

[B] ON YOUR MARKS

Monta Vista varsity boys prepare to push off the starting blocks to start their race. The starter gives the traditional command, "On your marks, get set...," cueing the athletes to get into their starting positions. Anticipating the starting pistol, the athletes try to get into the best position they can to outrun their opponents. Photo by Mia Tsuchida



[C] FLYING START Freshman Alex Frefel launches off the starting block, ready for the sound of the starting pistol. Sprinters typically use starting blocks to provide support for their feet as they push off to secure a better race start and acceleration. Photo by Mia Tsuchida



[A] BLAST OFF Senior Valerie Ayzenberg propels herself off of the starting blocks, beginning her race as the starting pistol goes off. It is important for sprinters and distance runners to explode off of the blocks at the start of the race in order to rapidly accelerate. This initial burst of speed is essential for gaining an advantage over competitors. In addition to training and running during the season, Ayzenberg also trains during offseason to stay in shape and to maintain her endurance during races. "Usually I will run with my friends or by myself. I don't push it during offseason but usually I try to run 3-4 times a week and make sure I'm not getting injured." Photo provided by Valerie Ayzenberg

BEYOND THE FINISH LINE

Senior Valerie Ayzenberg talks about her experience on the track and field team

Senior Valerie Ayzenberg first started doing track and field in middle school, starting out by sprinting throughout middle school, and later getting more involved with distance events in high school.

"I do a mix of events, the 400 meters, 800 meters and the 600 meters. I call it middle distance, since I do both sprints and distance. In high school, I tried doing cross country and I got more invested in distance events that require more endurance and speed and ever since I just stuck to it. I love improving and watching myself reduce my times and get faster."

One of Ayzenberg's proudest moments in her track and field career was when she was finally able to hit her target time after working towards this goal the entire season.

"Last year, I was really focused on the 800 meters, and my coach set a goal for me to go sub 2:30. All season I was working towards that, [and it] was really frustrating because I kept [getting] 2:31 or 2:30.5. My very last race, [at] league qualifiers, I ran a 2:28 and it was a really proud [moment]. All my friends were all celebrating me, and it was just one of those moments where I was so grateful for everything."

Despite Ayzenberg's success throughout the years, mentality has been a challenging roadblock for her, and she advises track athletes to be okay with not being at your best all the time.

"When you have a bad race, [try] switching your mentality into understanding that it's not always going to be a race where you're going to set a personal record or where you're going to win. [Know that] you're not always going to be at your best and remind yourself that you have time to improve. You have many more meets and races coming up."

Although Ayzenberg enjoys improving and getting her times get faster, she also loves spending time with her team and the supportive community that the track team provides.

"What I love most about the track team is the track team. It's a good community, and everyone is supportive. Especially this year, [being] surrounded by lowerclass[men] and being able to watch them and the seniors is really fun. My best friends are on the team and I always get to spend time with them after a long day of school, [and] rant or laugh with them while we run or do drills. The coaches are [also] really nice to talk to. I couldn't ask for a better second family."

[D] ON THE FAST TRACK

Sophomore Zoe Laruelle and junior Rajeswari Kenyan clear their hurdles during the 1x100 hurdles race. The key objective during a hurdle race is to maintain speed, rhythm, and proper technique while clearing each hurdle efficiently to reach the finish line as quickly as possible. Photo by Mia Tsuchida



[E] FAR FLUNG During warm up, sophomore Krish Kotecha prepares to release his shot put, aiming to throw it as far as he can. Shot put is a unique event that requires strength, technique and strategy. Throwers not only need power and strength but also need to know how to use their bodies properly to generate this strength. Photo by Mia Tsuchida



[F] FULL STRIDE Junior Ethan Zhu speeds through his 1x110 hurdle race, effortlessly clearing every single hurdle. During hurdle races, it is essential for runners to take long strides in between hurdles and maintain a certain speed throughout the race. Photo by Mia Tsuchida



ON THE RIGHT TRACK

Members of the track team share their experience with the track team and their various events

"I like longer events [because] I like tactical races [and] being able to start slower and then hunt people down. Especially after a stressful day, I find it relaxing to just be alone with my thoughts. When I'm running long, I usually turn my brain off for a couple of hours when I'm at practice. In terms of racing, I think it's really fun to see someone ahead of me and be like 'I'm going to go catch up.'"

ANIKA BHANDARKAR (11)

"I do both 110 and 300 hurdles and I think that hurdles are more fun [and] exciting than just running. My [favorite part] about track is that even though it's an individual sport, there's a really big team aspect to it. Cheering for my teammates [and] watching other people race is really fun."

ETHAN LU (12)

"I mainly do discus, high jump, long jump, and triple jump. The most fun event for me is high jump, [but] I think I'm best at discus. I think the most challenging thing [about track] is remembering everything that the coach says, since there's a lot of different things and it's hard to get all of them in one."

JASMINE ZHAO (9)

"I do the 100 meter, 200 meter long jump and triple jump, [but] the 100 meter is my favorite because it's the fastest one. It really just highlights the most about track and field, [and] you can feel the rush of air and the ground beneath your feet."

BEN CHEN (12)