

Boys regain conference championship



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By Kevin Gordon

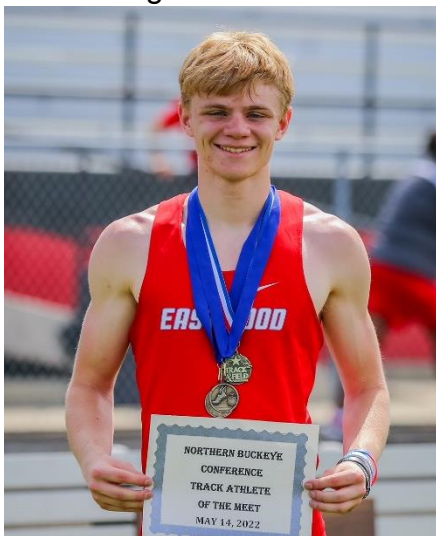
FOSTORIA — Eastwood High School's boys track and field team regained the Northern Buckeye Conference championship Saturday afternoon.

The Eagles won seven events and totaled 166 points to finish 29 points ahead of runner-up and defending champion Genoa and 34 points in front of third-place Otsego in the eight-team meet.

No other team scored more than 77 points at Memorial Stadium.

Eastwood had won 19 consecutive conference championships until Genoa snapped the streak last season. The Eagles had won the first eight NBC championships after winning the final 11 titles in the now-defunct Suburban Lakes League. The 2020 NBC meet was canceled because of Covid.

"That's why we work hard every day in practice, and that's why we work hard and compete hard in every meet, to win the league," said Eastwood junior Noah Smith, who was named the running athlete of the meet. He won the 110 hurdles and the 200, and was a member of the winning 4x100 and 4x400 relay teams.



Noah Smith

"It's a great feeling to win the league again," Smith said. "It's been our goal all year after last year. That was the best effort we've had this year, and the best team spirit we've had this year. Everyone was in a really, really good mood. Nobody was down."

Genoa edged Eastwood by seven points for the NBC title last season.

"We knew we were going to perform well," Smith said. "You could tell by the way we practiced this week, and the attitude we had coming over on the bus, and the way we prepared once we got here. Guys have been giving effort all year in practice and in our meets. Everyone was going after it. It was nice weather. We were ready for this."

In addition to winning seven events, the Eagles scored in all 17 events, and had double placers in nine of the 13 non-relay events. Eastwood had six second-place finishes, three third-place finishes, three fourth-place finishes and three fifth-place finishes.

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

The Eagles won six running events and one running event. They won only one event in the NBC meet last season, that being the long jump.

“They were liked caged dogs you were going to let loose,” Eagle head coach Brian Sabo said. “Genoa still competed hard, and we knew they would, but we were too much. We had PRs and season bests all over the place, a lot of them were seniors. They knew after last year, they wanted this feeling now. They did a great job. What an awesome day.”

The Eagle boys and girls teams had plenty of support during the meet. When they weren’t competing or warming up for their events, they were cheering on their teammates, and congratulating each other with high fives, fist bumps and hugs after each event. Loud cheers were heard regularly from the team’s athletes and coaches.

Eastwood has approximately 100 athletes, boys and girls combined, in its program. Many of the ones who weren’t competing in the meet still traveled to Fostoria to support their teammates.

Retired Eagle boys head coach Gary White and retired girls head coach Richard Morgan were at the meet, along with a number of alumni, both boys and girls. Sabo had White, and alums Erik Fertig, Isaac Emahiser and Nick Schling send him motivational videos, which Sabo played for the boys during team meetings prior to practice in the week leading up to the meet.

“The support we receive is awesome, and that helps us continue the tradition of the program,” said Smith, whose brother competed for the Eagles a few seasons ago.

“Knowing you have that support helps you perform better.”



Cory Jay

The meet easily featured the best weather of the season with sunshine and temperatures in the 80s. Prior to Saturday, the weather conditions this season had consisted of temperatures in the 40s and 50s, wind and rain.

“You had a feeling this week, this is what might happen ... just the way the guys acted and practiced all week long,” Sabo said. “Today, they were loose. They were super pumped. These guys wanted it for a lot of reasons, for the program, for the coaches, for last year’s seniors, for the alumni, for themselves, for each other.”

Setting the tone

Great days by seniors Devin Good and Cory Jay, solid performances in the running semifinals and by the team’s field event athletes set the tone for Eastwood.

Good and Day ran PR splits to lead the Eagles to a victory in the 4x800 relay, the first running final.

The team of Jay, senior Xander Ramsey, freshman Hayden Hoelter and Good won in 8:28.11 — a season-best by almost 16.5 seconds.

The 4x800 final was held in the morning after the semifinals of the 110 hurdles and 100, and before the 200 semifinals. The remainder of the running finals were held during the afternoon.

