

2026 Legends Cross Country Meet

Saturday, October 10th, 2026 at Trumbull County Fairgrounds - Cortland, Ohio

Presented By: Maplewood High School Running Rockets – www.gopherarun.com/legendsmeet

The goal of the Legends Meet is to inspire young runners by meeting Legends of the sport of distance running.

Past Legends:

2007 - Ann Henderson, Mark Croghan

2008 - Patty Metzler, Alan Scharsu

2009 - Rachel Sauder Kinsman, Scott Fry

2010 - Maggie Infeld, Ricky Pittman

2011 - Bob Schul, Harrison Dillard, Briana Shook, Bernice Holland

2012 - Marc Hunter, Harrison Dillard and Bernice Holland

2013 - Bridget Franek, Bob Lunn

2014 - Bob Mau, Julie Dias Taylor, Joanna Dias Ripple

2015 – John Zishka, Katie Sabino Dugan

2016 – Dave Wottle, Kate Radkewich Burkowski

2017 - Clayton Murphy, Kate Radkewich Burkowski

2018 - Michelle Sikes, Sid Sink, Les Nagy, Sam Bair, Paul Talkington

2019 – Connie Jo Robinson Earls and the Caldwell XC Program

2020 – Meet Canceled due to Covid

2021 – Sunni Olding Lomnicki and Jack Hazen

2022 – Bill Rodgers and Susan Nash Sugar

2023 – Frank Shorter and Jessica Beard

2024 – Abby Nichols, Elmore Banton and George Nicholas

2025 – Butch Reynolds, Annie Heffernan, Ron and Sue Addison

2026 Female Legend



Olivia Howell – A 2019 Solon graduate, Howell started her HS career with a fifth-place finish at the 2015 OHSAA Div. I XC final as a freshman. She would add podium finishes in the OATCCC and OHSAA meets in her first high school campaigns in the event that would become her specialty-the 1,600 meters/mile-in HS and college. After finishing third in XC as a sophomore, Howell took the state and nation by storm in the 1,600 in the spring of 2017 after winning the indoor metric mile title in 4:58.15. She registered a pair of 4:52s en route to going undefeated outdoors in the 1,600 and recording the second-fastest time in the U.S., a 4:43.25 that won an OHSAA final where the top 4 broke 4:50.

Howell closed out her HS career at Solon with a runner-up XC finish as a junior before claiming the OHSAA 1,600 title the ensuing spring. She added an 800-1,600 double at the state final her season year, covering the distances in 2:08.60 and 4:45.25, respectively.

It didn't take long for Howell to make her mark at her new home, the University of Illinois. She swept the Big Ten indoor mile and outdoor 1,500 titles in 2021 and then was 10th in the NCAA 1,500 final for the first of six All-American honors as a collegian.

In 2022, she again won both conference crowns on the track and also grabbed All-American honors indoors and out in the mile/1,500. Her best finish in a collegiate XC race – first in the Midwest Regional – was the precursor for a memorable 2023 track season, her final at Illinois. Indoors, Howell blasted a mile PR 4:33.77 on the big oval at Notre Dame before winning the Big Ten and NCAA titles weeks later. Outdoors, she won again at the Big Ten meet and claimed another All-American honor in the NCAA 1,500.

A graduate transfer to Texas, Howell wrapped up her collegiate career with All-Big 12 runs in the 800 and 1,500 before claiming her final All-American honor in the NCAA 1,500 final at Hayward Field in 2024. Howell now runs professionally for Adidas.

2026 Male Legend



Cory Leslie - A 2008 graduate of distance-rich Sandusky Perkins, Leslie has competed and coached on the world stage in a relatively short span of years. Leslie won the metric mile as a junior in 4:08.41, narrowly missing the then state record held by another Perkins standout and 2009 Legend, Scott Fry, and anchored the Pirates to victory in the 4x800 relay. Leslie's senior year was even better, starting off with a Div. II XC title by more than 14 seconds after finishing eighth as a junior. He also had no equal on the track in the spring of 2008, dominating both the 800 and 1,600 finals at the state meet. He won the shorter race by an astounding 3.62 seconds in a still-standing Div. II state record 1:50.77 and then won the 1,600 by 5.62 seconds in 4:12.44. He also placed third that summer in the 1,500 at the USATF U20 national championships.

Moving on to Ohio State, Leslie finished third in the NCAA steeplechase final in 2012 and was part of the Buckeyes' All-American distance medley relay squad indoors that year. He also earned All-American honors in the mile indoors in 2011 and '12, along with the steeplechase in 2011. He was an eight-time NCAA qualifier at Ohio State and, heading into 2026, still holds several school records. Leslie tops the OSU charts indoors in the mile (by almost 2 seconds) at 3:56.85 and 1,000 meters at 2:22.48 and as a member of the DMR team at 9:31.17. He also is in the top 5 in the 800 indoors (1:48.11) and 1,500 (3:39.00) and mile outdoors.

Leslie won a bronze medal in the steeplechase at the 2015 Pan Am Games as a member of Team USA and helped the American squad to fifth in the Mixed Relay at the 2017 World Cross Country Championships.

