

TRACK AND FIELD: Athletes finish strong at West Texas Junior Olympics



Peter Dindinger|Odessa American

Athletes endured another day of hot temperatures to compete in Day 2 of the USATF West Texas Junior Olympic Track and Field Championships on Saturday at Ratliff Stadium.

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There was laughter.

There was cheering.

And above all, kids were having fun Saturday morning.

Under a bright sun and humid conditions, athletes made their way to Ratliff Stadium for Day 2 of the USATF West Texas Junior Olympic Track and Field Championships.

Just like the first day, everything ran well on Day 2. Meet director Stella Neboh and staff hoped to beat the hottest time of the day, and they did.

“It went smooth. It went really good. We got through on time before it got really hot for the kids,” Neboh said. “That was our goal and that was why we started early this morning. We achieved that goal. We are very pleased.”

Athletes that place in the top six will advance to the Region XII meet in San Antonio July 10 to 14.

It was a good meet for the local track clubs. West Texas Track had a lot of competitors in a variety of events.

In the 15-16 age division, Miraya Morado placed first in the long jump with a mark of 15 feet, 1.5 inches. Marley Martinez took second place in the 800-meter run with a time of 3:15.26 for the 9-10 age division. Martinez won the 400-meter dash with a time of 1:22.22.

Also in the 9-10 age division, Isabella Laca and Addyson Juarez finished second and third in the 100-meter dash with times of 16.71 and 16.86, respectively.

Breeann Anderson won the 400-meter dash of the 17-18 age division after clocking in at 1:10.00.

To highlight the boys' events, Matthew Ortiz won the triple jump with a mark of 38-6.75 in the 13-14 age division.

Mauricio Ramirez finished first in the 9-and-10-year-old 800-meter run with a time of 2:55.97. Jaybrion Jones and Jacob Pornan placed first and second in the 100-meter dash of the 11-12 age division with times of 13.37 and 13.71, respectively. Jones also won the 200-meter dash with a time of 29.18.

Ramirez took first in the 1,500-meter run after clocking in with a time of 5:51.55.

Matthew Ortiz won the 800-meter run of the 13-14 age division with a time of 2:12.16.

Caden Ellis and Alan Olivo finished first and second in the 100-meter dash of the 9-10 age division with the times of 14.74 and 15.26, respectively.

"They did good. A lot of those kids were first-time runners. They have never run track their whole life," Neboh said. "So for them to have that courage, to come out here and compete and do so well, I am very proud.

"I think we're doing (something) good for the community, and I hope more will come out. I am a proud coach. I love what I saw today. The drive, the motivation, their desire to win is what gives me joy."

>> **YOUNG AT HEART:** Amongst all the young and exuberant athletes was 82-year-old William "Bill" Black, a 1954 graduate of Iraan High School.

Black competed in four running events. He went out onto the track and ran alongside high school athletes. Each time he neared the finish line he got a standing ovation from the crowd.

"I give God the glory for everything," Black said. "This is actually where I was born ... in Odessa. Started running in 1975 and when my wife passed in 2005, I started competing again.

"My motto is I give God the glory for everything I do and thank him for being able to do it and to influence other people to get off their couch and not become a stinking, rotten couch potato. That's what it takes. You gotta show up."

Bill's son, J.C., was also competing in the masters division.

"It's all humbling, but it's also a lot of fun to watch the little kids react to seeing someone my age," 60-year-old J.C. Black said. "Those little ones are inspiring to us, and it's great to come out and watch them trying their hardest.

"This is the biggest reason I'm out here — following my dad at 82. It matters that he's out here doing it at his age. He's an inspiration."

>> **FLYING HIGH:** The Odessa Flying Lyons brought in a lot of medals for their club.

In addition to competing in the high jump and 100-meter dash, Tyra Harris also participated in the heptathlon for the 15-16 age division.

Harris won the 200-meter dash with a time of 25.53 on Day 2.

Taylor Vuelvas dominated the field events, winning first in the discus with a throw of 129-0. She also won the javelin with a mark of 66-06 and the hammer throw with a mark of 72-09.

Jhalliah Sio won the 1,500-meter run of the 9-10 age division with a time of 5:43.90, while Kendall Mathis took first in the 13 and 14-year-old 1500-meter run with a time of 7:06.34.

In the 200-meter dash of the 9-10 age division, Brooklyn Davis took first with a time of 34.43.

For the boys, Jude Shatley won the 11- and 12-year-old shot put with a throw of 16-1.75. Shatley also won the javelin with a throw of 37-10. Isaiah Munoz finished first in the high jump with a mark of 4-2.

Track has had a rich history in Odessa. The Flying Lyons, along with the other clubs, are about getting kids to succeed in the sport. Most of their athletes go on to compete at the college level.

“It’s great because a lot of our kids have been running for us since they were four or five-years-old,” Flying Lyons coach Delmon Lyons said. “That’s why we do this.

“I’ve been doing this 29 years. I’ve doing this longer than anybody in West Texas. We love it. Track is one of the few sports where you can get individual scholarships. That’s something that we look forward to.”