

Making Tracks

DMPS athletes are training hard and turning heads to change the state’s outlook on the metro athletic program.

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It is a cool but bright Saturday morning on the track. Sophomore Jessica Kyne is minutes away from racing some of the best runners in the state - all of which are upper-class runners from suburban schools. Kyne wants to make a name for herself and pave a way for her district.

For what feels like centuries, metro schools have lived in the shadows of suburbia, constantly overlooked and underestimated. Recently, athletes from Hoover, Roosevelt, East, North, and Lincoln High School have voiced they are tired of being ignored. Metro athletes, including Kyne, are here to prove themselves when put up against suburban schools. Their goal is to gain respect and they have started their mission with a bang.

Kyne made her high school debut last year, being named the fastest freshman in the state. Placing second in the state for the 200 meter dash and third in the 100-meter dash, Kyne drew a lot of attention to herself as only a high school freshman. Her current events consist of the 100-meter dash, 200-meter dash, 4x100-meter dash, and occasionally the 4x200-meter dash. With the spotlight shining on her, many opportunities have been revealed to the runner.

“A lot of suburban schools have asked me how I feel about transferring my freshman year, but I want to stay in the Metro. I want to give us a chance to finally win,” Kyne said.

Not only has she made this claim, but many other Metro athletes also express their opinion on going up against suburban schools.

As much as Kyne has created a name for herself and opened eyes to the talent of the Metro, she is only one student at Hoover and she is not a one man show.

Russell Lamar-Nelson, a multi-sport athlete at Roosevelt High School, has turned the heads of many. While playing football in the fall and running track in the spring, he still finds a way to be a student and he is a proud advocate for getting an education. In the spring, Nelson runs the 100-meter dash, 200-meter dash, 4x100-

meter dash, 4x200-meter dash, and occasionally the 800-meter sprint medley relay.

When football season hits, Nelson grabs his helmet and heads to the field as a running back. While talking to peers and other classmates of Nelson, they have made it noticeably clear that Nelson’s athleticism and determination is something they most admire.

His talent has grabbed the attention of many people and he has shown great resilience. Lamar would like it to be known that Metro athletes are just as good as the suburban athletes despite any public opinion.

“My favorite memory was definitely making history against Waukee. We broke a 127-game win streak against the suburbs. We did it for the city and I take pride in that,” Nelson said.

“I want to stay in the Metro. I want to give us a chance to finally win.” Jessica Kyne said.

There is a clear divide between the Metro athletic experience and the suburban experience.

Former North High School athlete and current Valley High School athlete Rouce Sayee could not agree more. Many students in the Metro feel there is a distinct hierarchy between the two districts. They feel as though they are seen as less than not only by the suburbs but the staff of both districts as well.

“I used to never want to play sports because of the opinions’ people had about metro athletes and how bad it was. But I figured who cares, I am playing to have fun, you know?” Sophomore Takira Smith said.

Sayee spent his first two years at North High School and now is currently a junior at Valley High School. Sayee is a multi-sport athlete, playing basketball, football, and running track and field. He is one of many metro athletes that find themselves having to transfer to suburban schools because of the continuous complaints about the lack of recognition they get while attending a Metro school.

Numerous athletes find themselves entering the transfer portal by the time junior year hits. Athletes like Kyne, Lamar, Smith, and many other faces of the metro want to be the change for their district.

“I hate to say this, but at Valley, it is a better experience, athletic wise. They have better facilities here and more opportunities. I have a better chance of going to the State Championship game than I did when I went to North. But I will say North was a lot of fun even with the struggles,” Sayee said.

While this topic is still a big debate in the city, despite the standing point of everyone, many can agree that the city is filled with talent, no matter where you look. The talents of the Metro are making their mark on the city, and they do not plan to stop anytime soon.



Sophomore Jessica Kyne runs at the 2021 State Track Meet. Kyne placed first in 100 meter dash prelims. Des Moines Schools Flickr.

What's In My Track Bag?

1. Spikes
2. Rollers
3. Running Shoes
4. Headphones
5. Granola Bars
6. Extra Socks