

PRs, Newsome's Top 10 discus effort highlights throwers invitational



Photo Credits: Danielle DeFalco

By Kevin Gordon

LUCKEY — Olivia Newsome is re-evaluating her goals this week. The Eastwood High School sophomore crossed one of her season goals off the list Sunday afternoon. She had the seventh-best discus throw in school history during the Eastwood Eagle Throwers Invitational.

Newsome threw 119-11 to jump over the mark of 112-2 required to join the Eagles' all-time Top 10 in the event. The throw was part of a fun afternoon for Newsome and the approximately 20 girls and boys throwers from the six other schools which competed in the meet.

Eastwood senior Hannah Friend and freshman Izzy Romero both had PRs in the discus and the shot, and junior Ava Kiefer, seniors Gage Might and Mason Steele, and junior Nate Heskett also had good days for the Eagles.

The hammer throw also was held during the meet.

"Our kids threw well," said Eastwood assistant coach Whitney Recker, who is still the school-record holder in both the shot and the discus. The former Whitney Hartman set both records in 2004, throwing 43-5¼ in the shot and 141-2 in the discus.

"This was a great opportunity to get some more throws and improve, and have some fun," Recker said. "Hopefully, everyone who came enjoyed it."

The meet originally planned for each athlete to receive three throws during the preliminaries, with the top nine distances advancing to the finals. Each athlete then would earn three more throws in an attempt to improve their distance.

But because of the number of entries in both the girls and boys shot and discus events, there were no prelims and finals, and every athlete received six throws.

Big PRs

Newsome's discus throw was a big PR, improving her previous best of 115-1 April 6 at home during a tri-meet against Genoa and Swanton.

"That's really exciting," Newsome said of being seventh on Eastwood's all-time list. "All season, I've been thinking I have to throw 116-3 because that gets me into 10th. Every week, when we write our goals in our book, I've been writing 116-3, and I finally got it."

“Ever since I started throwing in seventh grade, I was hoping to get as far as I have now,” Newsome added. “I’m excited to get this far, and I’m hoping to keep improving and doing the best I can.”

A throw of 116-2 was needed to tie for 10th place. Immediately ahead of Newsome are Holly Coe, who is fifth at 120-9 (1999); and Julie Clark, who is sixth at 120-7 (2005).

“I want to keep moving up the list,” Newsome said of her next goal in the discus.

Newsome threw 30-2 in the shot where she has a PR of 32-8. She’s had a PR three times in both events this season, but her last PR in the discus came against Genoa and Swanton. Her last PR in the shot had come April 17 at the Napoleon Invitational.

“I was feeling really good today,” Newsome said. “I’ve been working hard in practice, and I know I can throw PR distances, but I haven’t been able to do it in a meet for a while. I was very

happy I was able to do it today. I’m happy with the way I threw. It was a good day.”

Friend and Romero joined Newsome in Sunday’s big PR club.

Friend had a PR in the discus of 113-5, improving her previous best of 107-0 April 23 at the Eastwood Relays. In the shot, she threw 31-4¾ to improve on her previous PR of 30-6½ as a sophomore and season-best of 30-6.

Friend has PRd in the discus four times this season, including three times in the last four meets.

“I focused on throwing as well as I could, and to get a PR is always exciting,” Friend said. “I’m really happy with the way today went.”

Romero had PRs of 19-2¾ in the shot and 65-2 in the discus. Her previous bests were



17-10½ in the shot and 59-2 in the discus.

“I came out here to get my PRs up, and support the team,” Romero said. “To get two PRs, that makes for a great day. I felt amazing hitting my PRs, and getting the cheering and the support from my teammates. The vibe here was amazing. Everyone is so supportive of each other.”

Kiefer threw 37-2 to win the shot and 100-9 in the discus.

In the hammer, Kiefer threw 112-8 and Newsome threw 80-0.

“I was a little off today, but overall it was OK,” Kiefer said. “I feel really good right now. I’m throwing consistently, and I’m looking forward to even more improvement.”

Kiefer set the school record in the hammer throw during the Eastwood Relays with a mark of 124-4. She’s also PRd twice in both the discus and the shot, and ranks second in school history in the shot with a distance of 38-5.

Although individual results and placings weren’t emphasized during the meet, Newsome won the discus and was third in the shot, Friend was second in both, and Kiefer was first in the shot and fourth in the discus.

In the boys meet, Might threw 43-10¼ in the shot, followed by Steele at 41-7¾ and Heskett at 40-4.

In the discus, Might had a mark of 113-0, followed by Heskett at 108-9 and Steele at 107-9.

In the hammer, Steele threw 133-7, Heskett threw 101-2 and Might threw 65-2.



Family reunion

The throwers meet was held for the second time after it was canceled last season because of the COVID pandemic. The meet debuted in 2019 to provide the throwers with an extra meet, primarily in the hammer.

The hammer isn't sanctioned by the Ohio High School Athletic Association and is held in only a handful of regular-season meets.

An unofficial state hammer championship is traditionally held the day after the official state meet, but whether a state hammer meet will be held this season hasn't been decided. The throwers meet gives athletes a chance to try to post a qualifying mark in the hammer for the New Balance Nationals. To serve as a qualifier for nationals, meets must have at least

five schools participating and a registered official.

"It's another chance for them to throw, especially the hammer, for them to get a mark," Eastwood boys head coach Brian Sabo said.

Sabo, and former Eagle assistant coach and thrower Lucas Friess came up with the idea for the throwers meet.

"The weather is usually better in early May than it is earlier in the season," Sabo said. "We want to them to come out and have fun throwing."

The athletes enjoyed the meet, which included throwers from four schools in the Northern Buckeye Conference — Eastwood, Elmwood, Fostoria and Otsego. Also competing were throwers from Bowling Green, Leipsic and Rocky River Lutheran West.

"It's like a family reunion," Steele said. "It was a fun meet. There's so much positivity because we're all friends, and we like competing against each other."

"I wanted to throw and compete against people we haven't competed against yet, and it's a chance to improve your distances and your technique," Kiefer said.

Eastwood has its final two meets this week before hosting the NBC Championships May 15. The Eagles visit Elmwood Tuesday and compete in the Oak Harbor Invitational Friday.

Athletes and coaches from the other schools besides Eastwood also could be seen and heard celebrating the PRs of their athletes.

“I liked the atmosphere of the meet,” Newsome said. “The vibe here was really good. We’re all friends. We all cheer for each other. We’re all doing well, we’re all getting PRs and cheering each other on, and just being there for each other.”

“Today was about having another opportunity to throw,” Friend said. “This was a lot of fun. The weather was perfect for throwing. We’re all friends, and we cheer each other on and encourage each other.”