

Boys win 3 events, advance 10 to finals on first day of NBC meet

By Kevin Gordon

GENOA — Eastwood High School's boys track and field team was nearly perfect Wednesday night (May 13).

The Eagles won three events, scored in the two other finals, advanced all 10 of their athletes to the finals and fashioned eight personal records during the first day of the Northern Buckeye Conference Championships at Genoa High School.

The Eagles' championships were won by Hunter Lauer in the shot put, Cullen Shank in the pole vault, and the 4x800 relay team of Ben Buehler, Casen Henline, Cole Schimmoeller and Henry Howard.

The finals of the shot, long jump, pole vault, 3,200 and the 4x800 relay were held, along with the semifinals of the 100, 200, 400, 110 hurdles and the 300 hurdles.

The meet concludes Friday with the final 12 events.

"(Former head coach Gary White) said last week, the team gives effort and everyone does their job for the team and the program; that's what the guys did tonight," Eastwood head coach Brian Sabo said.

White watched the Eagles win the Oak Harbor Invitational Friday (May 8) after driving up from his home in southern Columbus.

He retired as Eastwood's head coach following the 2011 season after guiding the Eagles to Division II state championships in 2009 and 2010, and 11 straight Suburban Lakes League championships.

Sabo then took over as head coach after serving as one of White's long-time assistant coaches, and the two have remained close friends.

Eastwood leads the team standings after five events with 49½ points, while two-time defending conference champion Oak Harbor is second with 38 and Lake is third with 31½. The Eagles are seeking their first NBC championship since 2023. They've finished second the last two seasons.

"They put themselves to go chase this Friday night, and that's all you can ask," Sabo said.

"They've provided the opportunity for us on Friday to really go after it."

Athletes battled cold and windy conditions during Wednesday's competition.

"We said the weather can't affect our effort, a PR type mindset, cheering on each guy, and it didn't," Sabo said. "We said there are going to be some people who don't feel it because of the weather. It's our job to try to PR. Three championships on the first day, that's a big deal, and there's more coming on Friday."

The top eight finishers in each event scored team points. The points were awarded on a 10-8-6-5-4-3-2-1 basis.

Lauer repeats shot put championship

Lauer threw 51-5¾ to win the shot for the second straight season. The senior won by 3¼ inches over Lake junior Isaac Romero.

Lauer's distance was the 10th-best in conference history by one-quarter inch. Only distances, heights and times in the NBC Championships are used to compile the conference records and all-time Top 10 lists.

Eastwood junior Grady Greulich was seventh at 40-9½.

"I'm really happy to have won," said Lauer, "I, obviously, didn't throw as far as I was hoping, but no one threw well. I'm definitely happy with winning. The weather had a little bit to do with it, but I wasn't really hitting my positions as well as I was earlier in the season, but I'm still happy with the way I threw."

"He threw well, not quite a PR. but he still had very good marks for a very competitive league meet," said Eastwood assistant coach Colton Ickes, who works with the throwers. "The conditions were nasty, but he adapted very well. I'm very confident there's another big PR coming soon

Lauer will compete Friday in the discus where he finished eighth last season and fifth as a sophomore. He's the No. 1 seed for the event with a throw of 171-6 earlier this season. The distance is fourth best in school history, while his shot put PR (54-6½) is fifth best in school history.

"I'm really excited for the discus," Lauer said. "(Thursday) will be a discus only practice and it will be warmer on Friday. Hopefully, it will go really well."

Lauer has PRd five times in the discus and four times in the shot this season,

"Lauer has a mindset to him," Sabo said. "It's about him and nothing else. If somebody beats me, they beat me."

4x800 relay wins again

The Eagles' 4x800 team of Buehler, Henline, Schimmoeller and Howard won in 8:29.05, good for an 8.41 second margin over Oak Harbor. Howard is a senior, while Buehler and Henline are juniors, and Schimmoeller is a freshman.

"It was a pretty good time," Buehler said. "We took it out and did what we needed to do. We won, that's what matters in the post-season, the places. We definitely got the place we wanted."

"With the weather conditions we were given, we put up a pretty good time," Henline said. "It's something we can build on."

Eastwood was the No. 1 seed, based on its previous season best of 8:27.88.

"Every time we get on the track, we at least put it out there," Howard said. "Because of that, the last few weeks we really haven't seen the time we think we can run. We still have yet to see that big jump in time that I think is coming, maybe on a better (weather) day with better competition. Today was a solid effort from everyone, in terms of putting it out there.:"

"It's incredible to run this well," Schimoeller said. "I didn't think we could go that fast. The expectation was to beat Oak Harbor. I definitely felt like we had a chance to win and we did. This puts us in a winning mindset and shows us what we need to do and what it should feel like. I think all of us can go even faster."

