

Oliver's big night, team effort lead boys to meet title



By Kevin Gordon

OAK HARBOR — There aren't enough superlatives to describe how well Dayquan Oliver performed Friday night.

But in a word, the Eastwood High School boys track and field junior was terrific. He won the 400, and finished second in the 100, the 200 and the long jump to help the Eagles win the Oak Harbor Invitational.

Oliver had a personal-record performance in all four events. He also earned a spot on Eastwood's Top 10 in the 100 and the 400, improved his Top 10 standing in the 200, and moved even closer to a spot in the Top 10 in the long jump.

The Eagles had plenty of other quality performances during the 12-team meet.

They performed well in all 17 events and totaled 150 points to edge Oak Harbor by two points for the championship in the 12-team meet. Lake was third with 113½, while Margaretta was fourth with 69.

Eastwood trailed Oak Harbor by five points entering the pole vault — which turned out to be the final event of the meet, finishing well after the completion of the 4x400 relay.

The 4x400 is the final running event, usually making that the final event.

The finishes of sophomore Cullen Shank, who was third at 13-6, and junior Hayden Hoelter, who was seventh at 12-0, in the pole vault gave the Eagles the team title.

Shank received six points for his finish and Hoelter two, while Oak Harbor scored just one point in the pole vault for its eighth-place effort.

The top eight finishers in each event scored team points, which were awarded on a 10-8-6-5-4-3-2-1 basis.

"The team was great," Oliver said. "Just a whole bunch of PRs. It was a great night. Everyone performed well."

The Eagles scored in all 17 events. They had two scorers in all eight individual running events, and two of the five field events. They finished no lower than fourth in all four relays. Schools could enter two athletes in the 13 individual events and one team in each of the four relays.

“We performed well in every event,” Eagle head coach Brian Sabo said. “I didn’t care if we won, but they did everything we asked of them. We were doing things that would allow us to get better in the next week or two, and they got better today by doing these things. I appreciate that and respect them so much for doing that.

“I gave them the freedom to not worry about the performance and the finish by investing in certain techniques or going out in a race harder or working on the first 30 meters of the 100,” Sabo added. “It paid off, and we ended up winning the meet.”

Oliver’s first-place finish in the 400 was Eastwood’s only win, but the Eagles had seven second-place finishes, six third-place finishes and four fourth-place finishes.

“We talk about investing and trying to be better for each other and see how many points we score at the end,” Sabo said. “We had a ton of PRs and if we didn’t PR, we were super consistent with the time we got three days ago in our meet at Otsego.

“They’re good kids and I enjoy being around them, and all of the coaches enjoy being around them,” Sabo added. “The winning makes it fun and the winning is for them, and it makes it more euphoric.”



All photo credits: Deb Streacker Athletes: Oliver and Sanchez

Oliver’s big night

Oliver won the 400 in 50.08 — the second-fastest time in Eastwood history. The school record of 48.86 was set by Bob Gay in 1997. Oliver ran a strong race, beating Oak Harbor junior Carson Ridener by 1.09 seconds.

“I knew I was running against some really good guys who I’ve run against before,” said Oliver, whose previous best in the 400 was 54.24. “I wanted to push out hard, get a lead and maintain the speed and

finish all the way through. That was a strong race.”

His first second-place finish in the running events came in the 100 where he had a time of 11.07 — the fifth-fastest time in school history. Oliver’s previous best was 11.30 earlier this season.

Oak Harbor junior Tyler Thompson won the 100 in 10.81.

“That felt smooth out of all the races,” Oliver said. “I got a great start and maintained my form, and finished very well.”

After running the 100 and the 400, Oliver ran the 200 and was second in 22.63 — the seventh-fastest time in Eagle history. His previous best of 22.75 came only 72 hours earlier.

Oak Harbor junior Garry Brooks held off Oliver to win the 200 by .08.

“I was feeling a little tired the first 150 (meters),” Oliver said. “The last 50, I just tried to push and use all of the strength I could to finish. I was gaining some distance, but he got me at the very end.”

Oliver ran the 4x400 relay in middle school, but has only run the open 400 a handful times in high school. He never ran the 200 much until the end of last season.

Oliver might run all three races during Saturday's (May 11) Northern Buckeye Conference Championships at Rossford's Glenwood Athletic Complex.

"We thought we might try that in the league," Sabo said. "I wanted to see him do it tonight because he's been running so well. Just invest and let's see what happens. For him and there was some good competition here and that allows you to have PRs, he's coming and he still has a lot left. I'm happy for him because he's such a good kid and he works really hard."

Oliver's third second-place finish came in the long jump where he had a distance of 21-2¼, beating his previous best of 20-9¾. His best mark came on his last attempt of the finals. His best jump in the meet to that point was 20-4, which put him in second place after the preliminaries.

The 18 jumpers were divided into two flights for the preliminaries where they received three attempts. The top nine distances advanced to the finals where they received three more jumps in an attempt to improve their mark.

The long jump was won by Margaretta junior Tate Bailey, who went 21-9.

"I went for it on my last attempt," Oliver said. "I tried to make sure my foot was under me, so I could get up high. If I did that, I knew my momentum would carry me to a good distance."

Even though Oliver PRd in the long jump, he's almost five inches from 10th-place on the school's all-time list. The long jump, like many events at Eastwood, is a strong event and making the Top 10 isn't easy. A jump of 21-7 is needed to join the Top 10.

Oliver's night consisted of the three sprint races and six jumps in the long jump.

