



PHOTOGRAPH BY JACOB REED

# Chelsea Girls Indoor Track Team Wins State

## BY JEFF MONTGOMERY

In 2021, Trey Lee took over the track and cross-country program at Chelsea High School.

his first head coaching position after several years as an assistant.

Just four years later, Lee and a group of dedicated athletes made history, winning the school's first Girls' Indoor State Championship at the Birmingham Championships on February 1.

Under Lee's leadership, Chelsea High School is on the cusp of becoming Alabama's next track and field powerhouse, vying for titles with blue-blooded like Mountain Brook and Northridge high schools.

Lee gives credit to the athletes, many of whom have been with the team since he walked onto campus, and have brought into his vision of not only winning championships but also growing the

"These seniors were the backbone I had when I first started. The idea was never just a state championship title, I always tell them that they're champions, and they took that to heart," Lee said. "A lot of the kids that helped us win started on JV. And so they stuck with us through injuries and disappointments and their tenacity is what made them special."

An outsider may look at the Lady Hornets championship as a Cinderella story worthy of a Disney sports movie. You know the kind - a rag-tag team full of underdog David's coming from behind to stop the

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mighty Goliath at the last possible second. While he said they may have been outnumbered, The Lady Hornets were built for this moment.

"I knew back in August this was possible and that this could be done," Lee states confidently.

"Our only downfall is that our team is kind of small. For instance, Mountain Brook had about 20 girls at state, where we had eight that competed and scored points," explains Lee. "So that was our only downside but even with that our girls are determined, hardworking, tenacious - all the good adjectives."

Among the seniors leading the Lady Hornets to victory include Hannah Quick, the anchor of the 4x800 relay group which included Brylee Bennett, Evie Scroggins, and Juliette Edwards. Lee said the team "didn't have the best time" going into the final, however after mentioning to the girls that a third-place finish would put them in a great position to win the state championship, he said they rose to the challenge.

"From the gun, you could tell that they were going after it," Lee said. "Briley had the best race that she had that year and the senior that anchored it for us, Hanna Quick, ran a great race."

"I know for a fact Hannah didn't know how fast she had run," Lee added. "When we told her what time she ran she did 'Are you sure? Did we count that right?'"

Another senior playing a huge role in Chelsea's success is Tamarah Rice. Rice anchored the 4x200 relay team, which included Kamryn Hudson, Mia Dunavant, and Addison Foster, and achieved a new personal record (PR) and helped Chelsea edge out Northridge and Athens to earn first place. However, Lee said Rice's performance in the long jump and triple jump put the competition out of reach for their competitors.

"When Tamara came in fourth in the long and triple jump, I was like, 'okay we're good,'" Lee said. "I literally called my wife and I said 'Okay, we've done it!'"

Among the underclassmen, Lee highlighted the performances of junior Ty Cason, who finished first in the 400 Meters and 800 Meters and second in the 1600 Meters, and sophomore Mia Dunavant, who finished second in the 400 Meters, 800 Meters, and the 4x200 Relay, and captures first place as part of the 4x200 Relay team.

Regarding Dunavant, Lee said the sophomore is not only a talented natural athlete but is one of the hardest workers he's ever coached, often reminding her she can take a day off here and there from her intense training workouts.

"For other programs, she's a bit of a nightmare to deal with because not only is she athletic but she has two more years," Lee said. "Her willingness to do whatever it takes is what makes Mia special."

For Dunavant, her accomplishments take a backseat to those of the team. Dunavant said seeing other teams with twice as many athletes gave them the mental edge they needed to pull together and win Chelsea's



sea's first indoor state championship. She also believes she peaked at the right time.

"It's easier to get close individually and you're excited for each other when anyone has a time PR or scores one point in an open event," Dunavant said. "It's just so much easier to be excited for everyone because you're so much closer together."

"I think (my performance) was really good. I'm super happy with it," she adds. "I hadn't run my best all season, so to kind of break out at the state meet and come through for my team was really awesome."

The team also received contributions from sophomore Kamryn Hudson who competed with the first-place 4x200 Relay Team and then hustled back to campus to suit up for the Lady Hornets basketball team in their playoff win over Spain Park.

With four years and a state championship under his belt, Lee is building a dominant track and field program at Chelsea High School as well as promoting the sport throughout the community. However, his primary focus is creating a positive environment for the athletes to develop, and believes the 2025 Girls' Indoor Track team is a testament to his vision.

"The thing I can say about these athletes and what makes them special is that they want to get better and they want to work hard," Lee said. "They work hard together for one another. It's like the chemistry is good because they work hard together and they work hard together because their chemistry is good."

"The kids feed off of each other in the most positive way," Lee added. "That was my hope all along."