

# Track and field runs in the family of area teen

Los Gatos girls standout Hannah Slover follows her father as a CIF champ

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**By Phil Jensen**

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**LOSGATOS »** Hannah Slover's connection to track and field goes back to when she was a toddler.

"I think my first track memory was just always being out on the track with my mom while she was coaching," said Hannah, whose mother, Kerri, was an assistant coach at Los Gatos High School at the time.

Hannah remembers "baby-sized" hurdles (her grandfather made those specifically for her) and being part of the Jack Rabbits youth track and field program when she was 3 or 4.

"Hannah would be out at the track with me every day," Kerri said. "She'd do the warmup with the girls, and I got a playhouse that I kept in the shed out there and I'd pull it out."

Hannah remembers a particular all-comer meet when she was 3 years old.

"My older cousin Kyle is there and he had just beat me in a few other events — and I was really angry about it," she said, with a laugh. Hannah then beat Kyle, who is a couple of years older, in a race: "I was determined."

Such conviction has followed

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# Slover

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the 18-year-old through a high school athletic career that landed the 6-foot-1 three-sport standout a women's volleyball scholarship at UC Santa Barbara.

But the Los Gatos senior, not surprisingly, also made a mark in track and field.

Last year, Hannah won a California Interscholastic Federation state championship in the girls high jump. Her father, Scott, won a pair of CIF state pole vault titles in 1993 and '94 for Leland High School. Hannah reached the state meet trials this year after missing most of the season with an ankle injury.

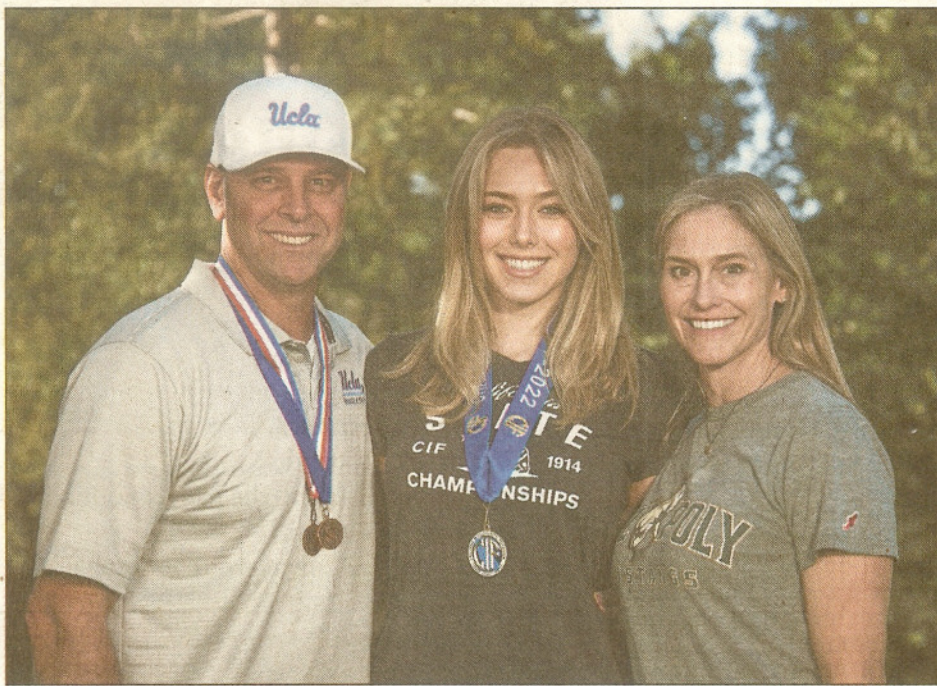
Hannah and Scott are believed to be the first father-daughter duo to each win state high school track and field individual championships, according to Central Coast Section track and field historian Hank Lawson.

"I don't think there was any better feeling because whenever your kids want something badly ... and have worked hard ... you want that for them. I was so happy for her. I know the feeling," said Scott, who watched Hannah win the state title, while the patriarch on the track — her grandfather, Bob — witnessed history repeat itself for the family. "State meet's a hard meet to win and you kind of have to have your day, and she did. For her to come out on top and have her win was the best feeling. Sharing it with my dad, we went through that. It was extra special because he coached her and he coached me."

"I've only seen my dad cry twice in my life, and that was one of them."