"I recovered way faster than I thought I would," Oliver said. "It wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. It was a good, positive night. I feel good. I'm PRing a lot. I feel healthy. Nothing is hurting. I'm getting stronger every time I run."

Senior Kaiden Sanchez and sophomore Austin Miller also scored in the sprints.

Sanchez was fifth in the 200 (23.41) and sixth in the 100 (11.43), while Miller was fourth in the 400 (54.00). Sanchez had a PR in the 200, beating his previous best of 23.57, and he matched his PR in the 100. Miller had a PR, lowering his previous time of 54.01. Also in the long jump, Eastwood junior Kevin Lewis was fourth at 19-9¾.



Athletes: O'Brien and Buehler

4x800 relay team has sizzling time

The 4x800 relay team of sophomore Henry Howard, junior A.J. O'Brien, freshman Ben Buehler and Miller was second in 8:30.14 — lowering its season-best by 11.56 seconds.

"That was super amazing for all of us," Howard said.

"We're all super happy about the way we ran."

"What a great race," Sabo said. "They did what we asked them to do. They hit the 400 goals, they hit the 600 goals we had for them. We told them we don't care what your total time is. We're trying to set you up for the next two weeks, but they all PRd."

The 8:41.70 clocking happened three races ago, and their two races since resulted in times of 8:42.60 and 8:42.78.

"It's great to destroy that barrier of 8:40," Howard said. "All of us knew a jump was coming with those consistent times. With all of the hard work we've been putting in, we knew we'd have that kind of jump at some point."

Howard, O'Brien, Buehler and Miller all ran 2:10 or better, and all four of their splits matched or tied their PR.

Lake won the race in 8:23.97.

"The distance crew really went after it," Oliver said. "They went out hard."

"The race went well," Howard said. "Everyone ran their hearts out and was really competitive."

Howard said the quartet's next goal is 8:20.

"They're still capable of more," Sabo said. "They attack, and they do it for each other and the team. That's what I respect about those guys."



Athlete: Howard

More distance success

Howard also finished third in the 800 with a time of 2:05.84, while senior Eli Good was seventh in 2:10.97. Howard and Good easily lowered their PRs. Howard's previous best was 2:09, while Good's was 2:16.67.

In the 3,200, junior John Stewart was fourth in 10:59.09, and sophomore Raif Johnson was fifth in 11:03.80. Stewart's time was a PR as he broke 11 minutes for the first time. His previous best was 11:04.21. Johnson's time was a season-best, lowering his time of 11:14.64

The 1,600 saw junior Connor Schramm finish fifth in 5:04.44 and freshman Casem Henline finish seventh in 5:14.16. Henline had a monster PR, lowering his previous best of 5:36.30.

"T.J. (assistant coach T.J. Tuttamore) and Laura (assistant coach Laura Buehler) do a great job with (the distance runners)," Sabo said. "They invest so much and it's reciprocated when the guys run like that."

Hurdlers keep on rolling

Juniors Andre Lewis and Jesse Poiry continued to run well in the hurdles.

Poiry was third in the 110 hurdles in 15.42, while Lewis was fifth in 16.05. Poiry's time was a PR, beating his previous time of 15.45.

In the 300 hurdles, Lewis was second in 41.01, and Poiry was third in 41.08. The time for Lewis was a PR. His previous best was 41.40.

Andre Lewis also cleared 6-1 for second place in the high jump.

Throwers have success

Eastwood junior Ethan Recker finished third in the shot put with a throw of 46-3³/₄, and sophomore Hunter Lauer was sixth in the discus with a throw of 130-0.

Recker and Lauer both had PRs. Recker's previous best in the shot was 45-1¹/₄, and Lauer had a previous best in the discus of 125-8.

“The throwers had a great night,” Sabo said. “They’ve been working hard. For them, they’re validating their efforts. The coaches knew it was in them. They just needed to do it in a meet.”



Athletes: Hoelter and Hefflinger

More relay results

The 4x100 team of Andre Lewis, Kevin Lewis, Sanchez and Shank was second in 45.05.

The 4x200 team of sophomore Collin Brogan, freshman Cody Hefflinger, Poiry and Kevin Lewis was fourth in 1:36.82.

The 4x400 team of Kevin Lewis, Miller, Hefflinger and Poiry was seventh in 3:35.44.

Championship season

The Eagles will defend their conference championship Saturday in the NBC meet at Rossford’s Glenwood Athletic Complex.

Eastwood takes part in the Division II district meet at Oak Harbor May 16 and 18.

“Awesome,” Sabo said when asked about how he feels about his team going into the conference meet. “Oak Harbor is still the team to beat, but we’re going to throw everything we have at them. If we PR in all of these areas and we’re first or second, it doesn’t bother me one bit. We’re going to try to take care of us of first, and then Oak Harbor and Lake or whoever it might be.”

The Eagles have steadily improved this season and have performed well during the last few weeks.

“We’re running for each other,” Oliver said. “Coach Sabo talks about it all of the time, effort and running for the person beside you. No-one is ever selfish. When you run for someone else, it means more and helps you run way better.”

Sabo praised the team’s captains, Good, Andre Lewis, Kevin Lewis, senior Ian Sibbersen, Sanchez and senior Caleb Souder.

“Our captains are unbelievable,” Sabo said. “How they perform and lead, and this group wants to do well for each other and the program. As a coach, you’re proud to coach them.”

NEXT

The Eagles host their annual junior varsity invitational Monday.

OAK HARBOR INVITATIONAL RESULTS

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EASTWOOD JUNIOR VARSITY INVITATIONAL INFORMATION

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