

## **Shank 2<sup>nd</sup> in district pole vault to earn 4<sup>th</sup> regional berth**

### **By Kevin Gordon**

FOSTORIA — Cullen Shank is headed back to his home away home.

The Eastwood High School senior earned his fourth trip to the regional track and field meet with a second-place finish during Wednesday's (May 20) Division IV district meet at Memorial Stadium.

He'll see plenty of familiar faces at the regional as the Eagles advanced two other individuals and one relay team to next week's regional at Harding Stadium in Marion.

Sophomore Dylan Perkins also advanced in the pole vault with a fourth-place finish, senior Hunter Lauer qualified with a third-place finish in the discus, and the 4x800 relay team of senior Henry Howard, juniors Ben Buehler and Casen Henline and senior Austin Miller advanced by finishing second.

The four finishers in each event at the district advanced to the regional May 27 and 29 at Marion Harding High School.

The finals of the discus, long jump, pole vault, 4x800 relay and the 3,200 were held Wednesday. The remaining field events and running finals are Friday (May 22).

In the 100, 200, 400, 110 hurdles, 300 hurdles, 4x100 relay, 4x200 relay and the 4x400 relay, the eight-fastest times advanced to the finals. The top eight finishers in each semifinal of the 800 and the 1,600 qualified for the finals.

The Eagles are second in the team standings with 27 points, six ahead of Huron and Liberty Center, who are tied for third. Margaretta is first with 31. Fifteen teams are in the district.

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

Eastwood advanced six individuals in five events and three relays team to the finals. The Eagles had eight PRs and one season best Wednesday.

"We had a great night overall," Eastwood head coach Brian Sabo said. "We qualified a lot of events to the finals, and we qualified events to the finals that shouldn't have qualified because they ran hard and they went after it. Those guys and our coaches deserve credit because they talk about running hard for the team and they did."

### **Shank second, Perkins fourth in pole vault**

Shank cleared 13-4 to finish second and Perkins jumped 12-0 to place fourth.

"I'm elated for those guys," Sabo said. "They jumped well in conditions that weren't all that great. They just keep attacking."

Shank's vault of 13-4 was just shy of his season best of 13-6.

"I'm really happy with how I placed," said Shank, who was seeded fourth based on his jump of 13-6. "My jumps were good. I was on the biggest pole I've ever been on. Everything went the way I needed it to. I'm really happy with the way I jumped. I finally figured out my top end. I'm really proud of it and I'm feeling good heading into next week."

Ashland Crestview's Liam Kuhn won with a vault of 13-4, his only attempt of the competition, to beat Shank on misses. Shank cleared 12-0, 12-4 and 12-8 on his first attempt, 13-0 on his second attempt and 13-4 on his third attempt. He then missed all three tries at 13-8.

“Cullen had a good night,” said Eagle assistant coach Ethan Downey, who works with the vaulters. “He’s really getting his timing back on the poles. He jumped on some poles he had never jumped on. He came to compete and had a good day.

“He’s really been jumping well,” Downey added. “He’s getting his confidence. He’s starting to feel comfortable. He realizes those poles are the right poles for the heights.”

The top five finishers in each of the three regionals next week qualify for the state meet, along with the next three best heights, regardless of region.

The Ohio High School Athletic Association expanded track and field from three divisions to five this season but reduced the number of regionals from four to three. However, the number of state qualifiers in each event remained at 18.

Shank finished eighth in the regional last season after a fifth-place finish as a sophomore and a 13<sup>th</sup>-place finish as a freshman. He has a PR of 14-1 as a sophomore, which is the sixth-best jump in school history.

“I have really high hopes for next week,” Shank said. “If the weather is right, I think I can go 14-0 and get out to state, especially with the at-large berths.

“I’m focusing on myself,” Shank added. “I’ve really improved my confidence over the last year. I’ve focused on myself. I don’t care what other people do. I need to do what I need to do and that places me. It’s amazing to go to the regional all four years; that’s something I’m really proud of.”

Perkins also jumped well, clearing 10-6, 11-0 and 11-6 on his first attempt and 12-0 on his second attempt. He missed all three tries at 12-4.

“I knew there was a chance I could make it to regionals, but I just wanted to vault my best,” Perkins said. “If that qualified me for the regional, that was good.”

Perkins was seeded sixth with his PR of 13-0.

“He had a nice night and jumped well,” Downey said. “He’s starting to jump like he was earlier in the season, and he’s starting to figure things out. He’s very young and getting a lot of experience.”

Perkins’ freshman PR was 8-6, but he opened this season with a jump of 13-0 at the Liberty-Benton Relays.

“It’s great to qualify for the regional after last season,” Perkins said. “I’ve had a lot of improvement this season, thanks to my coaches. The weight room and coming to practice every day have really helped. I understand the (pole vault) a lot better and my technique has improved.”

He’s jumped 12-0 twice in the last three weeks and finished fourth in the Northern Buckeye Conference Championships with a vault of 11-0.

“The jump at Liberty-Benton did set the tone for the season and showed me how much I can improve,” Perkins said.

### **Lauer finishes third in discus**

Hunter Lauer threw 169-1 for third place in the discus. His throw within striking distance of his PR of 171-6, which is the fourth-best throw in school history.

