

Fast start leads to terrific day for boys



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By Kevin Gordon

OAK HARBOR — Andre Lewis, Hunter Lauer and Jesse Poiry had Eastwood High School's boys track and field team buzzing early Saturday.

They all finished second with personal-record performances in their events.

Their teammates followed suit after that, leading to a terrific day for the Eagles during the final day of the Division II district meet at Oak Harbor.

Eastwood qualified five individuals in six events and two relay teams for the regional meet May 23 and May 25 at Lexington High School, near Mansfield.

The second-place finishes came from Lewis in the high jump, Lauer in the discus and Poiry in the 110 hurdles. Lewis also advanced in the 300 hurdles where he finished third.

Two other individuals also advanced to the regional — junior Dayquan Oliver was third in the 400, and sophomore Austin Miller finished fourth in the 800.

The Eagles qualified two relay teams to the regional.

The 4x100 team of Andre Lewis, Oliver, senior Kaiden Sanchez and junior Kevin Lewis finished third.

The 4x400 team of Andre Lewis, Oliver, Kevin Lewis and Miller was fourth.

Eastwood had more three regional qualifiers Thursday. Sophomore Cullen Shank won the pole vault, while junior teammate Hayden Hoelter was fourth in the same event.

The 4x800 relay team of Miller, junior Henry Howard, freshman Ben Buehler and junior A.J. O'Brien finished third.

The Eagles scored in 16 of the 17 events, and totaled 107 points to finish second to Oak Harbor. The Rockets won with 131 points, while Central Catholic was third with 66, Clyde was fourth with 60 and Lake was fifth with 47.

Andre Lewis was a four-event regional qualifier, while Oliver advanced in three events.

“It was darn near a perfect day,” Eastwood head coach Brian Sabo said. “They just went after it. We had things happen because of how much they wanted to do it to make it out of the district, and you saw that today.

“My favorite part of this is getting to be around these kids for another week,” Sabo added. “That’s the best part of it, being around the athletes and coaches. It’s a joy to be around them. They’re fun to be around.”

Sabo estimated 85 percent of the team had a personal record during the district meet.

“We were right there in a lot of events,” Sabo said. “I couldn’t be any prouder of this group, and how they represent the program. Anyone who is an alum should be proud of the way they competed, they acted, the way they’re around each other, boys and girls together, who they are. It’s an honor to coach them.”



Andre Lewis

Andre Lewis ties for second in high jump

Andre Lewis started the Eagles rolling, clearing 6-3 to tie for second place in the high jump. The height was a PR and put him in a tie for fifth-place all-time in the event at Eastwood.

His previous best of 6-2 came April 24 against Oak Harbor. That moved him into a six-way tie for sixth on Eastwood’s all-time list.

“In the morning, you always have energy. I felt springy and jumped really well,” Lewis said.

Lewis’ only misses came at 6-4. The top five jumpers all cleared 6-3 or higher.

Elmwood senior Micah Oliver was the winner at 6-6, while Lewis, Oak Harbor sophomore Braden Schultz, Fostoria senior Gavin Miler and Fostoria junior Brayden Morrison all cleared 6-3.

Lewis and Schultz tied for second on fewer misses.

“Getting 6-3 with no misses really helped a lot,” Lewis said. “That helps your confidence 100 percent. It boosts your confidence going to the next jump.”

Lauer follows with big PR in the discus

Moments later, Lauer followed with a second-place finish in the discus. He threw 144-2 — a 14-foot PR. His previous best of 130-2 came May 11 during the Northern Buckeye Conference championships at Rossford’s Glenwood Athletic Complex.

“I came in seeded very low, and I didn’t have any pressure on me to make finals,” Lauer said. “I knew I could out and throw by giving it my all without any pressure.”

Lauer was seeded 14th among the 26 throwers in the district meet. He’s been throwing well of late, hitting the 125-1 mark or better in each of his last four meets.

“I thought I had a chance to have a big improvement,” Lauer said. “I’ve been throwing well in practice, a solid 130-0, 135-0. I’ve been staying consistent, so I felt a big PR coming. I’ve been feeling a lot better at the end of the season.

