

# Another week, Another record

Junior distance runner  
**Emmanuel Sgouros**  
keeps getting better

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With two runners on his tail, junior Emmanuel Sgouros rounded the last curve of the 1600-meter SPC finals and sprinted toward the finish line. The St. Mark's crowd screamed encouragement to one of their runners while Sgouros felt his muscles groan from pushing through 40 mph winds. Nearing the finish line, Sgouros summoned a final reserve of energy to pull ahead. With six-tenths of a second to spare, he crossed the finish line, capturing his second title of the day.

In addition to placing first in the 1600-meter race (4:26.00), Sgouros also won the 3200-meter (9:47.33), which took place in Dallas, May 8.

During his first race, the 3200m, Sgouros conserved his energy instead of going all-out since he would run again four hours later.

Though he prioritized strategy over speed, Sgouros still felt tired during the second race, so he spent as little energy as possible until the final stretch, when he burst ahead of his competitors.

"He did it tactically," head track coach Richie Mercado said. "He didn't overdo it, and that really paid off."

This season, Sgouros broke the school record for the 1600m three times, most recently by almost 10 seconds. His time of 4:12:88 is the fourth fastest in Texas, 36th in the nation and a 22-second improvement over his best time last year. He also broke the 3200m school record by more than 39 seconds (9:05.82), which is second best in the state, 75th nationally.

"I knew I was working hard and running well," Sgouros said, "but I had no idea I would be running this fast."

Drew Woodfolk ('18), a two-year letter winner at Washington and Lee, set the previous marks for the 1600m and 3200m.

"During our senior year, the track captains and I wanted to leave the program in a better state than we found it," Woodfolk said. "Emmanuel's accomplishments are a testament to the fact that that actually happened."

Kyle Puckett ('20), who is now a freshman cross country and track runner at Washington University in St. Louis, ran frequently with Sgouros last year.

"Emmanuel has always inspired me," Puckett said. "He's an absolute beast."

Last summer, Sgouros trained in his hometown of Roussa Ekklesia on the island of Crete, where he took advantage of the cool weather and frequently scaled the mountainous terrain in order to better prepare for hilly cross-country courses. Since Greece had fewer COVID-19 cases than the United States at the time, Sgouros worried less about the pandemic.



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**RICHIE MERCADO**

Sgouros has kept himself in shape this year by running twice a day, about 70 miles a week. Sometimes he pushes himself to run 15 miles at a time. He also avoids eating sugar and fast food, and he always sleeps at least eight hours a night.

During the school week, Sgouros wakes up as early as

Drew Woodfolk set the previous St. John's 1600-meter record in 2018.

4:22.21

Sgouros has broken the 1600m record three times this year alone.

4:12.28

Woodfolk also established the school 3200-meter record in 2018.

9:45.35

9:05.82

Just a week after setting the 1600m record, Sgouros set the 3200m mark.

PHOTO BY Sarah Clark; DESIGN BY Willow Zerr

5:30 to exercise. He sometimes spends his free periods or lunch running.

"He's choosing to do things that will make him better at running. That means he might not do stuff that other kids would, like going to parties or eating junk food," Mercado said. "When it comes to the team, he's always right there."

Although track and cross-country athletes compete individually, Sgouros finds inspiration in his teammates.

"Without good teammates, it's hard to look forward to going to practices and long track meets," Sgouros said. "It's a lot more motivating to run for something other than just myself."

During quarantine, Sgouros started training with Tim Goldsack, a private coach. Since then, Goldsack has helped Sgouros improve his strength with new workout routines.

"When Emmanuel and I first met, he told me that he really wanted to go from being one of the best in Texas to being one of the best in the country," Goldsack said. "So we took his training to the next level."

Although strength is important, Goldsack says that a large part of Sgouros's ability comes from his positive attitude.

"Emmanuel doesn't let the emotion of a race get to him," Goldsack said. "He trusts the training and his talent, and then he executes the race perfectly."

Mercado appreciates Sgouros's mindset as well.

"He's very humble, quiet and grounded," Mercado

said. "When he's practicing, he's just one of the guys."

Since Sgouros holds some of the best times in the nation, colleges have taken notice, especially after he competed this year at national meets in Alabama and North Carolina.

Once Covid restrictions lessen, Sgouros hopes to run in more out-of-state meets against tougher competition.

"If I get into a race where I have to chase after somebody who's better than me, I think I could run even faster," he said.

Sgouros also aspires to make the Greek national track team within the next few years.

"I'm proud of being American, but as a first-generation immigrant, I have always had a special longing for Greece," Sgouros said. "It's also easier to make the national team in Greece than it is in the United States since there isn't as much competition."

With his senior year fast approaching, Sgouros wants his records to serve as motivation for future runners.

"Hopefully they see my records and are not intimidated," Sgouros said, "but instead accept the challenge of trying to chase after them."