

THE GREATEST PERFORMANCE EVER...



STATE PRELIMS BEFORE THE RESULTS WERE POSTED!

No other athlete in any sport in La Salle history has achieved a higher ranking in the state of California!

But the road was not always easy, nor was the end result assured. Paving a path to success, whether it is simply to set a new PR or to go all the way to state, is fraught with obstacles along the way. Perfection is elusive, and in fact, unachievable. Successful athletes are not perfect; successful athletes face obstacles as they arise, prepare well to minimize obstacles in the future, and accept the results of their performance in order to learn from their experiences.

The first half of the season was remarkably average for Michael in the jumps. He was not allowed to take all of his jumps at most meets by coach's decision. As a result it was difficult to find a rhythm. There were no PRs. That started to change after the Arcadia Invitational. But not before a low moment at the Russell Cup when Michael questioned why he was not

improving over his marks last season... Then came his next meet at Cathedral on April 21. He jumped over 22 feet three times and broke the school record at 22-5.5! And that occurred after a tiring trip to Carpinteria the previous weekend, a Monday workout of ten 200s and the most bounding he had done all season!



MR. STATE SPORTING HIS NEW HARDWARE!

Only four long jumpers in school history have jumped 22 feet. Two of the four only did it once, and it is very likely the third only did it once as well. By the end of 2010, Michael jumped over 22 feet in nine meets in his career, and several of those meets included multiple attempts over 22 feet!

Each year Michael went a step further in the long jump than the previous season. Freshman year he made league finals in the tough Del Rey League. Sophomore year he made CIF Finals, placing fifth. Junior year he made Masters, placing eleventh. This year the benchmark to hit at Masters was 22-6, the automatic state qualifying mark. Michael decided he had to achieve this in the first three of his six attempts at Masters. And boy did he! On his third attempt he flew 22-8.75, another school record, placing sixth in the section out of 570 schools, and becoming the first jumper in school history to qualify for the State Championships!



MICHAEL PERRY'S RECORD-SETTING JUMP, 23 FEET 2.5 INCHES!



PERRY WAVES TO THE CROWD AFTER RECEIVING HIS STATE MEDAL!

On Friday, June 4, Michael Perry stepped onto the runway at Buchanan High School in Clovis. It was the State Prelims. The thirty long jumpers who qualified for state were allowed three attempts, with a goal of finishing in the top nine and advancing to the State Finals the next day. Michael had the 14th best mark coming into the competition and was in the second of three flights made up of ten jumpers each. On his first attempt, Michael's leg buckled on the takeoff board and he had to bail out of the jump. It was a legal mark which measured just 15-11... Michael regrouped and prepared himself for his second attempt, which was his second best jump to that point in his career, 22-6.5. Bad luck came along on his third jump. While attempting to get the crowd to clap with him before he started his approach, the hottest heat in the girls 100 meters was starting on the other side of the track. The crowd was focusing on the 100. As they roared to that race, Michael's approach run was affected causing him to take off well behind the board. The mark was only 20-6.25.

State Prelims was over for Michael. After two flights, Michael was in fifth place at 22-6.5, but ten more jumpers in the top flight had yet to jump. Michael sat on the field, head down, arms crossed over his knees. As he reflected on his performance, Michael accepted the results and accepted that his performance would not be good enough to qualify him for the finals...

During the third flight Michael talked with his coach about what went well and what did not go well. The fact remained that his 22-6.5 was his second best ever, and in the last three years, that mark would have qualified him for State Finals. While Michael had not achieved his goal of 23 feet, it was important to note that he was on the right path to achieve that distance and that often in attempting to do something never done before, failure precedes ultimate success. Michael decided to practice his parkour skills, running and jumping off a wall nearby. After all, he was a free man now, having just completed his final meet in high school... or so he thought.

