

Middle school girls, boys sweep NBC championships

By Kevin Gordon

LUCKEY — Eastwood Middle School's boys and girls earned team titles in the Northern Buckeye Conference track and field championships Friday night at Freedom Field.

The Eagles won both meets convincingly.

The boys won five events and totaled 159 points to finish ahead of runner-up Otsego with 91½ and third place Rossford with 91.

The girls had five first-place finishes and scored 146 points to beat second-place Woodmore with 106½ and third-place Otsego with 78½.

"We came out and competed hard," Eagle coach John Sponaugle said of the boys and girls teams. "I can't begin to tell you how many PRs (personal records) we had tonight. Both teams performed well. I'm really proud of both teams."

"We encouraged the kids to go out and give it everything they had," Eastwood coach Chris Cunningham said. "They definitely rose to the occasion."

The dual conference championships completed a successful, but challenging season for the Eagles after their 2020 season was canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The last time the Eagles had a meet in 2019, this season's team members were fifth and sixth graders. And this season's eighth graders barely had a week of practice as seventh graders before the season was canceled.

"What we like to do in middle school is for them to develop a passion for the sport, so they continue on to high school," Sponaugle said. "I think we accomplished that this year. I'm hearing a lot of the kids saying, 'Yes, I'm coming out for track next year.' We like to keep that pipeline full to the high school, and get them feeling good about themselves. This is a good way to end the season on a positive note and head into the summer."

"None of these kids had done track before," Cunningham said. "They left the season having a lot of fun and looking forward to next season."

The boys have won all nine NBC championships since the conference was formed for the 2011-12 school year.

The girls' championship was Eastwood's second in the last three seasons and fifth overall.

GIRLS RECAP

In addition to their five first-place finishes, Eastwood dominated with its depth. The Eagles had six second-place finishes and two third-place finishes.

Eastwood scored in 13 of the 15 events, and had two of the top eight finishers in nine of the 12 non-relay events. The top eight finishers in every event scored team points.

Addison Hartman won two events for Eastwood, sweeping the throws. She threw 34-2½ to win the shot put and 85-9 to win the discus.

The Eagles' other winners were: Kyrie Henline, pole vault, 8-6; Mallory Sandberg, 100 hurdles, 18.05; and the 4x400 relay team of Savannah Stephens, Jordan Jensen, Sandberg and Leah Emch, 4:40.20.

Henline attempted to break the NBC record of 9-0 set by Julia Sabo in 2019. After winning the competition at 8-6, Henline moved the bar to 9-1, but missed all three of her attempts.

BOYS RECAP

Eastwood scored in every event, and had two of the top eight finishers in 10 of the 12 non-relay events. The Eagles also had seven second-place finishes and four third-place finishes.

The Eagles' five first-place finishes were by four different individuals.

Eastwood's Hayden Hoelter was a double-winner. He won the 800 in 2:17.56 and cleared 9-0 to win the pole vault.

The Eagles' other winners were: Kevin Lewis, long jump, 18-1½; Jesse Poiry, 110 hurdles, 16.96; and Andre Lewis, 200 hurdles. 27.73.

Complete results of the meet are available at:

<https://www.baumspage.com/track/trevent.php?peventid=356&table=C>