

Gunn freshman leads way

As expected, Palo Alto's MacQuitty tops boys race

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While seniors had their names called out in a ceremony prior to the cross country event dubbed the Palo Alto City Championships, it was a freshman and a sophomore who took home top honors in Tuesday's varsity races.

Three schools competed, including Palo Alto, which for nearly a decade has made the short trek to Gunn's home course for a duel against the Titans. The Castilleja girls have also been part of the race for the past three years.

On the boys side, even Gunn coach Ernie Lee conceded that the runner to keep an eye on was not one of his own, but rather Philip MacQuitty — Paly's sophomore sensation.

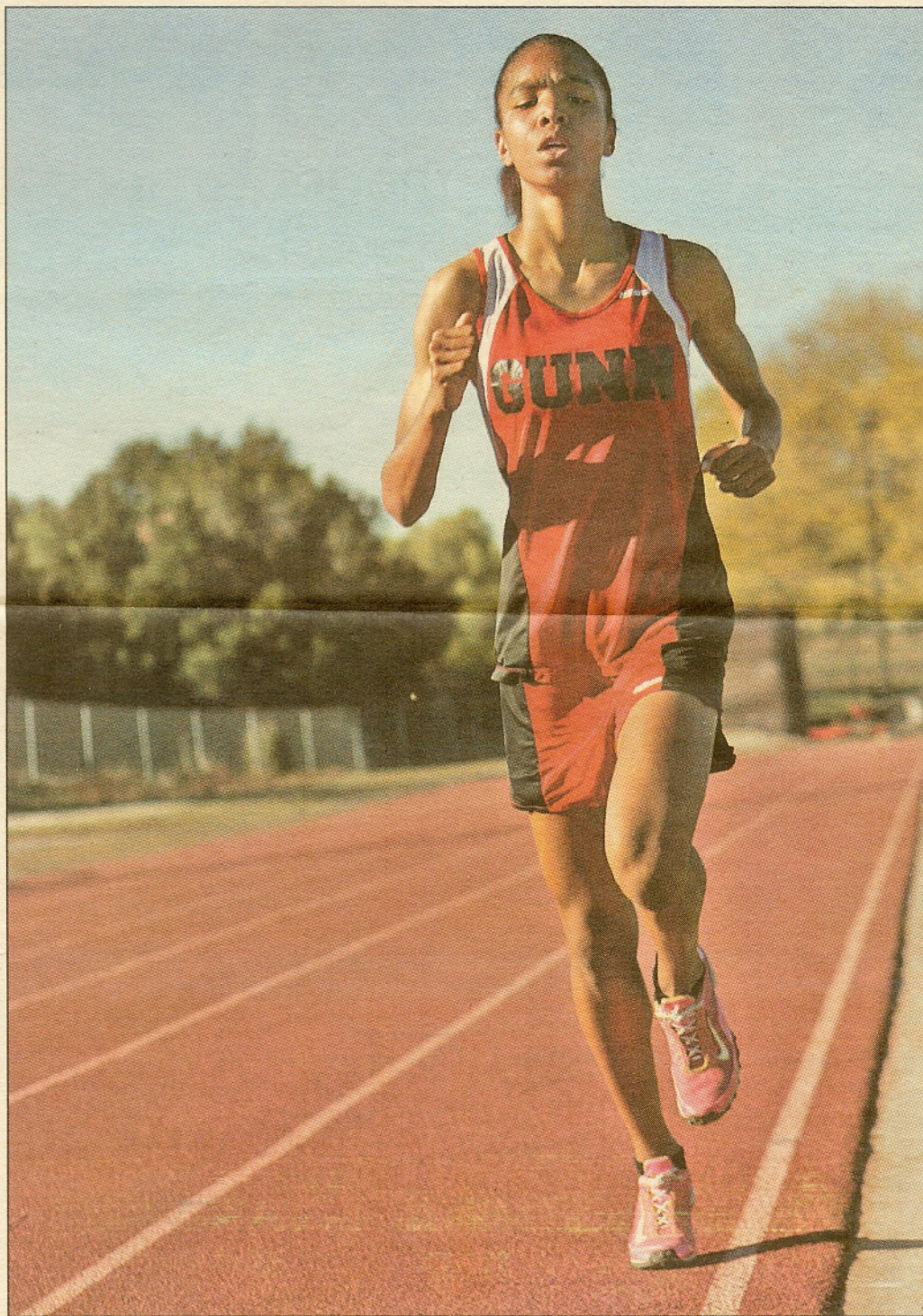
MacQuitty didn't disappoint — sort of. On his mind was the Bol Park course record set by St. Francis product Ben Sitler in 2004. The mark of 10:35 broke a 20-year record previously held by Craig Bockhus of Mountain View.

"I wanted to get the record today," said MacQuitty, who as a freshman clocked in at 11:03. "The guy who has the record made nationals, he's no slacker."

In the end, MacQuitty had to settle for the third-best mark ever, 10:43 — easily enough to run away with first place on a warm afternoon.

"It's very hot. ... I think I could've gotten it if it was cool," MacQuitty said. "I poured water on myself, and that cools you down for 800, 900 meters. So I was burning up the second mile. ... The heat takes a lot out of you."

That's what the girls found



Victor Maccharoli / Daily News

Gunn's Jackie Evans crosses the finish line first with no one else in sight Tuesday at the Palo Alto City Championship. The freshman beat her closest competitors by more than 30 seconds.