

Britani Gonzales, a True Student-Athlete for Santa Teresa High School

By Tyler Dunkel, NMAA Sports Information Director



One might think that a 17-year-old high school senior would have their mind set on just getting through their final year and then heading off to college. Although that is the ultimate goal for track and field standout Britani Gonzales, she still has much more to accomplish before leaving the halls of Santa Teresa High School in May of 2015.

The two-time 800-meter state champion, cross country runner, basketball player, student athletic trainer and honor student, carrying a 4.571 GPA, and ranking in the top 10 percent in her class, has a full plate her senior year and wouldn't have it any other way.

"I'm always busy with school and sports," Gonzales said. "My education is very important to me. If I wasn't in the top 10 percent in my class I would be very disappointed in myself. School and sports are hard to keep up with but I make the time to focus on both. Really any free time that I have I'm either doing homework or studying. I'm also involved in athletic training so I have to stay after all the other athletes leave to help clean up. Sometimes I will get home late and I'll tell my mom that I will eat dinner in my room or at the computer so I can continue to study. I love what I do and I wouldn't change it one bit."

Gonzales' mother, Shawna Blount says her daughter is a very motivated young lady.

"Britani has always been very dedicated to anything and everything she puts her mind to. She has a goal in her head and she does whatever it takes to accomplish that goal. I have always supported her but she has always been a very mature person and taken on that responsibility. She is a very self-motivated young lady."

Gonzales is the current record holder for Class 5A (which was Class 4A prior to 2014-15) in the 800-meters, posting a time of 2:14.60 her sophomore season at the state meet. Although being the state record holder is a great accomplishment, Gonzales says her goal for the upcoming year is to be the all-time state record holder, across all classifications. Currently, Laci Jackson, a former runner at Hobbs High School and New Mexico State University, holds that mark at 2:13.39, a record that has stood since 1999.

"My goal last year was to break my own record but since basketball and track cross over I didn't have as much time as I usually would to train. But I want to run a 2:12.00 this coming year."

Her coach Epifanio Solis says the 15 year old mark will fall in 2015, while having a much loftier goal for Gonzales this year.

“That record is going down in 2015. Senior year for my athletes is a year that we don’t want to hold back. We train our athletes from their freshman year to their senior year to peak in their last state championship of their career and I think Britani will do just that. We are not looking to just break the mark at 2:13.39 but we are striving for 2:10.00. She has the ability.”

The 800-meter run is arguably the hardest race in track and field simply because it’s not a full on sprint nor an endurance race, it’s both. Coach Solis believes Gonzales is the perfect runner for the event.

“The 800-meter is a combined strength, speed and endurance race and Britani has that natural speed that I don’t have to teach. I think what makes her a great 800-meter runner is that when I send her out to execute the training sessions she can hold the pace very well. Britani has the ability to run in the front, she has the ability to run in the group and she has the ability to run from behind, all because she knows how to execute the strategy we put into place for her.”

For this very driven young lady, college is the next step. Gonzales dreams of running track at the Division I level and is keeping her options open.

“After high school I want to continue to run at the collegiate level and hopefully get a track scholarship to a Division I school. I’m open to all options but I would like to go to the University of Houston or the University of New Mexico.”

Coach Solis agrees that Gonzales can make it at the collegiate level.

“Most definitely I think she can compete as a Division I athlete. Her time right now puts her in the top-10 and in some cases the top-5 in most conferences in the country. It’s a good indication that her best is yet to come.”

Gonzales is the daughter of Gerald Gonzales and Shawna Blount, both of whom ran track during their time in school. She also has four younger siblings and enjoys shopping and hanging out with her friends when she’s not practicing or hitting the books.

For comments about this story or ideas on future stories please email Tyler Dunkel at tyler@nmact.org