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## Guardiola's encouragement had impact on Soule

*By Jeff Arenz*  
*Sports writer*

FREMONT — Before Jessica Soule became Fremont Ross High School athlete, David Guardiola was there to encourage her during running events.

On Saturday, Soule and Wyatt Harvey were named the recipients of a collegiate scholarship from the David J. Guardiola Scholarship Fund during the David J. Guardiola Track and Field Festival at Fremont Ross's Alumni Fields.

"I really honored to receive this scholarship because, when I was in middle school, David would always encourage me to do well," Soule said. "I was only in eighth grade (at the time) but, when I ran, he would always tell me that I did a good job. He was excited for me and that I would be running at the high school level."

Guardiola, an 800-meter runner for the Little Giants, died in a car accident June 19, 2005. During that summer and every one since, Guardiola's family, with the support of many running clubs and area sponsors, have hosted the David J. Guardiola Track and Field Festival to honor his legacy and to provide Ross students with an opportunity to earn a scholarship.

Soule, who was the winner of the Female 17-18 Division 800 run in 2:47 on Saturday, has decided to continue her academic and athletic careers this fall at Grace College in Winona Lake, Ind. She was the captain of the Ross cross country squad in 2008.

Other female age division winners in the 800 run were Mikayla Overmyer (7-9) in 3:45.01, Hope Sivert (9-10) in 3:15.27, Sarah Szymanowski (11-12) in 3:01.72 and Michelle Leigh Jack (30-39) in 3:02.86.

Chris Graber, an Ohio State University athlete and Sandusky Perkins graduate, was the winner of the Male 19-29 Division 800 run in 2:08.00.

"From what I've heard about him, David was a great runner," Graber said. "I remember running this race as a senior. This is where its at ... its the final (individual) event. I wanted to end the meet strong and have a good race."

Graber bested Ross and Baldwin-Wallace College athlete Nathan Bowen, who ran the 800 in 2:12.00.

Other male age division winners in the 800 run were Robert Joerg (11-12) in 2:56.99, Louis Guardiola (13-14) 2:24.00, Zachary Humrichouser (15-16) in 2:19.51 and Harvey (17-18) in 2:17.45, Chris Sarsony (40-49) in 2:31.29 and John Moor (50-100) in 2:45.00.

"Earning this scholarship shows that working hard pays off," said Harvey, who leaves Wednesday for New Mexico Military Institute. "With all the hard work that an athlete puts in and all the schooling a student goes through in four years of high school, when you receive a scholarship like this, it makes it worth it."

Harvey won the Male 17-18 Division 400 dash in 56.35 seconds.

Graber and his friends were proud to support the meet, which is a family-style festival that uses officials to record exact times and distances.

"I like this meet because of its positive environment, Graber said. "I brought my friends — Kerry Fial, Ben Kalis and Ryan Garman. We all came out here, had a great time in a great meet and helped raise money for a scholarship fund for kids. What's better than that?"

Fial, Kalis (an all-Ohio hurdler) and Garman were teammates of Graber at Perkins, which won the Boys Division II state track and field championship in 2008 before ending up sixth in 2009.

Graber also won the Male 19-29 Division 400 dash and finished second to Buckeyes' sprinter and Big Ten champion Tony Cole in the 100 dash 10.67-11.54 seconds.

Woodmore graduate, four-time Division III OHSAA state champion and two-time Big Ten discus champion Emily Pendleton bested Wolverines' teammate Allison Liske in the discus 151.90-144.11 meters. Pendleton added a victory in the hammer throw against Oak Harbor native Jessica Lipstraw 151.70-83.20 meters.

Erin Pendleton, a Woodmore graduate, a two-time Division III OHSAA discus state champion and Michigan recruit, captured the Female 17-18 Division discus (158.70 meters) and hammer throw (145.40 meters). St. Joseph Central Catholic athlete Jessica Molyet, who finished third in the Division III state meet threw the discus 135.10 meters.

Ohio State graduate Elon Simms, who was Guardiola's track and field teammate at Fremont Ross, worked during the meet as a bullpen attendant, checking off the names of athletes before they competed in each event.

Simms, who ran the 400 intermediate hurdles for the Buckeyes from 2006-2008, sat out much of the 2009 season with a medical redshirt. He will have a fifth year of NCAA eligibility and compete for the Buckeyes in 2010 while he attends graduate school at OSU.

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Ohio State University graduate and 2008 Big Ten 100 dash champion Anthony Cole (front) leads Buckeyes' teammate Chris Graber (back left) in the 100 dash during the Guardiola Track and Field Festival on Saturday at Alumni Fields. (Brenda Soule | News-Messenger correspondent)



At left, David Guardiola, father of David J. Guardiola, presents a scholarship to Fremont Ross graduate Jessica Soule, while, at right, Judy Guardiola presents a scholarship to Fremont Ross graduate Wyatt Harvey on Saturday. (Brenda Soule | News-Messenger correspondent)