Shank earns another pole vault championship

Shank cleared 12-6 to win the pole vault for the second time in three seasons. The senior also finished second last season.

Shank won a battle against Oak Harbor junior Ayden Gaskalla, who also jumped 12-6, but Shank won on fewer misses.

Shank cleared 12-6 on his first attempt and then missed all three attempts to 13-0. Gaskalla made 12-6 on his second attempt, but then passed at 13-0 and then tried to

clear 13-6. Gaskalla missed all three of his attempts at 13-6, making Shank the winner on misses at 12-6.

Eastwood sophomore Dylan Perkins was fourth at 11-0.

"I'm really excited with how I vaulted," Shank said. "I did better than I thought I would do after warmups which weren't looking too good because of the wind and the cold. I just listened to Coach (Ethan) Downey and Coach Sabo who said, got back on the pole, keep my run the same I'm really happy with how I did.

The vaulters had to contend with a significant headwind and sidewind during the competition. Shank said the wind affected his approach.

"He had a good day," said Downey, who works with the pole vaulters. "He adapted to the conditions."

Shank's PR of 14-1 came in 2024 and remains the sixth-best height in Eastwood history. His best this season of 13-6 came last week at Oak Harbor.

"I thought I would be second," Shank said. "I knew if everything went the way I wanted, I would PR which I didn't, but I still had a chance to win the meet. I'm really excited I got back up to 13-6 last week and, hopefully, I can continue to vault well at districts next week."

Also in the field events, Eastwood senior Zach Mullholand finished sixth in the long jump with a distance of 19-0, and classmate Hunter Wilson was 12th at 17-10¼.

St. Louis finishes second in 3,200

Eastwood's Oliver St. Louis finished second in the 3,200 with a time of 10:35.30, a PR by 5.45 seconds.

Genoa junior Chase Cooper won the race in 10:27.92.

"I'm very happy with my time," St. Louis said. "I executed the race really well. I got out with the pack and then I settled in, but it was a little slower than I wanted. But I was still happy with the way I ran. It went fast at the start. We got out hard, at a really fast pace. Once we settled in, it was a matter who could grit it out in the end.

St. Louis' previous best of 10:40.75 came last week at Oak Harbor.

"My success comes with a lot of grit," St. Louis said. "That's what we teach all of the time at Eastwood, get out and put in the work and the results happen. Doing the small things and focusing on the workouts pays huge dividends during the season."

Also in the 3,200, Eagle freshman Zach McClure finished sixth in 10:47.86, just off his PR of 10:46.29 at Oak Harbor.

"Zach and I have a really special connection," St. Louis said. "When we get together, stuff happens, We push each other to the highest limits, to get to places we didn't think were possible. Even though he didn't run as well as he wanted, he's still been an important part of our team."

Miller qualifies for three finals.

Eastwood's Austin Miller qualified for the finals of the 100, 200 and 400.

The senior had times of 11.30 in the 100, 23.11 in the 200 and 53.30 in the 400.

Miller ran the fastest semifinal time of the eighth finalists in the 200, the second-fastest time in the 100 and third-fastest time in the 400.

The top two finishers in each semifinal and the next four fastest times overall, regardless of heat, advanced to the finals.

Eagle junior Cody Hefflinger advanced to the finals of the 100 and 400, and Mullholand earned a spot in the 200 final.

Hefflinger ran PRs in both of his races, 11.69 in the 100 and 53.41 in the 400. His previous bests were 11.71 in the 100 and 53.78 in the 400.

Mullholand also ran a PR in the 200, a 23.43 clocking, beating his previous best of 23.63. Eastwood sophomore Brayden Luidhardt qualified for the finals of the 110 hurdles and 300 hurdles. He'll be joined by Eagle freshman Levi Strayer in the 110 race Nolan Taylor in the 300 race.

Luidhardt and Strayer both ran PRs in the 110 hurdles. Luidhardt had a time of 15.98, lowering his PR of 16.06. Strayer was timed in 16.85, beating his previous PR of 17.36.

Luidhart also PRd in the 300 hurdles with a time of 44.27, beating his previous best of 44.42. Taylor advanced in the 300 hurdles with a time of 44.12.

NEXT

The NBC Championships conclude Friday (May 15) at Genoa High School. The field events start at 4 p.m., followed by the running events at 5:45 p.m.

NBC CHAMPIONSHIPS INFORMATION

<https://www.baumspage.com/track/trevent.php?peventid=177&table=C>

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