

Sabo breaks school pole vault record, Emch moves up the Top 10 in the 3,200 as girls beat Elmwood, Woodmore

By Kevin Gordon

ELMORE — Julia Sabo is confident and jumping well again.

And the pole vault section of the Eastwood High School track and field record book is no longer safe again.

The senior broke the school's pole vault record for the fifth time Tuesday night during a Northern Buckeye Conference tri-meet at Woodmore.

She cleared 11-7 to break the record of 11-6 she set June 5, 2021 at the Division II state meet where she finished fourth.

Sabo's school record was part of another solid performance by the Eagles, who won 11 of the 17 events and totaled 88 points to finish first. Woodmore was second with 68 points, while Elmwood was third with 19.

Leah Emch also had an Eastwood Top 10 performance during the meet. The sophomore joined the list in the 3,200. She finished second with a time of 12:02.98, the eighth-fastest time in school history. Her previous best was 12:07.75 set last season.

A few anxious moments

Sabo's record-setting vault came with a few anxious moments.

The event was held with a gusting tailwind. Sabo let go of her pole as she easily cleared the bar, but the tailwind eventually caused Sabo's pole to knock the bar off the standards — leaving Sabo to wonder if the official would rule she cleared the bar.

"I was a little nervous while I was waiting for the official to make his decision," Sabo said. "I knew I had cleared the bar, and then it was a relief when he said I had cleared it."

Sabo originally set the Eastwood record as a sophomore in her fourth varsity meet. She cleared 10-7 April 9, 2021 at the Whitmer Invitational. She later increased the record three times that season.

"It feels very good to set the record again," said Sabo, whose freshman season was wiped out by COVID. "I can't explain how excited I am moving forward. It's something I've been wanting the whole season, and getting it this early makes it nice to know I'm getting better, I'm doing the things I need to do, and my hard work is paying off again."

Sabo cleared 11-0 five times during a challenging junior season, the result primarily because of health issues that have since improved.

She cleared 11-0 this season during a dual meet against Genoa and Swanton April 4. After clearing 11-0, she failed to clear 11-7 in an attempt to break the record.

Sabo also vaulted well in the Whitmer Invitational Thursday when she cleared 10-6. She's been vaulting well in practice as well.

"There's a bit of relief that comes with getting the record," Sabo said. "With the way I've been vaulting, I knew I'd have another chance at the record later on, and I knew I could clear 11-7. It's great it came now, but I have to keep working and getting better."

Tuesday's competition started at 5-0, with Sabo passing to 9-6. She cleared 9-6, 10-6 and 11-0 before clearing 11-7. Sabo was the only vaulter to clear 10-0 or higher.

"That was a great jump, and she had great warmups," said Eagle assistant coach Ethan Downey, who works with the pole vaulters. "The way she's been jumping, I had this feeling something big was going to happen.

"She's putting everything together," Downey added. "There's definitely more to come. This is building confidence in a big way and sets us up for the rest of the season."

Sabo's next goal is clearing 12-0.

"Now, I need to keep getting the right poles and the right technique as I go for those higher heights to make sure I'm ready for it," Sabo said. "This really helps my confidence, and tells me I was doing the right things to get ready for the season. It pushes me to keep going."

Newsome, Sandberg each win twice

Eastwood won eight individual events in all and three relays.

The Eagles complemented their 11 victories with five second-place finishes, six third-place finishes and six fourth-place finishes. The top four finishers in each individual event scored team points, while the relays awarded points to the top two finishers.

Senior Olivia Newsome and sophomore Mallory Sandberg each won twice for Eastwood.

Newsome threw 117-2 to win the discus and 33-10½ to win the shot put.

Sandberg swept the hurdles, winning the 100 race in 17.64 and the 300 race in 54.98.

The Eagles' other winners were: junior Haley Sponaugle, 1,600, 5:50.5; junior Amelia Ward, 800, 2:36.0; and senior Emma Downs, long jump, 15-4½.

Eastwood's winning relays were:

- The 4x800 team of Emch, Sponaugle, Ward and senior Kayden Firsdon, 10:27.0.
- The 4x100 team of Downs, Sabo, and juniors Saylor King and Lila Keifer, 52.58.
- The 4x400 team of senior Talia Baum, sophomores Lilly Mullholand, Kyrie Henline, and Downs, 4:28.0.

The meet has hand timed. The Fully Automatic Timing conversion added 0.24 for the 100 and the 200, and 0.18 in the 300 hurdles and the 400.

NEXT

The Eagles compete in the Napoleon Invitational Saturday and host Rossford in an NBC dual meet April 18.

EASTWOOD-ELMWOOD-WOODMORE RESULTS

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NAPOLEON INVITATIONAL INFORMATION

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