

## GET TO KNOW THE GRANITE RIDGE COACHING STAFF

### **Jason Lienau, Director of Cross-Country at Clovis North, Asst. Track & Field Coach (Distances):**

Coach Lienau is a graduate of Clovis High where he ran track and cross-country. His high school cross country team was extremely successful and was the main nemesis for the 1987 State Champions McFarland (as depicted in the motion picture McFarland USA). In college, he attended and competed for Fresno State where he was a 2x Conference Cross-Country Champion and focused primarily on the 1500m in track. Post collegiately, he continued his running career while competing for the Reebok Aggie Running Club as a 3000m steeplechaser. His coaching/teaching careers started at Garfield Elementary. After a five-year stay there, he moved to Alta Sierra Intermediate to teach academic block and coach the xc and track teams. His teams won 5 straight cross country league titles in his six years there, and in track took league honors as well. After one year assisting at Buchanan High, Lienau started and directed both programs at Clovis North when the school opened in 2007. After three years at the helm of the track and field program, he handed off the baton to Richard Brazil, the current track and field program director, but continued as the assistant coach for distance events. Lienau built the Broncos cross country program into one of the top programs in California (recently voted the top state in the nation for cross country talent by MileSpitUSA). He led his girls teams to 12 CIF State Championship appearances (seven of which were Top 10), including last year's 4th place finish. His boy's teams also made 10 state appearances with four Top 10 Finishes. All-in-all, Lienau coached his teams to 10 League Championships and six Valley Championships.

### **Joanna Vitale, Head Coach**

Coach Vitale is in her 11th season as the head XC and track and field programs. She led the boys team to their first CIAL Championship since 2009 last fall. During her XC tenure she coached 11 boys and 10 girls into Granite's Top 25 All-Time runners at Woodward Park List. Vitale was honored as the coach of the year at Granite Ridge in 2017. Before Granite Ridge, Vitale coached for three years at Copper Hills Elementary as the head cross country and track coach. Vitale brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the program through her extensive running career. She has participated in 16 marathons, countless half-marathons, 10ks, 5ks, and several triathlons. She is a 6-time Boston Marathon (2009, '10, '11, '13, '18 & '23). Vitale entered the Abbott World Major Marathon Hall of Fame in 2017 after earning the coveted 6-star medal in London. The medal is awarded after the completion of 6 World Major Marathons (Boston, New York, Chicago, Berlin, London, and Tokyo). She took the reigns of the track program in 2016 after one year as an assistant coach. In that same year, she took on the role of head coach for the boys and girls cross country program at Granite. Under her direction, the Granite Ridge track teams won back-to-back girl's CIAL

championships in 2018 and 2019 and most recently, led the boy's team to a 2nd-place CIAL finish in 2022. She began her coaching career in youth triathlon in 2009 where she earned her USA Triathlon (L1) certification, as well as her USA Track and Field (L1) coaching certification. Vitale graduated with an accounting degree from Fresno State in 1991. She was a CPA for over 30 years before finding her true passion in coaching.

### **DeAnna Turner, Assistant Coach**

Coach Turner is in her ninth season coaching for Granite Ridge. She has also spent 10 seasons as an assistant coach for the GR Track team working with the sprinters and relay teams. She brings with her various perspectives from her career in the past 30 years. She spent over 20 years at Fresno State working in Division 1 athletics as publications/photography coordinator and assistant Media Relations Director. Turner moved to freelance graphic design in 2006, where she worked with clients such as Stanford, the University of San Francisco, and Nevada. Turner was the original graphic designer who started on the ground floor with football coach John Baxter (Fresno State, USC, Michigan) as he finalized this Academic Gameplan (a unique program that lays the foundation to be successful in school). In the last 16 years, she participated in various half marathons, 10ks, and 5ks, but when injuries started to plague her, she turned to RPR (Reflexive Performance Reset) to re-train her breathing and stop compensation issues. Turner is now certified in 2 levels of RPR and currently earning an Oxygen Advantage Breathing Certification. These methods are now being taught to all athletes in both xc and track to optimize performance and cut down on injuries. Turner is also a sport photographer and since 2017, has freelanced for MileSplitCA.com, shooting track and cross country events in the CIF Central Section. Before her coaching stint at Granite Ridge, she earned her Level 1 USA Track and Field coaching certificate and then spent two years at Copper Hills Elementary as an assistant track coach. Turner also has experience as a junior triathlon coach. She earned a Journalism degree from Fresno State in 1991.

### **Justin Sloan- Assistant Coach**

Justin Sloan joins us for his second season as an assistant XC and track coach (distance). A Staff Sergeant in the U.S. Army, Sloan began his coaching career at Granite Ridge in 2022 as an assistant for the cross country team. This fall, Sloan assisted with the Clovis North Cross Country as well. He was elected to the ALL-ARMY Cross Country team in December and will compete across the country as an official member of the team. Sloan graduated high school in Missouri in 2011, where he became an All-State 2 miler while competing in cross country and track.