"I've focused on my form and my speed, and that's made a big difference," Lauer added.

Lauer's best throw came on his sixth and final attempt.

The 26 throwers were divided into three flights for the preliminaries where they had three throws each. The top nine distances advanced to the finals where the athletes received three more attempts in an attempt to improve their distance.

Lauer was sixth going into the finals, and he was still sixth before his final throw. In the finals, the athletes throw in the reverse order of their standing. His best preliminary throw covered 138-4.

"I knew I had to go for it, a big throw," Lauer said. "I focused on my speed and the release, and everything worked out."

Genoa senior Caleb Gittus won with a distance of 145-7, while Port Clinton senior Samari Smith was third at 142-8. A distance of 138-1 was needed to make the finals.

"This isn't an easy region," Lauer said. "It's difficult to get out. There won't be any pressure on me at the regional, so I'll just give it my all again. I'll worry about taking care of myself and nothing else."

Lauer's regional goals are to throw 150-0 and make the finals. He's closing in on a spot in Eastwood's Top 10. A mark of 149-0 is needed to crack the Top 10.

"This kid has come on the last four weeks," Sabo said. "It's good he's figuring it out because he's only a sophomore. That's fantastic, a great thing for him."



Jesse Poiry

Poiry finishes as runner-up in 110 hurdles

Poiry was the runner-up in a thrilling 110 hurdles final, posting a career-best time of 15.12 to lower his previous best of 15.42 May 3 at the Oak Harbor Invitational.

Poiry led the race coming over the eighth of 10 hurdles, but he hit the next-to-last hurdle. Oak Harbor sophomore Wyatt Augsburger, the top seed in the event, came back to win in 14.88.

"Oh yeah, I knew (Augsburger) was on my tail," Poiry said. "You could hear the crowd roaring, and you knew he was coming. I did my best to hold him off, but it wasn't enough."

Augsburger was a regional qualifier in the race last season and finished ninth in the state in the 300 hurdles.

Poiry's effort and strong finish in the day's first running event kept the momentum rolling for the Eagles for the remainder of the meet.

"I wanted to pop off a big race to start the day off right for the team, hopefully to start a day of PRs," Poiry said. "I ran well. I had a great start, one of my best starts. Hitting that one hurdle messed up my race, but I'm still going to come back for regionals and give it everything I can to get to state."

"I was nervous coming in," Poiry added. "Thursday, there was something wrong with my mental state, and I didn't run well. But Coach Sabo and Coach Downey (assistant coach

Ethan Downey, who works with the hurdlers) helped my confidence back up, and it paid off.”

Poiry, Andre Lewis run well in 300 hurdles

Lewis finished third and Poiry was fifth in the 300 hurdles where both ran PR times. Lewis was third in 40.65, edging Oak Harbor senior Dan Allen by .01 and Poiry by .02. Augsburger was the winner in 40.14.

“I started off a little slow, but I knew I had it in me to be in the top four,” Lewis said.

“Poiry is always pushing me. We just told each other, let’s go, let’s get after it and we did. That was a good race. There’s always stuff to fix, but I have another week.”

Lewis’ previous best of 40.85 and Poiry’s previous of 41.02 best both came April 24 during a tri-meet at Otsego with the Knights and Lake.

Poiry dove at the finish line in an attempt to earn the fourth and final regional berth.

“I’d rather take the pain of hitting the track by diving over not qualifying, but this gives me more motivation for next year,” Poiry said. “I knew those guys were coming. I love the competition because it pushes all of us to get better. The competition is great.”

“I gave it everything I had,” Poiry added. “I knew I’d have to fight to get out, and I fought hard, but it wasn’t enough. I was in second and dove at the end. It’s all right. I’m not mad about it.”

Lewis moved up one spot to eighth on Eastwood’s all-time list, while Poiry gained a spot in the Top 10 at No. 9. Poiry also debuted in the all-time Top 10 in the 110 race, landing in eighth place.

“Our school is known for having a great track program, and that comes with good hurdlers, so it’s an honor to be on the list because it isn’t easy to get on those lists,” Poiry said.

Poiry and Augsburger spent last summer working out together in the hurdles at Oak Harbor.

