

THE HISTORY OF BOYS' TRACK & FIELD

In the spring of 1949, football and basketball coach Tom Carey became coach of yet another sport at Ursuline High School. Unlike the other two sports that were established prior to Coach Carey's arrival, track and field would be a completely new venture. In a carefully planned sequence, a Carey characteristic, the track program began slowly and carefully, and developed into a strong program for Irish athletes.

The 1949 track team was actually the 1949 Track Club that was designed to acquaint Ursuline athletes with the fundamentals of track and field. By the following spring, the "cindermen" as they were known at the time, engaged in varsity competition. Mr. Carey remained as coach thorough the 1950 season. He then passed the fortune of the young sport on to others and let them nurture its growth.

Since Mr. Carey, Ursuline has had seven other track coaches: Joe Clark (1951-1955), Lou Chiaro (1956-1961 and 1965-1969), Bill Narduzzi (1962), Joe Paul (1963-1964), Jim Pannozzo (1970-1974), Bob Jenkins (1975-1984) and George Stroia (1985-present).

These men have guided the Ursuline Track Program to City Series Championships in 1950, 1953, 1954, 1956 and 1963; and Steel Valley Championships in 1970, 1974 and 2004. In 2004, the second year of the Catholic Diocese of Youngstown Track Meet, Ursuline was the champion. The 1988, 1991, 1999 and 2004 squads have won District Championships.

Any athletes have gone on to earn laurels for their school and themselves. To date, Ursuline's Track Program has produced six individual state champions. The first was Joe Housteau, who in 1961 was the State Shot Put Champion. Then years later, in 1971, Ernie DeChellis won the 180 Yard Low Hurdles at the State Meet. David Hodge, who returned to coach Irish hurdlers from

1985-1991, won back-to-back State Titles in 1973 and 1974, in the 120 Yard High Hurdles. Tom Ragland was the State High Jump Champion in 1983. After two years as the State Runner-up, Tim Caffey finally won his State Title in the 400 Meter Dash in 1988. In 2002, Adam Chatman won the State Championship in the 300 Meter Intermediate Hurdles.

Several former members of Track & Field teams have been inducted into our Athletic Hall of Fame. While several were inducted for their contributions in other sport, those inducted specifically for Track & Field are Joe Houseau (1961), Ernie DeChellis (1971), Glen Hodge (1971), Joe Smaltz (1952), Dave Hodge (1974), Walter Angelo (1979), Ed Hernan (1982), Mark Bernard (1973), Chris Armstrong (1973), Tim Caffey (1988), Harry Johnson (1987), Bryan Cook (1988), Jim Pannozzo (1959), Jay Payne (1989), Tom Ragland (1983), Ron Gibson (1986), Chris Curd (1999), Steve Ballard (1999), Adam Chatman (2002) and Lennie Dukes (2000).

Ursuline's highest finish in a State Track Meet occurred in 1986 when the Irish finished fifth. Sophomore Tim Caffey placed second in the 400 Meter Dash, Junior Harry Johnson placed third in the 200 Meter Dash, and freshman Clinton Lynch, senior Ron Gibson, Caffey and Johnson combined to place second in the 4x100 Meter Relay. During the next two State Meets, the Irish finished sixth and eighth respectively.

At the 1991 District Track Meet the boys and girls of the Ursuline Track Program accomplished a first for the area by both winning District Championships.

The Ursuline Boys' Team made their first appearance in the Mahoning County Track Meet in 2003. They were the runner-ups that year. Their first Mahoning County Championship came in 2008 in Division II.

In 1989, the annual awards that are given to the athletes that score the most points in track events and the most points in field events were named after our first two State Champions. The award for scoring the most points in field events became known as the Joe Housteau Award. The first recipient of this award was Tom Drewek. The award for scoring the most points in track events became known as the Ernie DeChellis Award. The first recipient was Jay Payne.

Each year as winter turns to spring; young men work to continue to develop in the program. They and their coaches hope to add to the success of the program according to the formula that Coach Carey set down years ago: "...the first success that a program must achieve is the development of the character of its athletes. You must first judge a program by this standard. From there, all other successes flow."