

# EQUALITY AMONG CHAMPIONS

travel editor | phoebe xu

Imagine working all season putting in effort and time to be a better athlete. Your diligence finally pays off. You and your team win a state championship. But wait, your success is eclipsed because the athletes before you who have graduated also won state championships. You don't get the credit that other sports receive just because your team has a legacy of success.

Six sports teams won state championships last year in the 2017-2018 season: boys' cross country, boys' swim, boys' basketball, girls' track, boys' baseball, and tennis. The cross country, swim, and tennis teams have won multiple state championships in the past few years, while basketball won for the first time in school history and baseball for the first time in 33 years; however, the hiatus between wins should not make one championship more valuable than another. Some Students think that teams should be treated the same on all fronts:



2017 boy's swimming state champions

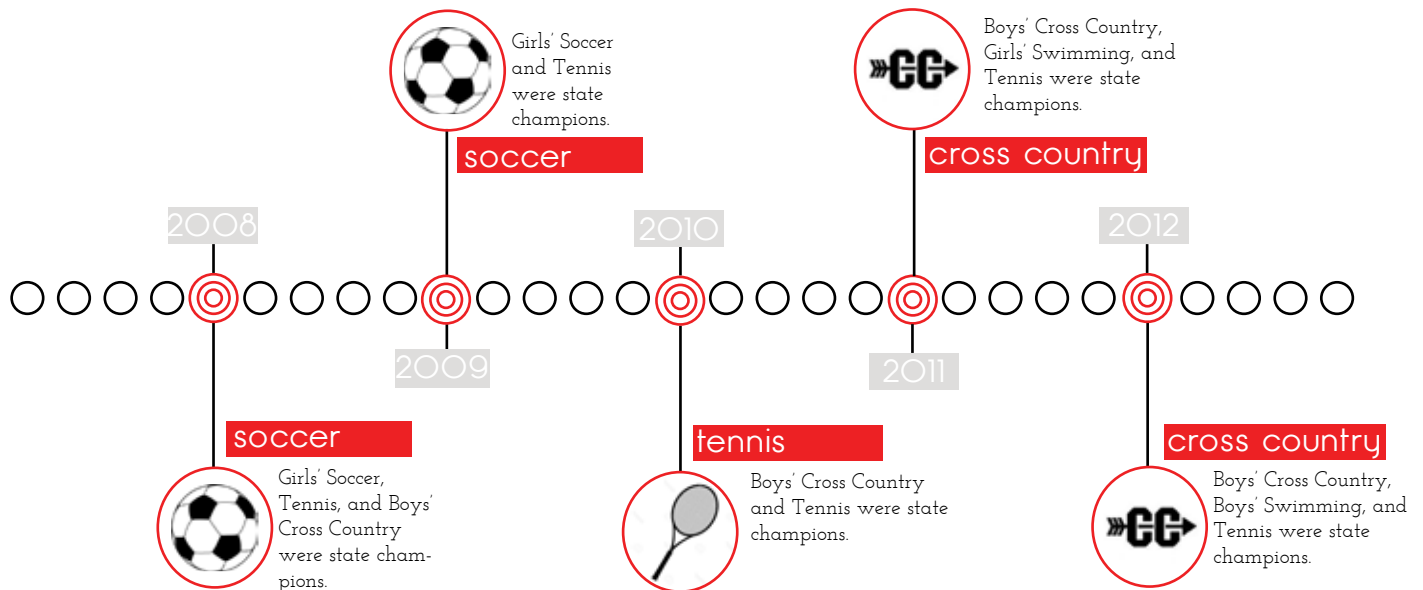
something St. Andrew's has not done.

"I feel like the tennis team has gotten basically nothing from the school even though we have won multiple state championships these past few years," Junior Lizzie Lee said. "The only funding we get is mostly from the moms of the team. I feel like just because tennis isn't one of the South's most popular sports like basketball, football, or baseball that are dominated mostly by boys, it doesn't make tennis any less important, and the school shouldn't make it less important either."

The tennis team has been one of the most successful sports team at St. Andrew's with 15 state championship wins in the last 16 years, but the team receives little to no recognition because of their continual success in the past. Along with Lee, many other athletes feel the same way about the lack of recognition from the school.



2017 boys' cross country state champions



The girls' soccer team played in the state championship game for the first time in nine years, but they still did not receive any commendation or any support from the school to encourage students to go to the game.

"The soccer program, in general, has



2018 boy's basketball state champions

always been undermined," Sophomore Allison Santa-Cruz said. "The baseball team has received new gear every year with several new jerseys this past year, while the soccer team has jerseys that are at least five years old. The announcements that are given by the school for sports have different emphasis based on the team. When [the soccer team] was playing at the state championship, our team did not get a tailgate before the game. Seeing the basketball team get a tailgate and the fact that the whole school was gathered to watch the basketball video was like a slap in the face. I know that if the soccer team had won our state championship game, we would not have gotten any posters."

