

Shank wins NBC pole vault as boys finish 2nd



By Kevin Gordon

ROSSFORD — Cullen Shank has jumped well all season.

Saturday's Northern Buckeye Conference Championships produced more of the same for the Eastwood High School pole vaulter.

The sophomore won his specialty at Rossford's Glenwood Athletic Complex.

Shank's first-place finish and junior teammate Hayden Hoelter's second-place effort in the same event helped the Eagles finish second as a team.

Eastwood scored 119½ points to finish as the runner-up to conference newcomer Oak Harbor, which totaled 182½ points in the eight-team meet. Lake finished third with 94, while Maumee was fourth with 76.

"Every person could have PRd, and we still would have been several points away from Oak Harbor. They were that good," Eastwood head coach Brian Sabo said. "That's the best team in my 20 years that Oak Harbor has had. I'm glad Oak Harbor's in the league. They make us better. They raised the level of competition."

The Eagles had three PRs in the meet, two coming from juniors Dayquan Oliver and Kevin Lewis in the long jump.

Oliver finished third with a distance of 21-3¾, and Lewis was fourth with a distance of 21-3. Oliver's previous best was 21-2¼, while Lewis' was 20-9¾. Oliver's jump was the ninth-longest in meet history, and Lewis' earned a three-way tie for 10th. The NBC meet was first held in 2012.

The Eagles' other PR came from sophomore Hunter Lauer, who was fifth in the discus with a throw of 130-2 to beat his previous best by two inches.

Oliver was named the NBC's athlete of the year in a vote of conference coaches.

"I told our guys getting off the bus, 'There's nothing that could happen today that would make me love them any less than I already do, and I stand by that,'" Sabo said. "It wasn't that they didn't care. It wasn't that they weren't trying to get better. There were times, they didn't have it and maybe, as coaches, we have to look at what we we're doing ... maybe we should have done this or not done this."

The Eagles' next competition is the Division II district meet Thursday and Saturday at Oak Harbor High School.

“Hopefully, there’s something we did this week that gets us charged up for next week, Sabo said. “We have to figure out how to do that for next year, so we don’t have the same thing happen. The kids cared a lot and gave great effort. We just didn’t have it. Everybody was really consistent with their times, even though they thought their races didn’t go well which tells me another PR might be coming.”

Oliver named athlete of the year

In addition to finishing third in the long jump, Oliver finished second in the 400 (51.46), and fourth in the 100 (11.41) and the 200 (23.26).

“It wasn’t my best day, but I’m still honored to win the award,” Oliver said. “There are a lot of great athletes who could have won the award.”

Oliver already has earned a spot on Eastwood’s Top 10 this season in three events — second in the 400 (50.08), fifth in the 100 (11.07) and seventh in the 200 (22.63). His PR in the long jump is less than four inches from cracking the long jump Top 10.

“When I put him up for the award, I knew were some other really good athletes who would be nominated, and you can’t vote for your own guy,” Sabo said. “It’s outstanding he won the award. He’s talented, but he’s also a good kid. They picked a good guy,”



Photo: D. DeFalco Athlete: Cullen Shank

Shank, Hoelter finish 1-2 in the pole vault

Shank jumped 14-0 for his conference championship, just one inch off his PR earlier this season. Hoelter was second at 12-0, just shy his PR of 12-6, also earlier this season. They were the only vaulters out of the 16 athletes to clear 12-0 or higher.

Shank’s vault put him in a five-way tie for fourth place in meet history.

Like all of the athletes, Shank and Hoelter had to endure cold, mostly cloudy and windy conditions. “I’m really proud of myself. I finally put everything together, stuff is clicking,” said Shank, who was the top seed in the event, based on his regular-season jump of 14-1.

Shank has jumped 13-0 or higher seven times in nine meets this season, including 14-0 or better three times.

“Going into today’s meet, I knew I had a chance to win, but I wasn’t overly concerned with winning. I just wanted to stay consistent around 13-6,14-0,” Shank said. “Today, I added the timing part of it. I’ve been able to accomplish some of elements of the pole vault, but the timing part came together today.”

After clearing 14-1, Shank moved the bar to 14-7 where he missed all three attempts. He’s sixth all-time at Eastwood with the 14-1 jump.

Hoelter has vaulted 12-0 or 12-6 in every meet his season. His PR of 12-6 tied him for the No. 2 seed going into the meet.

“That’s the first time we’ve finished first and second in the pole vault (in the conference meet) in quite a while,” Sabo said. “They’ve both been super consistent, and they both have another PR coming.”

Top-three finishes

Also for the Eagles, senior Ian Sibbersen was second in the shot put with a throw of 44-9, junior Jesse Poiry was second in the 110 hurdles in 15.49, and junior Andre Lewis was third in the 300 hurdles in 40.94.

NEXT

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

NBC CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS

<https://www.baumspage.com/track/trevent.php?peventid=420&table=C>

OAK HARBOR DISTRICT INFORMATION

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