

Emch has strong finish as Eagle girls and boys compete at state



Most photo credits: Danielle DeFalco
Athlete: Leah Emch

By Kevin Gordon

COLUMBUS — Even on one of the hottest days of the season, Leah Emch still found the energy to fashion a fantastic finish.

The Eastwood High School sophomore passed four runners coming down the stretch to finish 12th in the 3,200-meter run Saturday afternoon during the state track and field championships at Ohio State University's Jesse Owens Stadium.

Emch was one of six Eagles who competed in the state meet over weekend.

In the girls meet, senior Julia Sabo tied for fourth in the pole vault, senior Olivia Newsome finished 11th in the discus, and freshman Jenna Gallant finished 14th in the seated shot put.

In the boys meet, senior Bryce DeFalco finished 17th in the long jump and classmate Dalton Hesselbart finished 18th in the pole vault.

Emch, Sabo, Newsome, DeFalco and Hesselbart all competed in the Division II meet. There are no divisions for the seated events. Separate stories on Sabo and Gallant are posted on our web site.

GIRLS MEET

Emch finishes 12th in the 3,200

Emch finished with a time of 11:48.76 after passing four runners during the final 80 meters. The stadium was drenched in sunshine, with a temperature of 91 degrees when the 3,200 started for its 18 runners at approximately 2:45 p.m.

"Oh my gosh, I have no idea where that came from," Emch said. "I was like, it's the end of the race, it's the last race before cross country, so I tried to give it my all. I had picked off those girls before and I thought I could do it again, even if it was the last little bit.

"I had a feeling I could catch one or two of them," Emch added. "Then, all of a sudden, we were in a pack, even though I had to go into lanes 2 and 3 to pass three of them."

Because of the heat, Emch was well off her personal-record time of 11:32.56 at last week's Lexington High School regional where she finished fifth to earn an at-large berth to state. She also was hoping to make a run at the school record of 11:25.98 set in 1998.

"My time definitely could have been better, but the weather wasn't going to produce great times," said Emch, who immediately started drinking fluids after she returned to the team's camp shortly after the race. Her body was covered with cold towels.

"We've had a lot of cold days throughout the season and today wasn't that way," Emch said. "I've always run better in cold weather. But I still ran the same way today, the way I normally do. I tried to go out hard and give it my all."

Oakwood senior Bella Butler won the race in 10:49.66, while Athens freshman Sophia Szolosi was second in 10:59.23, and the next five finishers all broke 11:20.

“This was a fun experience,” Emch said. “These girls were fast, so I tried to go out there and make the most out of it. It only lasts 11 minutes or so. This motivates me even more for next year. I’m only a sophomore and I definitely want to come back here. I’ll keep on training and working hard.”



Photo Credit: Jeremy Robinson
Athlete: Olivia Newsome

Newsome competes in the discus

After fouling on her first two attempts in the discus Friday, Newsome threw 114-0 on her final attempt and didn’t qualify for the finals.

The 18 qualifiers were divided into two flights for the preliminaries. The athletes received three attempts during the prelims, with the top nine distances advancing to the finals. They received three more attempts in the finals in an attempt to improve their mark.

Newsome was competing at state for the second straight season. She fouled on all three her attempts last season and then fouled on her first two attempts this season.

“My goal was to do better than I did last year, and I fouled my first two throws and I was like, “Oh, No,” Newsome said. “At least, I got my third throw in and I’m happy with that, so I did better than last

year.”

Newsome’s first two attempts Friday were far outside of the left sector line.

“I slowed things down and made sure I hit the positions I needed to hit,” Newsome said of her final attempt. “My last throw was still a little bit too close because it still went so far left, but I’m glad it stayed in and I got one in.”

Norton junior Morgan Hallett won the state championship for the second straight season, tying the state record with a throw of 170-8.

Newsome qualified for state with at-large berth after finishing fifth in the regional. She also won a district championship at Oak Harbor and finished third in the Northern Buckeye Conference Championships.

She finished second on Eastwood’s all-time Top 10 list with a distance of 134-11.

“I’m really happy with how I did in high school,” said Newsome, who will throw collegiately at Hillsdale. “Now, I can use what I did here in high school and carry it over to college. I had a lot of successes, and I’m excited about continuing my career in college.”

BOYS MEET

DeFalco, Hesselbart compete

In the long jump Friday, DeFalco jumped 19-¼ after fouling on his first two attempts. Like the discus, the long jump had two flights for the preliminaries followed by the finals. LaGrange Keystone senior Ryan Shackelford won the event with a jump of 25-6½.

“It wasn’t the day I wanted,” DeFalco said. “After getting through the district and the regional, I thought today would be a fresh start to show what I was capable of. Obviously,



Bryce DeFalco

there's a purpose for everything and perhaps this was a part of mine. I have to accept it now, and learn and grow from it.

"I really went after my jumps," DeFalco added. "I went hard my first two jumps, and then I moved back a little too far on my third jump, and got a mark in, but it wasn't enough to qualify for the finals."

DeFalco finished fourth in the Oak Harbor district and fourth in the regional to qualify for state, and won the NBC championship with a PR jump of 21-3. He'll attend Bowling Green State University in the fall and be a walk-on member of the Falcon football team.

"I knew this weekend would be more about being around these people one more time, and being around a family-type atmosphere," DeFalco said. "The way we all get along and how far we've all come along, it's all fit together very nicely. Nobody's going to remember how we did. People are going to remember how you treated them and the relationships you had."

In the pole vault Friday, Hesselbart cleared 12-6 on his first attempt and 13-0 on his second attempt before going out of the competition with three misses at 13-6. He was competing at state for the third time.

Otsego senior Dakota Kiefer cleared 16-0 to win the state championship.

Hesselbart, who qualified for state with an at-large berth after a fifth-place finish at Lexington, finished his career tied for fourth place on Eastwood's all-time list. He had a PR of 14-6.



Dalton Hesselbart

"I had a solid career, but it's very disappointing to have qualified for state three times and not once make it on the podium," Hesselbart said. "I'm not very happy with the way today went, but there's nothing I can do about it now."

STATE MEET RESULTS

<https://www.baumspage.com/ohsaa/tf/2023/index.htm>

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