

CCS meet tomorrow 5-24

SPAL spikers shoot for state

Five local athletes look like solid bets and another half-dozen have outside shots to land State Meet berths in tomorrow's Central Coast Section track and field finals at San Jose City College.

Only the first three finishers in each varsity event qualify for the big season finale next Friday and Saturday in Woodland.

It's the end of the line tomorrow, though, for frosh-soph competitors. Trials start at 3 p.m. and finals at 7.

Palo Alto hurdler Carl Florant and Gunn distance ace Gordon MacMitchell have the top chances of making the state finals.

Florant is tied with Serramonte's Ike Allmond for the section's top high hurdles (13.9) and both should qualify handily in what could be the night's top race. Allmond (19.1) and Florant (19.2) are also the class of the low barrier field.

MacMitchell is the favorite as the section leader in the two-mile at 9:10.6. San Carlos sophomore Mitch Kingery (9:14.5) looms as a state qualifier also; he'll probably battle Westmont's Rich McCandless (9:11.6) for second.

MacMitchell also should qualify in the mile, where is 4:17.4 top is second only to Aptos' Dan Gruber (4:16.7). Yet the top mile qualifier should be Gunn's Steve Crowley (4:20.9), who's best with the chips down.

That takes care of the "should-go" SPAL athletes.

But another local star, St. Francis junior Mike Kasser of Redwood City, figures to qualify in the 880 behind Stevenson's Malcolm Cleary (1:54.0).

Menlo School junior Beau Willis (1:55.9) will battle that pair and probably Willow Glen's Guy Pabst (1:56.7) for a state berth. Willis has a badly cut foot and his performance is questionable, though he ran 1:57.0 on it last week.

On the fringe of free State Meet tickets are Ravenswood's James Ragland (sprints), Carlmont's Jack Lennen (pole vault), Cubberley's Stacy Geiken (mile, two-mile), Gunn's John Littleboy (high jump) and Menlo School's mile relay team.

Ragland has consistently hit 10.0 in the 100; he could be a sleeper with competition. And what competition he'll get — Silver Creek junior Millard Hampton, 9.6 and 21.0.

If Lennen can better his 14-11½ pole vault, he could give favorites Larry Hintz of Buchser (15-6½), Ryan Paton of San Mateo (14-7¼) and Iverson of Del Mar (14-7¼) a good go. Lennen beat Hintz in last week's Region II meet.

Strictly longshots for the state meet are Menlo-Atherton's Carl Johnk (hurdles), Larry Noble (440) and sprint relay; Sequoia's Eddie Oravillo (100), Marlon Murphy (220), Tom Dixon (pole vault) and mile relay team; San Carlos' Matt Yeo (two-mile) and Kevin Whitney (long jump); Carlmont's Bruce Sayre (880) and Woodside's Bob Abbot (discus).

Woodside's frosh-soph, led by hurdler Myrt Easley and sprinter Robert Sweet, has a good shot at the frosh-soph team title, but Silver Creek and Cupertino are favored over the likes of Gunn in the varsity.

Preps seek State Meet spike berths

The finest track and field competition of the local season is on tap tonight as the top athletes in the Central Coast Section vie for State Meet berths in the CCS finals at San Jose City College.

Trials began this afternoon, and finals begin at 7 o'clock.

The first three varsity finishers in each event qualify for a trip to Woodland next Friday and Saturday for the state's annual cinder extravaganza.

It's the end of the season for frosh-soph competitors; Woodside has a chance to go out in style as one of the favorites for the frosh-soph crown.

Silver Creek and Cupertino are top-rated in the varsity division. Top Sequoia District state hopefuls are San Carlos sophomore two-miler Mitch Kingery, Carlmont senior pole vaulter Jack Lennen and Ravenswood senior sprinter James Ragland.



PREP
Views and News
 by **Mike Nolan**

Ragland runs to riches 5-31

Notes on some notable locals:

Ravenswood High's surprising senior sprinter, James Ragland, has to be one of the most unlikely qualifiers the Peninsula has ever sent to the State track finals.

Not because Ragland doesn't have the talent — he certainly does — but because nobody knew about it until the season was nearly over, not even James.

Ragland spent the entire dual meet season on Ravenswood's two relay teams and in the 100-yard dash, where he had consistent but not sensational 10.1 and 10.0 clockings.

So how does he wind up in the State Meet tomorrow and (hopefully in the finals) Saturday in Woodland?

Only by tying the all-time best by an SPAL athlete for a 220 around a turn — 21.9 — in the Central Coast Section finals.

"It was his fifth 220 race," observed Ravenswood athletic director Ken Rivera. "He liked the 100 better and wanted to run that in the dual meets, and he couldn't go in the 220 because of the relays."

But Rivera talked Ragland into running the 220 at the Sequoia District finals May 4, and he's been little short of super since.

It wouldn't surprise Rivera — or anyone else — if Ragland qualified for Saturday's finals, though the sprint field is tough indeed.

But talk about your "sleepers!" Some college (San Jose State, you there?) ought to grab this fellow right away. Doubt if anyone else ever tied an all-time SPAL best in his fifth try.



JAMES RAGLAND
 A real 'sleeper'

Two other feats really stood out — from the standpoint of rising to the occasion — in the CCS meet.

That 1:57.3 in the 880 by Ravenswood's Charles Jones was terrific — he's only a sophomore. Only a handful of SPAL varsity runners have clocked that.

And Woodside's Bob Abbott, who toiled in virtual anonymity all season, came within 13 inches of making the State Meet in the discus. His 172-6 throw topped his life best by more than 12 feet and ranks sixth on the all-time SPAL list.

