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Boys Track and Field Athlete of the Year: Minecci leaves Walton on top

By Liam Dreesen MDJ Sports Writer
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Walton's Joseph Minecci was a frequent visitor to medal podiums during the 2024 season, culminating with the Class AAAAAAA state championships, with a pair of titles and a third-place finish.

Special - Leah Watson, file

Joseph Minecci finished his senior season for the Walton track and field team with three region titles and two state championships.

Minecci dominated in the Region 5AAAAAAA meet, winning the 800-, 1,600- and 3,200-meter races.

"It was just my plan — take it as easy as I could, but also get the wins," Minecci said.

The Class AAAAAAA sectional was a different story. Minecci finished without a win, but he said it was part of the plan he and Walton coach Patrick Kay set to conserve energy for the state meet.

“It took a lot for me to not get in there and compete and try to win those,” Minecci said. “I had to go in planning to just qualify for state, and then I was going to have to get to state and really compete.”

Minecci and Kay said they decided he should take it easy in the sectional because of the amount of races he had run in such a short amount of time.

The plan worked, with Minecci leaving the state meet with wins in the 800 and 1,600, along with a third place finish in the 3,200.

“I had to take the momentum from qualifying and put it into trying to win, and I wanted to bring my team up,” Minecci said. “And, you know, having my friends there, having it be my last season, it was just all or nothing, and I just had to go out and work as hard as I could.”

For his efforts, Minecci was named the Cobb County Boys Track and Field Athlete of the Year by the county’s coaches.

“It’s a great honor. I’m excited to have made it this far in my career,” he said. “I never would have seen it coming, having started as a freshman.”

Minecci said his season was a breakout one for him, and that he made huge progressions compared to previous seasons. Next year, he will continue his running career at Georgia after committing to the Bulldogs in December.

“It’s a huge opportunity. I’m very happy about it. I think it’s going to be a great time,” he said. “They have a great team. I think we’re gonna do really well this season.”

Minecci said his favorite memory from this past season was the team’s senior night meet.

“It was just special to be there with my team and hang out with all the other seniors and reminisce about our four years together and just how far we had come,” he said.

2024 Cobb County All-County Boys Track and Field Team

Athlete of the Year

Joseph Minecci, Walton

Coach of the Year

Patrick Kay, Walton

First Team

Sprinters: Mehkai Williams, Sprayberry; Tyson Poole, Walton; Gabriel Carson, Allatoona

Distance: Joseph Minecci, Walton; Andrew Rothwell, Whitefield Academy; Dermont Maloney, Pope

Hurdles: Jorden Reddick, Marietta; Daniel James, McEachern

Shot Put/Discus: Tahir Hines, Allatoona; Omer Inan, Walton

Pole Vault: Will Frederick, Marietta; Seth Burns, Allatoona

Triple Jump/Long Jump: Femi Stuart, Walton

Relays: Wheeler (Shemarr Session, Ephraim Riddick, Joseph Oliver, Ja’Von Broussard)

Second Team

Sprinters: Tyson McCrary, Walton; Keyawn Spencer, Pebblebrook; Ryan Nash, Kennesaw Mountain

Distance: Cline Huggins, Harrison; Grayson Swingley, Harrison

Hurdles: Shemarr Session, Wheeler; Triston Smith, Marietta

Shot Put/Discus: Demary Toney, Marietta

Long Jump: Gosfavor Adenuga, Kennesaw Mountain; Marqavious Saboor, Kell; Brandon Dodd, Kennesaw Mountain

High Jump: Gosfavor Adenuga, Kennesaw Mountain; Jabaar Abdul-Malik, Harrison; Jackson Crowder, Campbell

Relays: Pebblebrook (Cameron Yeary, Marcus Robinson, Jalen Brassell, Keyawn Spencer); Harrison (Grayson Swingley, Clint Huggins, Bryce Brownlee, Riley Comstock)

Honorable Mention

Allatoona: Lukas Espino. **Campbell:** Michael Carroll. **Hillgrove:** Joseph Brooks. **Kell:** Tyriq Green. **Kennesaw Mountain:** Cameron Williams. **Marietta:** Nasie Williams. **McEachern:** Tristan Arey, Nnadozie Onyirimba. **Mount Paran Christian:** Cameron Hewling, Hank Stevens. **North Cobb:** Shea Thiewes. **North Cobb Christian:** Michael Perry. **Sprayberry:** Jayden Gillis, Nicco White, Aiden Williams, Marcus Williams, Mehkai Williams. **Walton:** Aiden Ziolo. **Wheeler:** TreVaughn Calhoun, Larry Paul III. **Whitefield Academy:** Jace Baker, Bo Mitchell.