

Hesselbart earns return to state meet in the pole vault

By Kevin Gordon

LEXINGTON — Dalton Hesselbart checked one more item off his goal list Thursday night.

The Eastwood High School junior earned a return trip to the Division II state track and field championships during the first day of the regional meet at Lexington High School.

Hesselbart cleared 13-10 in a jumpoff to earn the fourth and final spot in his sport's showcase event June 3-4 at Ohio State University's Jesse Owens Stadium.

The top four finishers in each event at the regional qualified for state. Two at-large qualifiers in each event also advance to state. The at-large berths are awarded to the next two best times, heights or distances in an event, regardless of region.

Eastwood senior Ava Kiefer appears to have advanced to state in the shot put with an at-large spot. She finished sixth in her event with a throw of 38-1½, but looks to have the second-best throw of the non-automatic qualifiers.

The at-large qualifiers will be announced Sunday by the Ohio High School Athletic Association. Also for the Eagles, senior Noah Smith qualified for the finals of the 110 hurdles with a time of 15.72.

The regional was suspended because of lightning after the girls 4x100 semifinals. The meet will be completed Saturday with the field events starting at 11 a.m., followed by the running finals at 12:30 p.m.

The running events will start with the 100 meter hurdles. When the meet gets to the boys 4x100 relay, the races will be run as timed finals. The timed finals also will be held in the 400, 300 hurdles, 200 and the 4x400 relays.

Hesselbart qualifies for state

Hesselbart earned his trip to state in a jumpoff after he and Liberty-Benton freshman Stefan Kolan both failed to clear 13-10 on all three attempts, leaving them tied for the fourth and final state berth and requiring a jumpoff to break the tie.

Hesselbart cleared 13-10 on his fourth attempt after Kolan went first and missed on his fourth try.

"To go to state again has been my goal, and to achieve that goal is a great feeling," Hesselbart said. "It's a bit of a relief to know that pressure is off. But I still want to continue to improve and do as well as I can at state."

Although Hesselbart earned fourth place, the event wasn't completed because of the inclement weather. The top three vaulters will return Saturday to finish the event.

"Whether I went first or last in the jumpoff didn't matter to me, but it was nice to know if made that jump I was going to state," Hesselbart said. "It's nice to have it finished tonight, but if I would have had to have come back Saturday, I would have come back."

Hesselbart's vault of 13-10 was his second best of the season after he cleared 14-3 at the Oak Harbor district meet last week. His district height ranked second among the 16 regional qualifiers.

"I'm really happy for Dalton; to qualify for state two straight years is a great accomplishment," Eagle head coach Brian Sabo said. "He's worked hard, and that hard work is being rewarded."

He came through when we had to.”

“Today is about getting in the top four, unless you’re vying for a regional championship with your team, and then the points matter,” Sabo said.

Hesselbart finished 14th in last season’s state meet at Pickerington North High School where he cleared 13-0.

“It’s great to be going back to state,” Hesselbart said. “I could have jumped better today, but the big thing is I’m vaulting next week. Today was more about the place than the height. Now, I’ll work to get better in practice next week.”

Kiefer finishes sixth in shot

Kiefer’s throw of 38-1½ came on her final attempt of the competition.

The 16 regional qualifiers each received three throws during the preliminaries with the top nine distances advancing to the finals where they had three more throws in an attempt to improve their distance.

The top eight finishers scored points for their team and were recognized on the awards podium after the event — sending Kiefer to the podium.

“I’m 99 percent sure she qualified, but we won’t know officially until Sunday,” Eastwood girls head coach Nikki Sabo said. “She had a good day. She progressively kept throwing better and better.”

The top four throwers all threw 41-11 or better. Norton sophomore Morgan Hallett won the event with a throw of 47-6¼. Hallett broke the regional record 46-7½ set in 2003 during the prelims and then increased her record during the finals.

Girls, boys 4x800 teams earn podium spots.

The Eagles’ girls and 4x800 teams both ran a season-best time to earn a spot on the podium.

The girls finished sixth, while the boys were eighth.

The girls team of freshman Leah Emch, senior Maisy Stevenson, sophomore Amelia Ward, and junior Talia Baum had a time of 10:07.53, beating its previous best of 10:18.51. Emch ran a PR during her split, while Stevenson, Ward and Baum all ran season-best splits.

“They ran well, and they competed hard,” Nikki Sabo said. “They had a great race, and their time reflected that. That’s a nice race for them to end their season on.”

The boys team of seniors Devin Good and Cory Jay, freshman Hayden Hoelter and senior Xander Ramsey had a time of 8:27.77, lowering its previous best of 8:28.11. Good and Hoelter both ran PR splits.

“They ran hard and competed, and ran a season-best time. That’s all you can ask,” Brian Sabo said. “I really care about and like those three seniors (Good, Jay and Ramsey) and they brought the freshman (Hoelter) along with them.

“The thing I appreciated about them is they were ready to run,” Brian Sabo added. “They were warmed up and ready to go, and it showed in the way they ran.”

Smith qualifies for 110 hurdles finals

Smith advanced to Saturday’s final of the 110 hurdles final with a time of 15.72 in a race that was run in a monsoon. The top two finishers in each semifinal, and the next four fastest times overall advanced to the finals.

Smith finished second in his heat to automatically lock in his spot in the finals.

“A great feeling to get to the finals, that’s what I’ve been working for all season,” Smith said. “I knew I had a chance if I ran well, and I went out as hard as I could. “The weather didn’t bother me because we practice in the same conditions. You have to embrace the weather, no matter what it is. It was actually fun to run the hurdles in the rain.”

Smith earned second place in his semifinal with a terrific finish over the final six hurdles.

“The hurdles here are heavier, and the first hurdle about knocked me over when I hit it, but I kept going, and I felt like I was getting stronger and stronger,” Smith said. “I felt like I finished strong. I knew I needed a strong finish to get to the finals.”

Smith’s district time of 15.76 was the eighth fastest of the regional qualifiers. His PR is 15.60. His regional semifinal time was the sixth fastest of the eight finalists. The top two times were under 15.00.

“I want to get to state and get on the podium, so I’m going to go out and run my hardest, and we’ll see what happens,” Smith said.

More results

Also competing in the regional for the Eagles were:

- 100 hurdles: senior Aubrey Haas, 14TH, 16.81.
- 4x200 relay: junior Julia Sabo, sophomore Saylor King, senior Mikayla Hoelter and junior Emma Downs, 10TH, 1:50.93.
- Long jump: freshman Dayquan Oliver, 15TH, 19-0.

Thursday’s results/Saturday’s program-heat sheets-time schedule-live streaming

<https://oh.milesplit.com/meets/485420-ohsaa-division-2-region-6-lexington-2022/info#.YpBLYWDMK3I>