

THE COMET RELAYS....YESTERDAY...AND TODAY

Now past its 65th year, the Comet Relays has grown from a modest four-team event to one of the largest high school relay showcases in Ohio.

It all started in 1955 when Amherst High School Coach Jack Wilhelm ran the first edition of the Comet Relays. Wilhelm was inspired by what he saw at the Ohio Wesleyan Relays in Delaware, Ohio and decided that Amherst should be a pioneer in the relay world in northeast Ohio. Clearview, Vermilion, and Wellington joined Amherst for the Comet Relays debut.

“I didn’t want to make it too big when we started out,” said Wilhelm. “We ran the same events as they did in Delaware, though the types of events have changed over the years. I figured that instead of making a long bus trip somewhere else, we could bring some of those talented people to Amherst.”

Wilhelm left Amherst after that season to go on to coaching careers at South Amherst, Vermilion, and Lorain County Community College. But the Comet Relays remained intact and grew, thanks to assistant coach Dick Cooley, who continued to coach the Comet track teams and direct the Comet Relays. From 1956 until 1990 Dick Cooley directed the Comet Relays. Dick became one of the most successful track and cross country coaches in Ohio.

From 1991 until the 50th Anniversary, Dick and Darline Elsasser directed the Comet Relays. Dick Elsasser retired in 2005 after the 50th Comet Relays. Rob Glatz then took his place as head boys and girls coach and meet manager with Darline. Darline retired in 2012 after the 57th Comet Relays and Michelle Kamczyc took over her role as co-meet manager until 2020. Coach Glatz and Keith Whitman are the current directors of the Comet Relays.

Over the past several years, many quality athletes have run in the Comet Relays, first on the original cinder track and then on the all-weather track built in 1971. The current track was resurfaced in 2016.

The school and community take pride in hosting the Comet Relays. The many years of success are attributed to the support of many dedicated volunteers and the work of outstanding track and field officials.

The Comet Relays are sure to be a fixture in the Ohio track scene for years to come.