“He’s a good guy,” Poiry said. “If you want to be the best, you have to train with the best. I asked him to come out and he said, ‘Yes.’ I picked him up when we worked out. We worked on starts and making each other better.”



Dayquan Oliver

Oliver takes third in the 400

Oliver finished third in the 400 with a PR time of 49.72, beating his best of 50.08 at the NBC Championships. The 50.08 time was the second-best in school history and Saturday’s run moved him even closer to Bob Gay’s school record of 48.87 in 1997. “I knew I’d have to take it out hard, and I did,” Oliver said. “Towards the end, I was getting close to second. I had a good race. I ran sub 50, and that’s been a goal ever since I started running the 400 and the 4x4.” Oliver had approximately 10 minutes to recover between the end of the 4x100 and the start of the 400.

“It wasn’t as easy as I thought it would be, but I was ready to go for the 400 and felt charged up,” Oliver said.

Miller’s late charge earns regional berth in 800

Miller closed strong to finish fourth in the 800. He was in fifth place coming out of the final curve, but he passed Clyde junior Eli Pumphrey with about 50 meters remaining to claim the final regional spot.

Oak Harbor junior Brodee Miller won in 1:58.74, while Rogers senior Brandon Payne was second in 2:00.54 to edge Toledo Central Catholic junior Jerry Brown by .26 and Miller by 1.20 seconds.

Miller’s time was a PR, beating his previous best last season of 2:12.66 at the NBC meet. His best this season was 2:16.59 April 13 at the Napoleon Invitational, but he ran a 2:02 split in the 4x800 relay Thursday in the district meet.

“I knew I was fifth and at the beginning year I wanted to go to regionals,” Miller said. “It was just a matter of getting after it and going hard the rest of the way. I felt the team behind me, everyone screaming and cheering for me. That was an awesome feeling. You know then you have to give great effort.”

Throughout the meet, the Oak Harbor track was surrounded by members of Eastwood boys and girls teams cheering their teammates on. Both teams also cheered their teammates on at the field events.

The Eagles also had a strong turnout of alums at the meet.

“I thought I could catch him, but I knew it would be close,” Miller said. “It’s an amazing feeling after last year. I didn’t even get close to regionals then.”

Eastwood sophomore Henry Howard finished sixth in 2:04.32, just 2.60 seconds behind Miller. His time also was a PR, surpassing his previous best of 2:05.84 at the Oak Harbor Invitational.

Miller and Howard both closed in on a spot in Eastwood’s Top 10. A time of 1:58.88 is needed for the Top 10.

“He always runs gutsy,” Miller said of Howard. “He always goes out hard and gets after it. He fought hard. He had a fantastic race. I’m disappointed he didn’t qualify for regionals in the 800, but I’m happy he at least qualified in the 4x800.”



Figure 1 Austin Miller

Miller strikes again, Eagles finish fourth in 4x400 relay

Miller delivered another thrilling finish in the 4x400 relay, allowing the Eagles to finish fourth and advance to the regional.

Miller fell from third to fifth with 150 meters to go, but he rallied to finish fourth.

The team of Andre Lewis, Oliver, Kevin Lewis and Miller had a season-best time of 3:27.80, beating Eastwood’s previous best of 3:33.19 April 24 during a dual meet against Oak Harbor. The four also moved within 4.37 seconds of a spot in the school’s Top 10.

Oak Harbor won in 3:25.76, followed by Central Catholic 3:26.74 and Rogers 3:27.31. Miller moved into fourth place, passing a Clyde runner with about 10 meters to go. "When I dropped to fifth, the entire team was screaming and cheering, and I had to run for these guys. It wasn't about me. I knew I could get fourth place, so I just went after it and I caught them."

"The way he runs, he can anchor for us because he's a distance guy," Oliver said. "We know he can come back hard and come back with an extra kick. I loved the effort he gave. Andre and Kevin ran very well, and Austin ran great. We really ran well as a team."

"(Miller) had a heck of a day. He definitely stepped it up," Andre Lewis said.

The 4x400 relay has long been the signature event of the Eastwood program because it's last event of the meet, and because it requires a blend of speed and endurance.

