

Boys relays run well at state indoor championships



Photo Credit: Wes Lewis Athletes: Hoelter, Miller, K Lewis, Shank, Poiry, Sanchez, Brogan, Howard.

By Kevin Gordon

GENEVA — Eastwood High School's boys 4x400 and 4x200 relay teams had solid performances Saturday. The 4x400 team of Kevin Lewis, Austin Miler, Hayden Hoelter and Henry Howard ran a season-best time of 3:41.97 to finish 21st during the Division II-III state indoor track and field championships at the SPIRE Institute.

The 4x200 team of Kaiden Sanchez, Lewis, Collin Brogan and Cullen Shank also ran well with a time of 1:38.90 for 23rd place.

Sanchez was the only senior who ran for the Eagles, while Lewis and Hoelter were the only juniors. Brogan, Shank, Miller and Howard are sophomores.

"I'm really happy. It was a good day," Eastwood head coach Brian Sabo said. "They ran hard and gave a lot of effort. It was fun to watch."

4x200 relay gains experience

The 4x200 team of Sanchez, Lewis, Brogan and Shank was just off its state qualifying time of 1:34.81.

"We ran well. Everyone ran their hardest, and I appreciate that," Lewis said.

Kevin Lewis, Brogan and Shank were last-minute replacements for juniors Andre Lewis and Dayquan Oliver, and senior Caleb Souder on the relay team. Andre Lewis, Oliver and Souder completed their basketball seasons Friday night, and elected not to compete in the state meet. Sanchez, Souder, Oliver and Andre Lewis ran Eastwood's qualifying time which was the ninth-fastest time in school history.

"We knew those guys might not run and that's fine," Sabo said. "Their job was to get a couple of relays here and give those other guys an opportunity to run at state."

Sanchez was competing at state for the first time.

"It was really exciting to watch Kaiden Sanchez run," Sabo said. "He's wanted to get here for the last couple years and just missed. He ran really well. That was exciting for me with him being a senior, and it was exciting watching the younger guys run. They put a lot of effort in."

Cleveland Glenville won in 1:29.90, while Columbus Hartley was second in 1:31.42 and Beachwood was third in 1:31.88.

"I felt I ran one of my best times, and the other guys ran well for not being in our normal relay," Sanchez said. "They were just thrown into the biggest meet of the indoor season, and I'm proud of the way they ran."

"I wanted to run the best race I could, and that's what we told them to do," Sanchez added. "Just run as fast as you can. It doesn't matter what the time is or where we finish. It was about doing our best and running as fast as we could."

Brogan is a regular sprinter for the Eagles, while Shank only competed in the pole vault this season. As a freshman, he vaulted and competed in the sprints.

"This meet was definitely more intense, the whole atmosphere, a lot more adrenaline," Brogan said. "It felt good to be in this type of meet. It was definitely fun even though it didn't turn out the way I wanted, but it was still fun. It was as a great experience."

Shank was a Division II regional qualifier in the pole vault during last spring's outdoor season.

"This was a lot different than the regional, a lot more challenging endurance wise," Shank said.

"It taught me how to push out and maintain the speed that I was experiencing as a freshman. It was a lot different than last year. It was a really good experience."

4x400 runs season-best time

Even without Andre Lewis, the Eagles ran a season-best time of 3:41.97 in the 4x400 relay by more than two seconds. Eastwood qualified for state with a time of 3:44.03, run by Andre Lewis, Kevin Lewis, Miller and Howard.

"The 4x4 is my favorite event," Sabo said. "I wanted to see them go out really hard and go for (personal records). They embody everything we talk about. They give effort and see what the heck happens, and they're good dudes and have fun with each other. It was a fun day with these guys. I'm looking forward to the season."

Kevin Lewis, Hoelter, Miller and Howard all ran PRs, including Lewis, who ran a time of 53.77 on the opening leg.

Chardon Notre Dame Cathedral Latin won in 3:25.90, while Batavia was second in 3:29.37 and Marlinton was third in 3:30.30.

"We're super happy," Howard said. "We earned this day. We didn't get on the (awards) podium, but we got our best time of the year, and everyone gave it everything they had. We focused on effort and ran our hardest."

"Everyone ran hard," Miller said. "Nobody held anything back."

Hoelter, a pole vaulter, ran his first 400 since last season.

"He was fantastic," Miller said. "He ran hard and put everything on the line."

"I felt good, but I was a little nervous because I didn't expect to run a 400 this early in the season," Hoelter said. "I just wanted to run my hardest and help the team."

Eastwood's Jesse Poiry also qualified for state in the 60 hurdles, but didn't run in the meet. The junior was held out of the meet for precautionary reasons, the result of an injury suffered earlier this winter.