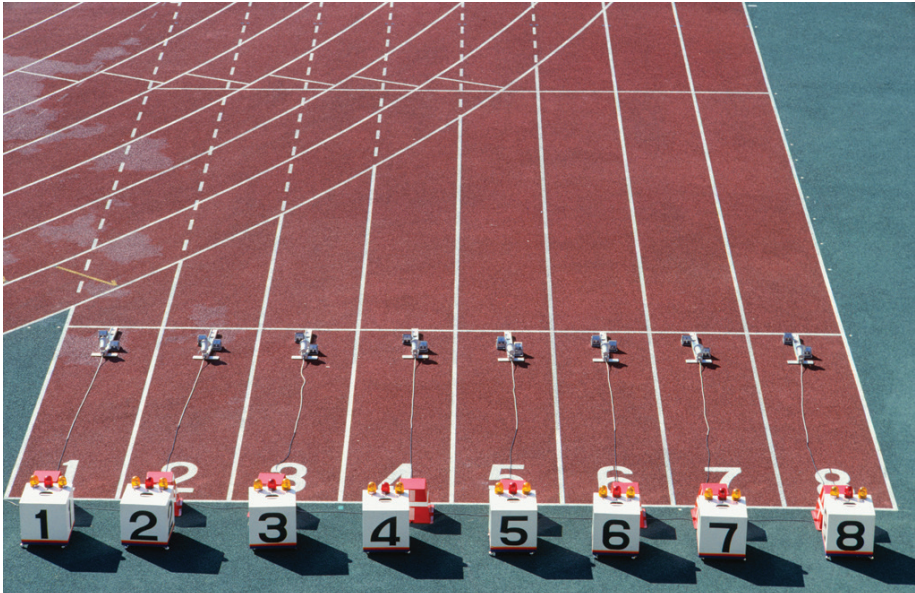
Panthers, Cougars roar at KHSAA State Track & Field competition

BY WES ELROD
NEWS-DEMOCRAT & LEADER

Last week the two track and field programs of the Russellville Panthers and the Logan County Cougars traveled to Lexington to compete in the KHSAA State Track and Field Competition. The Cougars competed in the Class 2A division, as the Panthers were in the Class 1A division. It was a strong showing for both programs as they each ended their seasons on a high note with bright futures ahead.

For the Cougars, they crowned a new state champion in the triple jump as Nick Blann defeated the field with a 45-0 mark and claimed the silver in the long jump. Teammate Damani Goodloe finished top-10 in the triple jump with the 8th spot. For the girls' triple jump, Nia Scipio earned the bronze with a 33-9.25 mark and earned seventh place in the long jump. For the girls' hurdle events, Cleo Bragard placed in the top five in the 300-meter and just outside of the top five in the 100-meter.

The team of Lilaina Veigel, Lizzy Veigel,



Katelyn Haas, and Rhiley Bunce finished 14th in the girls' 4x800 relay, with Lilaina earning a top-10 spot in the 800-meter dash. Cole Christmas finished in the 19th spot for the boys' 400-meter dash, as Jayron Jefferson placed 20th in the shot put. Overall, a strong team performance from the Cougars.

For the Panthers, they had multiple athletes on the podium and took home the silver. Octavious "Too Too" McKeage finished second with a mark of 43.8 in the triple jump. Jordan Inscoe and DJ Smiley finished second

in the unified long jump and scored the bronze in the 2x200 unified relay. DeMyiah "Baby D" Allen, the middle school state champion in the girls shot put, earned the silver with her personal best throw of 37-9 and ranks as the best 7th grader in the shot put event in the country. "No pressure, have fun. Time to make a name for yourself. All or nothing right here. All the work you put in, let it pay off," quotes from Allen on what she says to prepare herself for throws.

Justin Bigbee and Madden Bloodworth competed in the hur-

dles events for the Panthers, with Bigbee placing 11th in the 300-meter and 12th in the

110-meter. Bloodworth finished 21st in the 100-meter hurdles, as Trys-tanne Hickman rounded out the state meet team in the girls' discus throw, finishing 11th.

Talking with the Panthers head coach Cortez Reeder, he talked about what they expected for the state meet: "We missed the goal on a couple of events we had high hopes of winning gold in. Never a disappointing meet when we have multiple athletes make the podium, yet we all left Lexington slightly dissatisfied with the outcomes on the day. Nonetheless, we are still extremely happy

for an overall great season. With the completion of state, the reality of how young we really are set in. Losing Too Too and Justin Bigbee will be a tough pill to swallow, but the future is so bright for the Russellville Track and Field Panthers."

As the track season concludes, each program will look to build on their final meet and look toward improving for next spring.

Wes Elrod can be reached by emailing wpechagolla@gmail.com.

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—Phillip E. Baker
Logan County Judge/Executive

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