Leslie followed former Ohio State coach Robert Gary to Furman after graduating from OSU, starting a coaching career that would take him to George Mason and then Arizona State, where he was named the head XC and distance coach in 2019. Today, the 2026 Legend is the head coach for Under Armour Mission Run Baltimore Distance. Earlier this year, Leslie also served as the head coach of the U.S. men's U20 team at the World XC Championships in Tallahassee. Running against such powers as Kenya and Uganda, Team USA finished third.

2026 Senior Legend



Joel Marchand – Long before The Decision altered professional sports in NE Ohio, another equally weighty decision changed the athletic path of 2026 Legend Joel Marchand and Navarre Fairless athletics. Convinced to play football for the Falcons as a freshman, Marchand returned to cross country the next fall and soon became one of the top distance runners in Ohio AND the school's first state champion in any sport and one of its most decorated ever.

Marchand's first time on a state meet podium was at the 1978 track finale at Ohio Stadium as he finished fifth in the then 2-mile run in 9:41.1. The following fall, he claimed his first state title in Class AA and led Fairless to the runner-up team spot in XC.

He added to his state title total back on the track in 1979 as his 9:22.2 clocking was the best in the 2 mile in AA and set the stage for a remarkable senior year that is one of the finest ever in the Buckeye state.

With a trio of Legends honorees (John Zishka, Ricky Pittman and George Nicholas) dueling and dominating in AAA, Marchand did not disappoint in a solo run in the 1979 Class AA individual race. His 12:11.9 clocking was more than 30 seconds ahead of his closest challenger and only bettered by Nicholas and a 12:08.2 over 2.5 miles in edging Pittman in the AAA individual race.

The Fairless star closed out his prep career in style, joining a short list of Ohio greats to win the Distance Triple Crown (XC and 1,600 and 3,200 in track) in a school or calendar year. His winning times in The Shoe that June were 4:16.7 and 9:13.4, which then was the AA state meet record.

Marchand stayed close to home to continue his running career, deciding to join fellow Legends honoree Jack Hazen and the then Malone College Pioneers, who were a major force in the NAIA ranks. Although only a true freshman, Marchand battled with the nation's best, helping Malone finish second to powerhouse Adams State with an 11th-place finish. A handful of months later, Marchand was a national champion indoors, claiming the 1981 NAIA 3-mile run in a then record 13:59.86 on the super tight arena ovals of the day and doubling it up with a fifth in the 2 mile. His championship was the second ever in Malone athletics history.

That fall, Malone was fourth in the team standings with Marchand finishing ninth, having battled with the likes of the incomparable Pat Porter and Adams State. Marchand and Porter squared off again indoors in 1982 in the NAIA 2-mile championship as Porter claimed his last NAIA title before dominating U.S. cross country for the next decade, with Marchand a close second. Marchand's final All-American honor at Malone was in 1984 when his 16th-place effort led the Pioneers to fourth in the NAIA XC ranks.

Marchand lives in Navarre, Ohio and is employed by Stark MRDD. He and his wife, Kathy, have two children, Raelyn and Brant.

The 2026 Legends Cross Country Meet Information

Date and Location

Saturday, October 10th, 2026 - The Legends Meet will be held at the Trumbull County Fairgrounds (4181 Hoagland Blackstub Rd. Cortland, OH). The Fairgrounds offer an excellent facility for cross-country meets. Ample parking, sheltered seating and restrooms are available to complement a fast, spectator-friendly course. Maplewood High School will be the host school for The Legends Meet.

Awards

The top three boys and girls teams in each division of the high school races and the top three boys and girls middle school teams will receive team picture plaque awards. The top seven members of the winning high school teams and the coach will receive individual awards. The top 40 individual finishers (regardless of division) in team races and the top 10 in open races will receive individual awards. Individual champions in each race will receive picture plaques. Individual and team awards are presented on the stage by The Legends immediately after the finish of each race.

Fees

- \$120 per gender for HS Boys and Girls (unlimited entries; \$12 per individual if 10 runners or less)
- \$90 per gender for MS Boys and Girls (unlimited entries; \$12 per individual if less than 7 runners)
- A "B Team" can be entered in a varsity race for a \$25 fee if enough starting boxes are available.

* Each coach submitting a full team into any one of the team races will receive a coach's gift upon returning their timing chips.

Schedule of Events – Modified from previous years:

- 9:30 - Middle School Boys and Girls Open Race - 2 Mile (Combined boys and girls)
- 10:00 - Middle School Girls Team Race - 2 Mile (Limited to 9 runners per team)
- 10:30 - Middle School Boys Team Race - 2 Mile (Limited to 9 runners per team)
- 11:00 - *Small Division 3&4 High School Open Race - 5K (Combined boys and girls)
- 11:30 - *Small Division 3&4 High School Girls Team Race - 5K (Limited to 9 runners per team)
- 12:00 - *Small Division 3&4 High School Boys Team Race - 5K (Limited to 9 runners per team)
- 12:30 - National Anthem / Presentation of The Legends
- 12:50 – Elementary Grades 3 and under Half Mile Race - Individual awards given to the top 10 boys and top 10 girls
- 1:00 - Elementary Grades 4-6 Mile Race - Individual awards given to the top 10 boys and top 10 girls
- 1:15 - *Large Division 1&2 High School Girls Team Race - 5K (Limited to 9 runners per team)
- 1:45 - *Large Division 1&2 High School Boys Team Race - 5K (Limited to 9 runners per team)
- 2:15 - *Large Division 1&2 High School Open Race - 5K (Combined boys and girls)