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 Mitch Kingery, the super soph from San Carlos, hasn't lacked publicity, but he's still underrated.

His 9:09.4 two-mile — second to Gunn senior Gordon MacMitchell's 9:01.6 in the CCS finals — is truly a great time for Mitch's age.

Only 29 runners in the entire nation (17 from California) bettered that mark last year and not one was a sophomore. In fact, only eight were even juniors. (MacMitchell would have ranked 14th).

The reason, of course, that Mitch is underrated in prep track is simple. He's merely the nation's finest high school marathon runner — and record holder — and his two-mile times pale in comparison.

But only in comparison to himself.

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It seemed like an awful lot of good juniors in 1972 really went downhill this SPAL baseball season, and a spot check verified this.

Of 29 regulars over '72 and '73 who had significant (25 points or more) changes in their batting averages, 17 went down; some way, way down.

We won't go into the "downers," but Carlmont catcher Bob Peek wins the "upper" trophy. He lifted his average from .038 to .313.

Other big improvements: San Carlos' Duane Jones (.167 to .302), Cubberley's Chip Miller (.154 to .326), Gunn's Bob Dinges (.347 to .436) and Woodside's Tim Powers (.327 to .393).

On the mound, Cubberley's Jeff Ross went from 1-4 with a 6.39 earned run average to 5-3 and 1.76, while Ravenswood's Ken Campbell went from 0-7 and 6.14 to 4-4 and 2.25.

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Gunn tennis coach Ernie Leydecker, whose Titans met Del Mar today for the Central Coast Section championship and 66th straight win, thinks his squad is as good as any prep team he's seen in more than two decades of coaching.

That's in "comparison" with any sport, and he's probably right. You can't really compare teams in different sports, especially with those of the past, but there's a good chance Gunn stands as strong in tennis as any team ever did in any sport on the Peninsula.

With six ranked players, Gunn could probably give any team in the nation a go. Every single one of those Titans, led by Nick Saviano, is a major college prospect.

Strong local crew in

5-3

WOODLAND — Eight of the nine classy local entrants in the 55th annual State high school track and field finals — one of the area's finest contingents in history — have a good chance of making it a two-day stay here.

Trials begin tomorrow at 4 p.m. at the Woodland High School stadium in this town of 15,000 some 20 miles northwest of Sacramento.

Three of the locals — Gunn's Gordon MacMitchell, San Carlos' Mitch Kingery and Cumberley's Stacy Geiken — are

guaranteed spots in Saturday's noon finals since they are all in the two-mile, the lone event without trials.

Of the other six, only Gunn's Tom Oberhelman, who qualified third in the Central Coast Section finals with a life best 54-10½ shot put, appears over his head. It generally takes a mark of 58 feet to make the finals.

The others all have a fair or better finals shot, including Palo Alto's Carl Florant (both hurdles), St. Francis' Mike Kasser of Redwood City (880),

Gunn's Steve Crowley (mile), Carlmont's Jack Lennen (pole vault) and Ravenwood's James Ragland (220).

Twenty-seven athletes from the state's 10 sections qualified for the meet in each event, including the top three from the CCS.

Track trials are run in three heats of nine each, with the top three in each heat making the finals. Heats are seeded to distribute evenly the best and worst marks.

In the field, the top 12 in tomorrow's trials advance.

Florant, the smooth-striding Paly ace who made the trip but not the finals last year at Oroville, has a fine shot at a medal if not first place. His 13.9 high barrier best is among the state's top five.

Florant's chances in the lows (19.1) aren't quite as good, but he still could make the finals field.

Kasser, whose life best 1:54.5 in the 880 was second to Stevenson's Malcolm Cleary (1:53.2) in the CCS finals, is just a junior.

Following a remarkable

n State track meet

mid-season recovery from a badly torn leg muscle, Kasser probably will need to run in the low 1:53's to qualify. But he's improved steadily since his training regimen was broken by the injury.

Ragland's 220 chances hinge upon improvement, but that's not unlikely. His 21.9 for third in the CCS finals was nineteenth second better than his winning SPAL finals effort.

"Every time he's run the 220, he's gotten better," said Ravenswood coach Ken Rivera. Ragland didn't run the

furlong until late in the season because he ran the 100 and both relays in the dual meets.

The ordinary dirt track at Woodland High figures to cut times somewhat, but the sprint competition in this meet as always, will be brutal.

Crowley, a great kick runner who's at his best under heavy pressure, ran a 4:12.6 life best to win the CCS mile. He can expect to qualify handily with a similar effort; that time would have placed fourth in last year's finals.

Crowley's senior classmate,

MacMitchell, hit 9:01.6 in the CCS two-mile but seems capable of going under nine minutes. He'll probably have to place, though he's currently among the state's top six.

Kingery (9:09.4), only a sophomore, and Geiken (9:12.6) should finish in the top half of the field unless it's extraordinary.

Lennen's 14-6 vault for second in CCS was his best. A 14-footer should qualify him for the finals, but from there it's anybody's guess in this most

unpredictable of events. A 14-6 got third last year.

Other CCS entries with a good chance for medals are Silver Creek junior sprint sensation Millard Hampton (9.6 and 21.0), Leland discus thrower Dave Hickson (194-2), Serramone hurdler Ike Allmond (13.9) and Cleary.

All are State Meet veterans. Hampton was fourth in the 100 at 9.6 and third in the 220 at 21.3, and Hickson, a hulking 270-pounder, fourth in the discus.