For some reason it took a long time for the final long jump results to be posted. Over an hour after the event closed, the results finally came out. Coach Ring had been waiting by the press box to get a copy of the results when they came out. He was in disbelief when he first saw them. Michael and his Mom had gone to the results board yet again to see if long jump was there. As Coach Blackman sat in the stands watching the meet, behind him Coach Norris exclaimed, "You mean he qualified?" as he looked at the results Coach Ring brought back. At that moment, Michael arrived and said, "Coach, guess what place I got?" Of course that place was ninth, the final qualifying spot for State Finals... The results had taken so long to be posted because there was a three-way tie for 10th, 11th, and 12th place at 22-6.25, all three just one-quarter inch behind Michael's 22-6.5! There was also a tie for 13th and 14th at 22-6, one-half inch behind Michael! How important is every quarter inch in the jumps? That night it was the difference between qualifying for State Finals and going home...

Making State Finals means you are one of the top nine in your event in a state made up of 37 million people, the most populous state in the country, and out of over 1400 high schools in CIF. If that doesn't bring a smile to an athlete's face, nothing will. Michael smiled on Saturday, June 5, as he waited for his event to begin. He had achieved something that had only happened three times before. Lancer Mark Ruelas went to the CA State Finals in the 3200 meters in 1980.

The girls 4x400 team of Daniella Russell, Mary Jo Alexander, Gina Clayton, and Natalie Calderon qualified in 2000. Thrower John Caulfield competed in Shot Put in 2002. The top finish at state achieved to that point was sixth place.

The best performance in athletics ever seen by Coach Blackman occurred just after 7 PM on Saturday, June 5, 2010, at Buchanan High School in Clovis, CA. Senior Michael Perry stepped onto the runway as the first long jumper of the night. He broke the school record on his first attempt, flying 22-10.25. That solid mark by the ninth qualifier sent a message to the rest of the field that Michael meant business. On his second attempt, Michael made school history once again, soaring over 23 feet for the first time, with a mark of 23-2.5. He was in third place after three rounds when the jumpers were reseeded. Michael would now be jumping seventh in his final three rounds. As the rounds went by, jumper after jumper gave his best attempts, with no others surpassing Michael's 23-2.5. Michael finished his fifth and sixth rounds matching his previous PR of 22-8.75, and surpassing it for the third time that night at 22-9.5. Four of his six jumps matched or exceeded his previous PR! Wow!

As the event ended, Michael was escorted to the awards stand where the top six jumpers in the state were introduced and awarded their State Championship medals. Michael received his third place medal, capping the greatest State Meet performance by any Lancer Track & Field athlete, and indeed achieving a level of athletics success that no other athlete in any sport at La Salle has ever achieved. Congratulations Michael! You are the very best!



THIRD IN STATE!

pasadenastarnews.com

Quotes from the Pasadena Star News High School Track Notes by Keith Lair, June 8, 2010

HIGH-FLYING PERRY

La Salle's Michael Perry had a very good reason to be excited after last Saturday's long jump competition in Clovis.

He achieved three goals, of which one – taking third place in state - wasn't necessarily in his plans 24 hours earlier.

Jumping 23 feet had been his primary goal all season. He had been so close, yet so far away until his second jump in the finals. He set a school record with a wind-legal 23-2 1/2.

"Usually I meditate on exactly how I am going to approach the jump," said Perry, who went through graduation ceremonies before the meet. "I told myself that I've done it so many times that I thought I would just go for it now. I would focus my attention on the crowd. It worked."

He went 22-3 1/4 to finish second in the CIF-SS Division 4 finals and then qualified for state at 22-8 3/4 in the CIF-SS Masters.

He struggled on the first day of State qualifying with a best effort of 22-6 1/2 and thought he was not advancing to the finals. But he got the ninth and final spot and that was enough to get him to his magical 23-foot barrier.

"I was thinking at the time that I had a 1 percent chance of qualifying," he recalled.

But then he went 22-10 1/4 on his first attempt, which was a personal best and school record. He followed that with his third-place finish. "I felt the power," he said. "I knew the 23 was coming. It was a great jump."

"I was wanting to finish in the top six, maybe a top three, so it was awesome. I knew I could do this. The coolest thing is that this was my last meet in high school and I went out with a PR of 5 3/4 inches."