

## Hesselbart earns district pole vault championship

**By Kevin Gordon**

OAK HARBOR — Dalton Hesselbart's goal this season is returning to the state high school track and field championships.

He moved one step closer to his goal Thursday night.

The Eastwood High School junior earned a Division II district championship in the pole vault to qualify for next week's regional meet at Lexington High School.

The top four finishers in each event at the district advance to Lexington.

Hesselbart will see some friendly faces at the regional as the Eagles had two other regional qualifiers during the first day of the district meet which concludes Saturday.

The 4x800 relay team of seniors Devin Good and Cory Jay, freshman Hayden Hoelter and senior Xander Ramsey finished second; and freshman Dayquan Oliver finished third in the long jump.

Hesselbart cleared 14-3, the fifth-best vault in school history to beat his previous best of 13-9 March 29 at Oak Harbor in the team's first meet of the season. The vault of 13-9 originally put him in a three-way tie for ninth place on Eastwood's all-time list.

The vault of 14-3 moved Hesselbart into second place in the region and 10<sup>th</sup> place in Division II. The top four finishers at Lexington qualify for the state meet June 3-4 at Ohio State University's Jesse Owens Stadium.

Only one other vaulter cleared 12-6 or higher, runnerup and Clyde sophomore Lance Laughlin, who jumped 13-3.

"I wanted to win, but the biggest thing was clearing 14-0," Hesselbart said. "Qualifying for the regional is big, but I'm not going to stop now. I feel good about the way I'm vaulting."

"It was definitely a good day," Hesselbart added. "I've been struggling with 14-0 since the first meet at Oak Harbor. I'm happy I finally got it and another three inches."

Hesselbart finished 14<sup>th</sup> at state last season, clearing 13-0. He's jumped at least 13-0 in every meet this season, including 13-6 five times, but he hadn't made 14-0 until Thursday.

"It was just a matter of time until I cleared 14-0," Hesselbart said. "It's been a matter of timing issues, but, today, we put it all together. After 13-6, I knew I'd get 14-0 because all of my jumps were consistent."

Hesselbart had a solid day. He cleared 12-6 and 13-0 on his first attempt, 13-6 on his second attempt, 13-9 on his first attempt, 14-0 on his second attempt and 14-3 on his first attempt.

"We've known that's there," Eastwood head coach Brian Sabo said of 14-0. "We worked with him a couple days ago on not worrying about the crossbar, and just vaulting the pole vault pole, and everything else will take care of itself, and that's what he did."

After clearing 14-3, Hesselbart missed three attempts at 14-6. Only two Eagles have cleared 15-0 or higher, including Crosby Schemenauer, who made 15-4 in 2008. Jacob Montag is second on the school's all-time list, clearing 15-0 in 2017.

"He came in focused," Sabo said. "He made a great attempt at 14-6, and I think he believes he can clear 14-6. Finally for him, things just clicked, and he jumped the way we knew he was capable of. We're going to keep doing that."

### **4x800 team finishes second**

The 4x800 team of Good, Jay, Hoelter and Ramsey had another strong run with a time of 8:30.85, just shy of its season best of 8:28.11 during Saturday's Northern Buckeye Conference Championships at Memorial Stadium in Fostoria.

The NBC time was a season-best by almost 15 seconds. The Eagles nearly had another season best at the district meet, even though Ramsey wasn't feeling well and Jay was feeling tired. The 4x800 team became Eastwood's first regional qualifier in a running event since the 2019 season. The Eagles had four regional qualifiers, all in the field events, last season and the 2020 season was canceled because of Covid.

"It wasn't a season best, but we're going to regionals, and that's what matters," Good said.

"PRs are important, but the bottom line is taking the next step.

"Weather has played a factor, and the adrenalin and the environment," Good added about the team's faster times of late. "Some races during the year, you run by yourself. Now, you're running against guys who have similar times, and now you're going after the next guy. That really helps out."

Perkins won by 19.2 seconds over the Eagles, who finished 7.17 second ahead of third-place Rossford.

"They were fantastic," Sabo said.

The Eagles are 10<sup>th</sup> in the region, but only 8.21 seconds from fourth place. Eastwood hasn't qualified for state in the 4x800 since 2018 when it finished 14<sup>th</sup>.

"We're still hungry to go state," Ramsey said. "We're a little ways out. It's not much, like eight seconds, and that is very doable. We're going to recover well, we're going to prepare well and give it everything we've got in the regional."

