By Jan Schultz
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A total of 52 high school athletes are out for the 2009 track season at Chase County Schools.

And, the total is divided equally with 26 girls and 26 boys on the two rosters.

The first day of practice arrived a few days apart for the teams earlier this month since the boys' basketball season runs a week longer.

Head Girls' Coach Al Zuege held first practice for the Lady Longhorns on March 5, while the boys' team hit the track for the first time on March 9, said Head Boys' Coach Marc Mroczek.

Weather has been cooperating for the most part, but the teams had to practice indoors twice last week. With temperatures in the 70's Monday and Tuesday this week, the team has been enjoying very pleasant practice conditions outdoors lately.

The first week for both teams was spent on foundation work, but the athletes are moving into more technique now, both coaches said.

"Especially with our younger kids, we've been working on starts, getting in the blocks," said Mroczek.

Zuege, likewise, said he's been working with his athletes on starts, exchanges, hurdle drills and running form.

It's not too early to be starting that technique work, either. The Longhorns open their season next Saturday, March 28, at the Cambridge Invitational.

There is one change on the schedule this season. The teams won't be competing at the Gothenburg Invitational. Rather, they will attend the Sutherland Invitational on Friday, April 17.

Coach Mroczek noted the teams at Sutherland, mostly C and D schools, are more their size, compared to some of the area's bigger Class B schools that compete at Gothenburg.

Chase County will compete in Class C again this year, after dropping from Class B to C last season.

This year's SPVA meet will be held in Hershey on Saturday, April 25.

The teams will go west this year for districts to be hosted by Bayard. Chase County submitted a bid to host the district meet this year, but it was awarded to Bayard instead.

The state track meet will be held at the start of the Memorial Day weekend this year, May 22-23.