Jay also won the 1,600 in 4:49.11 and was second in the 3,200 in 10:49.27, thanks to a strong finish in the final 200 meters. Good was third in the 800 in 2:02.78, a PR by almost five seconds.

Good also ran a leg on Eastwood's 4x400 relay which won in 3:32.98, a season best by almost 1.5 seconds. The first three legs of the relay were run by senior Jake Limes, freshman Andre Lewis and Good.

"Those guys grabbed a hold of the group and led the way," Sabo said of Jay and Good. "The 4x8 got us going, and it built from there.

"They had great splits in the 4x8," Sabo added. "Cory had a great 1,600. He gave it everything he had in the 3,200 and ran out of gas. Devin was fantastic. He had a PR in the 4x8, a PR in the open 8 and ran on the 4x4 team."

The Eagles also built early momentum during the morning semifinals of the 110 hurdles, the 100 and the 200. All six Eastwood athletes in those three events qualified for the finals.



Jake Limes & Bryce Koprowski-Kistner

More Noah Smith

The 4x400 relay was a victory lap for the Eagles, who clinched their championship during the 3,200 — the meet's next-to-last event.

Eastwood won the 4x400 by 5.79 seconds after Limes, Good and Lewis gave Smith a huge lead.

"We build our whole culture off the 4x4," said Smith, who ran six races during the meet. "Coach Sabo says a sprinter can do it and a distance runner can do it, and the race brings the team together. It's exciting. It's the last race.

"Knowing we had the league won, it was fun to run that race," Smith added. "We wanted to win the race, so we felt pressure. Everyone's effort together, it

was awesome."

The 4x100 team of junior Bryce Koprowski-Kistner, Limes, sophomore Kaiden Sanchez and Smith won in a season-best time of 43.68, lowering its previous best by 1.14 seconds and just missing a spot on Eastwood's Top 10 by just .28.

"That came out of nowhere," Smith said. "Bryce K popped it off with a great start. Limes brought it down the backstretch. Sanchez ripped up the curve. All I had to do was hold on the rest of the way. They did the work for me."

Smith won the 110 hurdles in 15.79, a season best. He had finished second in four events at the Napoleon Invitational April 16.

“It was nice to win one after all those second-place finishes,” Smith said. “I hadn’t run (the 110 hurdles) in a while. It was nice to win that. That’s supposed to be my specialty event. To see it all come together was really nice. This was my best meet of the season.”

Smith won the 200 in 22.79, the seventh-fastest time in school history. He normally runs the 300 hurdles, but switched to the 200 for the first time during a May 4 dual meet.

“That’s a dead sprint,” Smith said. “That was a surprise I ran that fast. It’s a fun race. I was hoping to win, and I knew I had a good shot at it, but I didn’t expect to go 22.78. I was hoping to break 23, but to break it by two tenths of a second is huge.”



Emmet Getz

Field events have big day

Eastwood’s field events also had a big day, scoring 59 out of a possible 90 points.

The Eagles finished first and third in the high jump where senior Jacob Meyer cleared 6-3 and freshman Dayquan Oliver cleared 5-10, respectively. Both were PRs, with Meyer’s jump tying for the fifth-best height in school history. His previous best was 6-2.

Oliver had three great attempts at 6-0, but barely scraped the bar each time to knock it down. His previous best was 5-8.

In the shot put, senior Nate Heskett threw 43-5¾ for second and classmate Emmet Getz threw 42-3½ for fourth.

In the discus, Getz was second at 142-8 and sophomore Elden Slack was eighth at 110-9.

In the pole vault, senior Dalton Hesselbart was second at 13-6 and Hoelter was fifth at 10-0.

In the long jump, Oliver was fourth at 19-1¼ and classmate Kevin Lewis was fifth at 18-9½.

“The field events, we were getting places higher than what we were seeded,” Sabo said. “The high jump scored points and that was big, too.”

Other scorers for the Eagles

Also finishing in the top eight for Eastwood were:

- 110 hurdles: senior Andon Mason, eighth, 17.94.
- 100: Limes, second, 11.59; and Sanchez, fifth, 11.84.
- 4x200 relay: sophomores Noah Haar and Caleb Souder, Andre Lewis and senior Calvin Price, third, 1:35.43.
- 400: Oliver, sixth, 54.24.
- 300 hurdles: Andre Lewis, second, 43.03.
- 800: Ramsey, eighth, 2:16.20.
- 200: Souder, seventh, 24.43.

“The freshmen came through and contributed,” Sabo said.

On the horizon

The Eagles compete in the Division II district meet Thursday and Saturday at Oak Harbor High School.

NBC results

<https://www.baumspage.com/track/trevent.php?peventid=721&table=C>

Oak Harbor district information

<https://oh.milesplit.com/meets/476125-ohsaa-division-2-district-oak-harbor-2022#.YoEi4ZPMJ3x>