"That race was who are and who we still need to be," Sabo said. "We've dropped a lot of time over the last month, just because they wanted it really badly. That race signifies who we are – the effort we put in, each guy trying to give the anchor the chance to be in a comfortable position. There were some really good guys that we ended up passing on the front stretch because he wanted it for the team, not just himself. That's what I appreciate about this group and that's who we are."



Kaiden Sanchez

4x100 relay qualifies for regional

The 4x100 relay team of Andre Lewis, Oliver, Sanchez and Kevin Lewis was third in 43.76 to advance to the regional. Perkins won in 43.47, while Rogers was second in 43.68.

The quartet also moved closer to the school's Top 10 which requires a time of 43.40 or better.

"We ran really well," Sanchez said. "We had really good handoffs. We ran really well. We were right there at the end, and now we're running at regionals. We ran a good time. I'm really proud of the guys."

SATURDAY'S RESULTS

FINALS

Top four in each event qualified for the regional

High jump: 2) tie, junior Andre Lewis, 6-3; 12) tie, sophomore Drew Luidhardt, 5-8.

Discus: 2) sophomore Hunter Lauer, 144-2 (pr); 17) senior Eldon Slack, 114-0.

110 hurdles: 2) junior Jesse Poiry, 15.12 (pr).

100: 6) senior Kaiden Sanchez, 11.35 (pr); 7) senior

Caleb Souder, 13.39.

1,600: 7) junior Connor Schramm, 4:56.14 (pr); 12) freshman Ben Buehler, 5:01.50 (pr).

4x100 relay: 3) team of Andre Lewis, junior Dayquan Oliver, Sanchez and junior Kevin Lewis, 43.76.

400: 3) Oliver, 49.72 (pr).

300 hurdles: 3) Andre Lewis, 40.65 (pr); 5) Poiry, 40.67 (pr).

800: 4) sophomore Austin Miller, 2:01.74 (pr); 6) sophomore Henry Howard, 2:04.32 (pr).

200: 6) Sanchez, 23.37 (pr).

3,200: 6) junior John Stewart, 10:50.90 (pr); 7) sophomore Raif Johnson, 10:57.95 (pr).

4x400 relay: 4) team of Andre Lewis, Oliver, Kevin Lewis and Miller, 3:27.88 (season best).

THURSDAY'S RESULTS

FINALS

- 4x800 relay: 1) Team of Miller, Henry Howard, Ben Buehler and junior A.J. O'Brien, 8:20.33.

- Pole vault: 1) sophomore Cullen Shank, 13-0; 4) junior Hayden Hoelter, 12-6.

- Long jump: 5) Kevin Lewis, 20-9; 6) Oliver, 20-7.

- Shot put: 5) senior Ian Sibbersen, 47-7½; 7) Lauer, 44-7¾.

PRELIMINARIES

The eight fastest times, regardless of heat, qualified for the finals:

- 100: 7) Souder, 11.54; 8) Sanchez, 11.56.

- 200: 6) Sanchez, 23.38.

- 400: 1) Oliver, 50.19; 13) freshman Cody Hefflinger, 55.88.

- 110 hurdles: 4) Poiry, 15.79; 10) Luidhardt, 17.48.

- 300 hurdles: 4) Lewis, 42.01; 6) Poiry, 43.15.

- 4x100 relay: 2) team of Andre Lewis, Oliver, Sanchez and Kevin Lewis, 43.61.

- 4x200 relay: 9) team of sophomore Collin Brogan, Hefflinger, junior Wyatt Oestreich and sophomore Zach Mullholand , 1:38.62.

- 4x400 relay: 5) team of Andre Lewis, Oliver, Kevin Lewis and Poiry, 3:33.98.

OAK HARBOR DISTRICT INFORMATION

<https://oh.milesplit.com/meets/607611-ohsaa-division-2-district-oak-harbor-2024>

OAK HARBOR DISTRICT RESULTS

<https://www.baumspage.com/tf/nw/2012/oakharbor/2024/Results.htm>

LEXINGTON REGIONAL INFORMATION

<https://oh.milesplit.com/meets/568342-ohsaa-division-2-region-6-lexington-2024>