Good and Hoelter both ran PR splits. Good's split was 2:02.1, down from 2:03. Ramsey said Good was on pace to break the two-minute mark with 200 meters to go.

"Devin's running well," Ramsey said. "He's running hard and getting it done. He likes popping off (running first) and running against people he knows might be better than him because it gets him right up there with them, and he chases them the whole way."

Ramsey and Good both run the 800 Saturday, and Ramsey believes Good could break the two-minute mark then.

"That's inevitable," Ramsey said. "He's in the form of his life and he's running great. I'm really happy to see that."

Hoelter had a time of 2:09.9, his best of the season. His previous best was 2:11.06.

"That kid is a freak of nature," Ramsey said of Hoelter. "He's running times I didn't run until I was a junior. I couldn't be happier for him. He's so athletic and has so much potential. It's great for our team because we have the potential to do great things."

Hoelter also finished 11<sup>th</sup> in the pole vault, clearing 10-0. The pole vault was held at 4 p.m., with the 4x800 starting an hour later. Hoelter had vaulted several times before he ran the 4x800. He finished the pole vault after running the relay.

"He doesn't warm up with us because of the pole vault, so I don't know what secret sauce he has or what he does to get ready," Ramsey said. "I hope he keeps it up. I love what he's doing."

### **Oliver finishes third in long jump**

Oliver had a terrific day in the long jump, finishing third with a PR jump of 20-8¼.

"I've been trying to hit the 20s all year," Oliver said. "I was in a little bit of slump, but that jump really felt good. My speed on the runway, I've really started to pick that up, and that's made a big difference. I got more pop off the board today."

Oliver's previous best was 19-7¼ during the Napoleon Freshmen Invitational May 2. He jumped 19-0 one other time, that coming during the conference meet when he had a distance of 19-1¼.

"I was expecting to hit 20," Oliver said. "I wanted to give it the best I had because this could have been my last meet. I've been close to 20, and now I've got it. It's exciting to get to the regional as a freshman. I'll go there to compete, have fun and cheer on my guys."

Oliver's best jump came on his sixth and final attempt.

The 25 athletes were divided into two flights for the preliminaries where they each received three attempts. The top nine distances advanced to the finals where they received three more attempts in an attempt to improve their distance.

The top eight finishers scored points for the team. Oliver was fifth going into the finals.

"Going from fifth to third, that's what it takes," Sabo said. "That's a vote for confidence for him to get over 20. Now, he knows he's closer to 21-0 than 20-0. When that kid gets stronger and builds more speed, he'll keep getting better."

Also in the long jump, classmate Kevin Lewis finished ninth at 18-5¾.

In the shot put, senior Nate Heskett finished fifth at 46-1½ (pr).

### **District finalists**

Qualifying for Saturday's district finals were:

- 100 hurdles: senior Noah Smith, 16.08; and freshman Jesse Poiry, 17.51.
- 4x200 relay: sophomores Caleb Souder, Kaiden Sanchez and Noah Haar, and senior Jake Limes, 1:33.32. Souder and Sanchez ran PR splits.
- 4x100 relay: junior Bryce Koprowski-Kistner, Limes, Sanchez and Smith, 43.78.
- 300 hurdles: freshman Andre Lewis, 43.57.
- 200: Smith, 23.04.
- 4x400 relay: Limes, Good, Haar and Smith, 3:31.03. Good and Haar ran PR splits.

The Eagles are second in the team standings with 29 points after four of the 17 events. Perkins is first with 40.

"To come in and compete, that's all we ask," Sabo said. "When you do that, great things happen. They did that. They showed up and competed. We had a lot of positive things happen. I was elated with how we competed and gave great effort."

The Eagles also received some great experience during the meet.

"There is a lot of youth in some of our events, and, fortunately, we have great senior leadership to help them along, and take them along and follow me," Sabo said. "There are a lot of kids here who needed great experience here, and they got it today."

"When you're here a second time, you're a little more relaxed than you were the first time, and you know what it's like," Sabo added. "Somebody always PRs in the district or regional, and they get on the awards stand or they win or do something big."

### **District results**

<https://oh.milesplit.com/meets/476125-ohsaa-division-2-district-oak-harbor-2022/results#.YocTE2DMK3k>

**District information**

<https://oh.milesplit.com/meets/476125-ohsaa-division-2-district-oak-harbor-2022/info#.YoY7I2DMK3k>