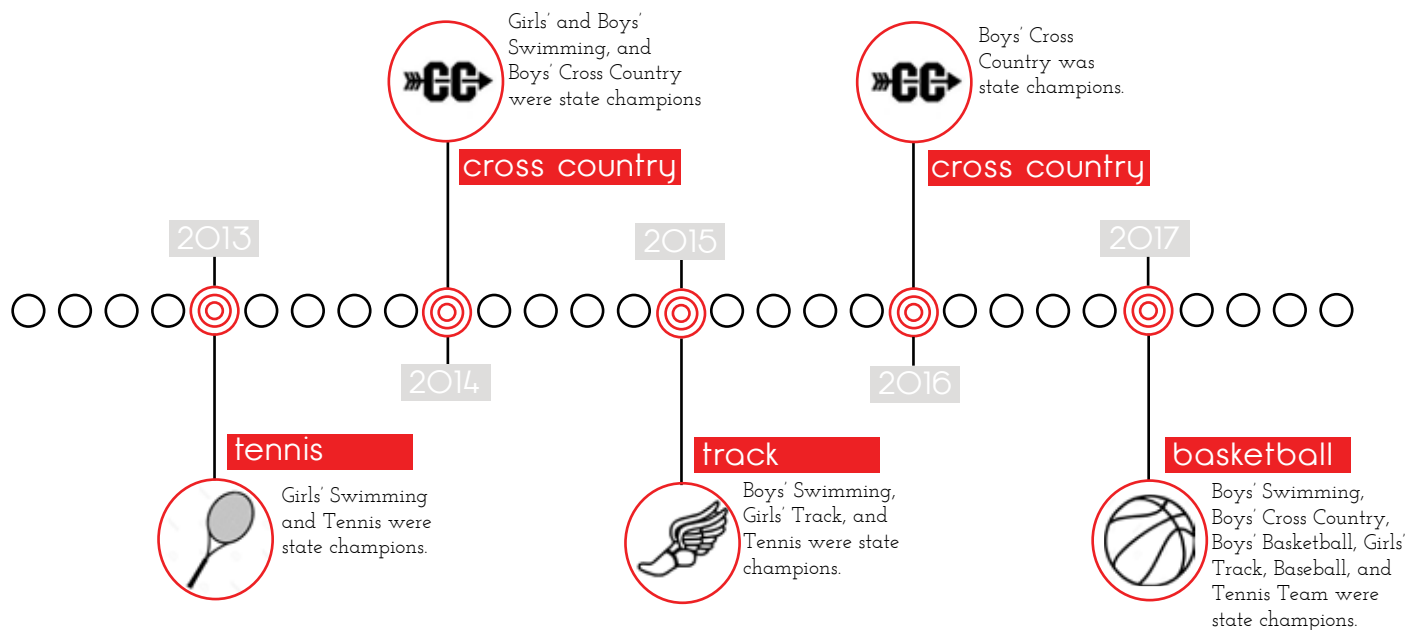
The girls' track team won the state

championship and previously won in 2015. No one expected the team to pull out this state championship win this past year, and some are disappointed with the lack of support.

"Track receives barely any recognition at all," Junior Simone Weatherspoon said. "No one comes to watch the meets, and we even struggle to get volunteers to work our meets. The girls' track team pulled out a difficult, gritty win at state this year with multiple members placing first in their individual events, yet the banner from MHSAA was all the team received. The team also went to open doors at carpool, but no one knew who we were or that we had even won state. Additionally, it seems like the most consistently accomplished teams (tennis, swimming, and cross country) are taken for granted. As a dance team member and SA student, I am extremely proud of the basketball and baseball teams, but as a track member that was part of the Spring 2018 State Champion Team, I can't help but feel excluded and ignored."



2018 girls' track state champions



The school invites most state championship teams to go to the Lower School to do morning carpool, but they did not invite the girls' track team. Instead, the team had to ask the school for participation in this tradition. Junior Ebun Oyata, a nationally recognized track athlete, feels the



2018 tennis state champions

same as Weatherspoon.

"Initially, I did not think much of the lack of recognition that the girls' track team received, but I now notice that we did not get as much recognition as the basketball team from the school," Oyata said. "Basketball got a whole presentation in an assembly and a poster. The school also made a huge deal on the baseball championship win including a ring presentation during the halftime of a football game. For track, it has been a few years since we have gotten a state championship, and even before that one, it had been a really long time. It would have been nice to get more than a small announcement at the end of an assembly for our recognition."

While the school might favor some sports over others, Senior William Harkless believes that there is a reason why.

"Once the basketball team made it to the coliseum, we did get a tailgate and other things that weren't normal, but it was because it was the first time ever getting there," Harkless said. "[...] The school wants to increase sponsorship for the more popular sports, which does have to do with the team's success. Basketball is probably making more revenue than other sports, which is why the school wants to increase sponsorship there."

However, recognition might not always be up to the school, but to the coaches and parents.

"The Booster Club will take care of funding for athletics," Athletic Director DeWayne Cupples said. "If [athletic teams] really need something, either the school or the Booster Club will help out. Some of the parents make the posters that are all around campus like the football posters.

The school makes the schedule posters like the football and swimming ones. Parents usually step in for championship posters, but if they don't, the school will get it made for them. It is up to the coaches or the parents to decide if they want one or not, but if they want one, [the school] will get them one. If anyone wants to do anything like [the basketball video], we will certainly encourage it because it is get publicity for athletes and the school."

“I am extremely proud of the basketball and baseball teams, but as a track member that was part of the Spring 2018 State Champion Team, I can't help but feel excluded and ignored.”

-Simone Weatherspoon

In the past, the school has always supported specific teams more than others, and alumni and Freshman English Teacher Marty Kelly can attest to that.

"Obviously, football has always received the most attention solely because of tradition," Kelly said. "I think many people have a problem with this, and some steps have been made to recognize other teams, but obviously not to the degree or frequency with which the football team gets recognition. It does seem as if we should make an effort to recognize our teams like cross-country,



2018 boys' baseball state champions

tennis, and swimming who consistently crush it every year. We also have a number of individual state champs in track and field."

With the school focusing so much on diversity and equality, shouldn't it also apply these ideals to state championship teams? The lack of representation that some teams have is unacceptable from a school like St. Andrew's that prides itself in equal treatment, no matter how popular a sport may or may not be.