

## The Province

# Ellenwood hits trifecta, Daly-Grafstein has his best day as valley and city Saints win at multi-events

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Ben Daly-Grafstein of St. George's Saints tied rival Nick Fyffe in the pole vault, but won the BC high school decathlon championships Saturday in Abbotsford. (Arlen Redekop, PNG)



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ABBOTSFORD — Nothing seems to be able to slow Georgia Ellenwood's determined drive to become the most successful multi-event track and field athlete in B.C. girls high school history.

And despite suffering two torn hamstrings in less than a year, Ben Daly-Grafstein showed the perseverance that made him a provincial champion.

Those were the two story-lines which peaked Saturday afternoon at Abbotsford's Rotary Stadium as the Subway B.C. high school track and field championships opened with the women's heptathlon and men's decathlon events.

Ellenwood, the Grade 11 standout with the Langley Secondary Saints, became just the third female in provincial meet history to win the seven-event decathlon three times, a feat she accomplished by winning six of the seven disciplines in competition Friday and Saturday at Rotary's Jane and Gerry Swan Track.

Daly-Grafstein, the Grade 12 from Vancouver's St. George's Saints, was able to improve on a fourth-place finish from last season, registering an amazing eight personal bests over the two-days of the competition in the 10-discipline test to top Nick Fyffe of Vancouver College, the Fighting Irish senior who took silver for the second straight season. Daly-Grafstein finished with 6,384 points, while Fyffe was second with 6,253.

"I have had a lot of injuries the last year, so to tear both hamstrings and then come back and have such a great decathlon is really satisfying," said Daly-Grafstein who tore his left hamstring in the heats of the 110-metre hurdles last June on the first day of the individual-event portion of the meet at Swangard Stadium, then tore the right ham string during a January training session.

The first tear wiped out his entire summer, while the second took him out of competition for the first three months of 2012.

So it was more than significant that Daly-Grafstein barrelled out of the gates on Friday, with PB's in both the 100 metres (11.45 seconds) and long jump (6.95 metres), the latter one of his two event-wins over the weekend.

"After those first two events I sort of rode it out the rest of the day until the 400 metres (51.84 seconds), where I just ran as hard as I could," explained Daly-Grafstein of finishing the first day of the competition in first with 3,420 points, 42 more than the second-place Fyffe. "Then on Saturday, it was the (110-metre) hurdles where I PB'd again (and won in a time of 14.99), and was able to put a big gap on the field."

The only events that weren't personal bests for Daly-Grafstein were the pole vault, where he and Fyffe tied for first at 3.70 metres, and the 1,500-metres finale (5:01).

Rostam Turner of Kelowna was third overall with 5,653 points.

Daly-Grafstein plans to compete in the long jump, pole vault and 110-metre hurdles next week at Swangard, as well as with the 400- and 1600-metre relay teams.

In the heptathlon, Ellenwood came through with 4,955 points, 681 better than second-place Grade 10 Kelly Watts-Watling.

The victory moved her into a tie with Langley-D.W. Poppy's Kelly Ann Kempf (1985, 86, 88) and Courtenay-G.P. Vanier's Katie Gallagher (2004-06) as the only three-time hep winners.

"To win it four times would be incredible," said Ellenwood, who has upped her point total each season, despite competing over the weekend with an inflamed left take-off foot, which severely hampered her explosiveness in the jumping events.

What pleased Ellenwood most about her weekend?: That her work with new throws coach Tom Nielsen was starting to pay huge dividends.

Ellenwood's ever-growing depth as a heptathlete was shown by her efforts in the winning both the shot put (9.74 metres) and the javelin (37.3 metres). She was also first in the 100-hurdles (14.92 seconds), 200 metres (25.62), long jump (5.3) and 800 metres (2:26.14). She was second in the high jump (1.62).

This coming Friday and Saturday, at the main portion of the B.C. meet, Ellenwood is planning on entering the same high jump, long jump, 100-metre hurdles trifecta which she swept in golden fashion last June en route to the meet's Top Female Performer honours. But she says the coming week will be the final arbiter.

"The high jump might not happen," she says of considering her foot injury. "I am taking the whole week off from training. That is a risk. But I think the best thing for me is come into provincials fresh."

Allison Eades is the only girl in B.C. meet history to win four straight multi-event titles. However her first two came in the form of the five-event pentathlon which she won over its final two seasons of inclusion (1980-81) while a Grade 9-10 at Burnaby's Cariboo Hill. Over her Grade 11-12 years at Burnaby Central (82-83), she won the first two heptathlons