

Boys fare well from start to finish, placing third at Whitmer



All photo credits: Danielle DeFalco Athlete: Jesse Poiry

By Kevin Gordon

TOLEDO — Eastwood High School's boys track and field team was impressive as soon as it exited the bus at Whitmer High School Friday night. The Eagles warmed up well and then fashioned a third-place finish during the 54th annual Gold W Invitational. Eastwood scored 103 points to finish just three points shy of runner-up Whitmer in the eight-team meet and edge fourth-place St. Francis by one point.

Bedford won the meet with 115 points. Eastwood won two events on the way to its third-place finish.

The pole vault team of Cullen Shank, Hayden Hoelter and Eli Good was first with a combined height of 36-0.

The high jump team of Andre Lewis, Dayquan Oliver and Drew Luidhardt won with a combined height of 16-9.

The field events were scored as relays. Schools were allowed to enter three athletes in each field event, with the combined height or distance of those athletes being used to determine the order of finish.

Eastwood also finished second in three events and third in eight more events.

The invitational consisted of 22 events — the 17 standard events held during a dual meet plus the triple jump, distance medley relay (800-200-400-1,600), sprint medley relay (100-100-200-400), 4x110 shuttle hurdles relay and 4x100 throwers relay.

"When the guys got off the bus and even yesterday during practice, you could tell they were excited to compete," Eastwood head coach Brian Sabo said.

The meet was the second of the season for the Eagles, who competed in the Liberty-Benton Relays March 28. The team's dual meet Tuesday against Swanton and Liberty-Benton was canceled because of inclement weather.

"There were multiple events we had a chance to win, and that's how we ended with a bunch of seconds, thirds and fourths," Sabo said. "That's how you get better. You don't get better running against bad teams. We got better today. We kept battling against great competition.

"We had a lot of PRs (personal records) for this early in the year.," Sabo added. "Even the events we didn't place or just scored a point, we gave great effort."

Sabo also praised his team's athletes and coaching staff for helping Whitmer with the hurdles, and for picking up trash in the team's camp throughout the meet. The Eastwood coaches also served as exchange zone judges in events they weren't scheduled for that role.

Sabo, himself, held the starting blocks for a Northview runner at the start of the 300 hurdles race.

"I loved the effort and team spirit, and we performed well," Sabo said. "It's an honor to coach these guys because they do the things you ask them to do and they take it to another level."

Pole vault, high jump teams first

Shank, Hoelter and Good all had big nights in the pole vault. Shank tied for first individually with a vault of 13-0, while Hoelter tied for third at 12-0, and Good tied for sixth at 11-0. Shank and Good both had personal records, while Hoelter matched his personal best.

"Those guys were dialed in from the start," Sabo said. "You could tell from the way they came in and warmed up, they were going to do well."

Andre Lewis tied for first in the high jump at 6-0, while Oliver tied for sixth at 5-6, and Luidhardt tied for eighth at 5-3.

The Eagles finished first, second or third in all six field events.

"We were sixth as a team during the middle of the meet, and to come back to finish third is just crazy," Andre Lewis said. "That didn't include some of the field events, but we made the most of our opportunity. We competed hard."



Dayquan Oliver

Second-place finishes

Eastwood's second-place finishes came in the 4x100 relay, the 4x100 shuttle hurdles relay and the 4x100 throwers relay.

The 4x100 team of Andre Lewis, Kevin Lewis, Kaiden Sanchez and Oliver had a time of 44.87.

The shuttle hurdles team of Andre Lewis, Drew Luidhardt, Sawyer Mason and Jesse Poiry was timed in 1:05.10.

The throwers team of Jordan Kieper, Braden Dix, Hunter Lauer and Ethan Recker had a time of 51.72.

"The 4x1 had great chemistry," said Sanchez, who also finished third in the 200 in 24.03 and fourth in the 100 in 11.55.

"The handoffs were perfect," Kevin Lewis said. "We're happy with the way we ran.

Everyone ran a good leg, and that gave us a good time overall."

Kevin Lewis also finished fifth in the long jump with a distance of 19-1¼.

"I struggled with my jumps, but I was able to come back and run well in the 4x100. I was happy we got second," Kevin Lewis said.

Sabo also loved the shuttle hurdle race run by the Eagles: "They run such an aggressive race that it ruined our form, but they wanted to run through hurdles to win the race. I appreciated that. We'll fix the technical stuff, but to see that effort, things become easier to fix with effort."

Third-place finishes

The Eagles' other third-place finishes:

- 800: Henry Howard, 2:11.55.
- 110 hurdles: Andre Lewis, 16.65.
- 300 hurdles: Poiry, 43.25.
- Long jump: Kevin Lewis, Oliver and Hunter Wilson, 55-11¼ . Lewis was fifth, while Oliver was sixth at 19-0¾ and Wilson was 12th at 17-9¼.
- Triple jump: Oliver and Wilson, 66-3½. Oliver was eighth at 35-1½ and Wilson was 10th at 31-2.
- Shot put: Ian Sibbersen, Hunter Lauer and Recker, 122-9. Sibbersen was fifth 43-2, while Lauer was 11th at 40-5 and Recker was 14th at 39-2.
- Discus: Lauer, Kieper and Dix, 333-4. Lauer was sixth at 116-3, while Kieper was seventh at 112-10 and Dix was 16th at 104-3.3.

Blast from the past

The Eagles resumed their tradition of wearing flannel shirts when they weren't competing. The flannel shirts were a trademark of the program's great teams of the past and were worn to reflect the team's work ethic.

"We talk about the flannel shirts all the time and we wanted to bring them back," Good said, crediting Sibbersen for suggesting to wear the flannels. A number of Eagles wore them at Whitmer.

"We brought back the flannels to show we're going to work today, we're giving effort," Good said. "Everyone gave great effort."

Improvement, great competition

The Eagles were the smallest school, based on enrollment, in the meet and fared well against its Division I opponents. Eastwood is a Division II school.

"We competed well against good competition," Sanchez said. "We don't care who the competition is. "We're going to compete hard, give it our best and get the work done." Good praised Ben Buehler for giving the team "a jolt of energy" with his leg during the distance medley relay. Buehler had a time of 2:14.5, including one lap of 69 seconds. The DMR was the first running event of the meet.

"That really gave us a boost, to see him go that hard," Good said. "It got us off to a great start."

Sanchez praised the 4x200 relay team of Wyatt Oestreich, Wyatt Ashby, Steven Nelson and Cody Lutz for not quitting, even after the team dropped the baton.

"The energy was there," Kevin Lewis said. "We knew we were the smallest school here and it was good competition. We had a good day. This meet is going to give us a lot of confidence."

NEXT

The Eagles have two meets next week, hosting Maumee and Genoa in a Northern Buckeye Conference tri-meet Tuesday and competing in the Napoleon Invitational Saturday.

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