Scott went on to have a very successful collegiate career at UCLA, where he was a five-time All-American and two-time Pac-10 champion. He was also an assistant coach at Cal from 2007-2011.

The Slovers certainly have a connection with Los



SHAE HAMMOND — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Hannah Slover, center, and her parents, Scott and Kerri Slover are pictured at their home in Los Gatos. Hannah was the state champion for high school high jump last year.

Gatos High School's track. It is where Kerri and Scott met, as local area athletes in the '90s. Kerri, who went on to compete as a hurdler at Cal Poly, graduated from Monta Vista High School in Cupertino.

"We met back up at the track again when we both were running track in college, so we've known each other a long time," Kerri said. "Track really brought our family together. We love track. It's such a great culture."

In elementary school, Hannah's attention turned to soccer, basketball and swimming. But she still stayed connected to track through all-comer meets.

In a sixth-grade physical education class at Fisher Middle School, she tried the high jump.

"They put a tiny pit in the middle of the gym, and they just had a bungee up and everyone was trying to jump over it," Hannah said. "I didn't know how to do the form or anything, but I was jumping over higher bungees than everyone else in the class and I was like, 'Oh, this is super fun.'"

She ended up with a mark of 4 feet, 11 inches that school year at the Santa Clara County Cham-

pionships, a clearance that is very competitive in high school varsity league competitions. In seventh grade, she improved by leaps and bounds, setting a huge then-personal record of 5-5 at the same meet. The mark is still a school record. Coincidentally, the same height is the at-large standard in the girls high jump for this year's California high school championships.

"She was amazing," said her grandfather about Hannah's initial foray in the event.

Bob has coached his granddaughter throughout her high jump career. He was a field event coach for 31 years at Del Mar High School, coached his son Scott in the pole vault and is currently an assistant coach at Los Gatos. Bob, who competed in the 1968 and '72 Olympic Trials in the pole vault, has never coached a female athlete better than Hannah. "I'm proud of her," he said.

In eighth grade, Hannah missed part of the season due to an ankle injury suffered while playing volleyball but still managed to jump 5-4, she said.

Then the pandemic hit. Hannah proceeded to con-

centrate on volleyball when the gyms opened again and committed to UC Santa Barbara before her junior year. But track and field remained in the back of her mind.

"(My grandfather's) always down at the track and it was just one of those things, we started talking about it, like maybe I should come out," said Hannah, who wanted to spend time with her grandfather and also missed the culture. "I think it was just a bunch of different things and just for fun."

"I always wished I could do it. Every season I would always think about it."

At the prestigious Arcadia Invitational in 2022, Hannah set her personal record of 5-8 to tie for fourth in the top Invitational Division. Two of the athletes who placed higher hailed from Washington and Colorado.

Hannah qualified for the state meet with a third-place finish with a mark of 5-7 at the CCS championships. Then in very windy conditions that caused the high jump standards to fall repeatedly, she won the CIF state title at Buchanan High School in Clovis with a clearance of 5-6 on her





NHAT V. MEYER — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Los Gatos' Hannah Slover digs the ball in front of teammate Sarah Herman (7) during a match against Palo Alto on Oct. 13.

first attempt at the height.

"It was unbelievable how that all worked out for me because I came out there thinking I would be doing it for fun, like hopefully I still remember how to do things," Hannah said. "I ended up being a serious competitor and getting to learn from Grandpa like my dad learned from him, that was pretty amazing. ... Winning state is not something that most people get to do in their life, and I got to do it, which is really cool."

In a basketball game in late November, Hannah seriously sprained her left ankle, which also happens to be her jumping leg on the track. She started jumping in mid-April, and cleared 5-7 in a dual meet against Gunn on April 18.

That turned out to be her season best, as Hannah's

bid to repeat as state champion at Veterans Memorial Stadium finished with a tie for 15th during the CIF trials at the end of May.

"It was very bittersweet," said Hannah about this season. "I really enjoyed being out there with my grandfather, but it was hard to top last year. I really soaked up all the time with my teammates and my family. I was happy that I got to the point I did in the competition."

As far as her athletic plans in college, Hannah said, "Most likely I'll just be playing volleyball."

But she added that the UCSB track and field coaches already reached out about joining the team in the spring.

"So I will be talking to my (volleyball) coaches about that," Hannah said, "and further investigating the possibility."