“I feel very good. I threw very well and I’m very happy to advance,” Lauer said.

The discus featured terrific competition. A distance of 167-3 was needed to qualify for the regional. Collins Western Reserve’s Hayden Keith won with a distance of 178-3, while Liberty Center’s Hunter Spangler was second at 169-2.

Five throwers, including Lauer, entered the meet with throws of 170-0 or better. Lauer was seeded second with his throw of 171-6.

“Five guys over 170-0 coming in, that’s crazy,” Lauer said. “That was some great competition. Everyone threw pretty well, too, so I’m pretty happy with how I threw and how I ended up placing.”

Lauer’s day started with a foul on his first attempt, but he responded with a throw of 164-6 on his next attempt. His throw of 169-1 came on the first throw of the finals.

“I got it together after the foul,” Lauer said. “A foul on the first attempt definitely makes me a little nervous. But with all of the practice I’ve had, I still feel like I can get the next throw in. I’m still concentrating on myself – that was a big key to my success, just focusing on myself like I’ve done all season.”

The 30 throwers received three attempts each during the preliminaries with the top nine distances advancing to the finals. The athletes then had three more throws in the finals in an attempt to improve their distance.

“(Lauer) threw well,” Sabo said. “He was able to qualify against a tough field, an unbelievable field. His main focus was being who he’s been all season. I’m chasing my own marks, my own PRs and not worrying about anyone else. I know if I throw close to 170, that should be good enough.

“He kept his composure the whole time, especially after he fouled on his first throw,” Sabo added. “He went after it from there. Next week, you throw the way you have all year and remain consistent, you’ll be fine.”

In the long jump, senior Hunter Wilson was 16<sup>th</sup> with a distance of 17-7.

#### **4x800 relay finishes 2nd in season-best time**

The 4x800 team of Howard, Buehler, Henline and Miller advanced with a second-place finish in 8:20.72, easily a season best. The Eagles’ previous best this season was 8:27.88. Henline had a season-best split.

“It was a good time, a season best, which is solid,” Buehler said. “The thing I like about it is (Henline) PRd and the rest of us didn’t. Casen can drop more, and the rest of us can drop more. There’s easily 10 seconds to cut if we just run our PRs. If we PR, we can be in the low 8s. We can go a lot lower.”

Huron won the race in 8:19.05, 1.67 seconds ahead of the Eagles.

“They had a season best and have to run a little bit better next week, but they did exactly what we needed to do this week,” Sabo said. “This was the right time to have a season best. They all know there’s more in the tank.”

Sophomore Oliver St. Louis and freshman Zach McClure both ran PRs in the 3,200, the only other running final Wednesday.

St. Louis was ninth in 10:30.01, beating his PR of 10:35.30. He was only .31 from earning a tie for the 10<sup>th</sup> spot on Eastwood’s all-time list. McClure was 11<sup>th</sup> in 10:44.00, lowering his previous PR of 10:46.29.

#### **Eagles qualify for finals**

Eastwood athletes to qualify for the finals, with their times and placings, were:

- 110 hurdles — 5) junior Brayden Luidhardt, 16.52.
- 4x200 relay — 4) sophomore Carsyn Jones, seniors Zach Mullholand and Collin Brogan and Howard, 1:32.31.

- 1,600 — 3) freshman Cole Schimoeller, 4:54.86; 14) St. Louis, 5:02.40.
- 4x100 relay — 4) Brogan, Jones, sophomore Trace Johnson and Mullholand, 44.93.
- 400 — 5) senior Austin Miller, 52.80.
- 300 hurdles — 8) senior Nolan Taylor, 44.25.
- 800 — 11) Buehler, 2:13.76; 13) Howard, 2:14.16.
- 200 — 7) Jones, 23.57 (a personal record, beating his previous best 23.83).
- 4x400 relay — 4) Mullholand, Brogan, Howard and Miller, 3:33.87.

### **Eagles competing in the district**

Eastwood athletes who competed in the district but did not advance to the finals were, with their times and placings:

- 110 hurdles — 10) Levi Strayer, 17.26.
- 100 — 17) junior Bryce Coger, 12.31; 19) junior Brayden Brown, 12.35.
- 400 — 20) Henline, 57.55.
- 300 hurdles — 9) Luidhardt, 45.21.
- 200 — 14) Brown, 24.64.

### **NEXT**

The district meet concludes Friday (May 22) at Memorial Stadium in Fostoria. The meet IS NOT at Fostoria High School. The address for Memorial Stadium is 530 Stadium Drive, Fostoria, Ohio, 44830.

The regional meet is May 27 and 29 at Harding Stadium, 500 Presidential Drive, Marion, Ohio, 43302. The meet IS NOT at Marion Harding High School.

### **FOSTORIA DISTRICT MEET INFORMATION AND RESULTS**

<https://www.athletic.net/TrackAndField/meet/650235/info>

### **FOSTORIA TICKET INFORMATION**

<https://www.ohsaa.org/tickets>

### **MARION REGIONAL INFORMATION**

<https://www.athletic.net/TrackAndField/meet/651382/info>

### **MARION TICKET INFORMATION**

<https://www.ohsaa.org/tickets>

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