

Team effort helps girls finish 2nd in NBC



By Kevin Gordon

ROSSFORD — Eastwood High School's girls track and field team fashioned a run at a Northern Buckeye Conference championship Saturday.

The Eagles fell short of the title, but still turned in a championship-level performance. They performed well, won three events and totaled 117 points in the conference meet at Rossford's Glenwood Athletic Complex. Otsego won the eight-team meet with 133 points, while Oak Harbor was third with 112 1/3 and Lake was fourth with 107 1/3.

"We really went after it," Eastwood head coach Nathan Howard said. "The girls really responded. Mind-set wise, the girls were there all week. They were ready to compete, and they performed well.

"This was one of our best meets of the season in terms of the way they competed," Howard added. "They stayed in it. They had a great meet. No matter the conditions, they competed hard and did what we asked them to do."

Eastwood scored in 16 of the 17 events, and had two placers in seven of the 13 non-relay events. The top eight finishers in each event scored team points, with the points awarded on a 10-8-6-5-4-3-2-1 basis.

Schools were allowed to enter two athletes in the non-relay events. The relays had one team per school.

"It was everything across the board," Howard said. "We don't have the athletes of the meet or the athletes of the year, but we have a lot of really good kids who all pour into the team concept and doing their best for the team."



Photo Credit: Valerie Sponaugle Athletes: Foos, Ward, Sponaugle, Emch

Distance runners win NBC titles

The Eagles won three events in cold, mostly cloudy and windy conditions — the 4x800 relay team of senior Amelia Ward, junior Leah Emch, senior Haley Sponaugle and freshman Camille Foos; Emch in the 1,600; and Sponaugle in the 3,200.

The 4x800 relay won in 10:13.66.

“We did exactly what we

wanted,” Sponaugle said. “We weren’t too concerned about our time because today is about placing and scoring points for the team. The time was still decent, and we’re very happy with that.”

The Eagles won by 11.58 seconds over Oak Harbor, posting their third-fastest time of the season.

“The 4x8 ran really well. They ran a solid race,” Howard said.

“We definitely deserved it,” Emch said. “We have a great group of girls and two of them are seniors who won’t be here next year. It will be really hard and really sad without (Sponaugle and Ward) next year, but we have to take advantage of our opportunity this year. (Sponaugle and Ward) have worked very hard the last four years and to be able to give them a league title is great.”

Emch won the 1,600 in 5:36.63, good for a winning margin of 3.12 seconds. Sponaugle was third in 5:41.62 Emch’s time was shy of her PR 5:31.50, although she was running an open 1,600 for just the second time this season.

“It didn’t go as planned,” Emch said. “I was hoping to run faster, but I’m getting back into the groove, and I still won. I have to be happy with that. Your effort level still has to be good. You have to bring the energy, no matter the conditions. I gave it my all, and I had to push forward and keep grinding it out.”

Emch also was second in the 800 in 2:31.47, finishing second to Oak Harbor freshman Kennedy Slates by 2.28 seconds. Ward was fourth in 2:33.42.

Sponaugle won an exciting 3,200 in 12:13.69, holding off Genoa freshman Stella Rethman down by front stretch by 1.38 seconds. Sponaugle’s time was the ninth-fastest in meet history. The NBC meet started in 2012.

Eagle senior Z Ramsey was third in 12:27.57, a season best by almost 30 seconds. Her previous best was 12:54.74.

Rethman was the top seed entering the meet at 11:47.49, while Sponaugle was second at 12:05.35. Rethman had passed Sponaugle late in the 1,600 to take second place in that race.

“The plan was to go out and run the (3,200) and get third-place points for the team,” Sponaugle said. “But after the (1,600), I decided I wasn’t going to let that happen and I



Photo: V. Sponaugle Athletes: H. Sponaugle, Z Ramsey

was going to go out and do what I knew I could do in the 1,600. I was going to go out and win it.”

Ramsey and Rethman battled for the lead during the first two-thirds of the eight-lap race before Sponaugle took the lead for good on the next-to-last lap. Sponaugle was third early on, about 20 meters behind the leaders before steadily closing the gap.

“It was awesome,” Sponaugle said. “(Ramsey) and I had a plan going in and executed it perfectly. Our getting first and third was the best scenario we could have dreamed of. (Ramsey) decided to go out hard the first mile, and we knew the Genoa girl would go with her and get tired. I pretty much ran my normal race.

(Ramsey) saying we’re going to go out and do this together is the best thing ever.”

After taking the lead, Sponaugle held off Rethman the rest of the way.

“I knew she’d try to stick with me,” Sponaugle said. “I did my best to create a gap as best I could, but that didn’t happen. I had to kick a lot, and it worked out better than I thought it would because that’s normally the part of the race I get passed. I felt strong at the end.”

The individual NBC championship was the first for Sponaugle, whose first conference title of any kind came in the 4x800 relay earlier in the day.

“When we won the 4x8, I said there it is, a league title, and I was ecstatic,” Sponaugle said. “My original plan was to run the 3,200 and get third-place points for the team. But after the 4x8, I said I’m going to go out and win the 3,200.”

Emch and Foos both competed in the maximum four events, and Sponaugle and Ward were each in three.

The 4x400 relay team of Ward, senior Reilly Might, Emch and Foos was second in 4:20.52.

Foos finished third in two events, clearing 5-0 in the high jump and finishing the 400 with a time of 1:02.18.

“We asked a lot of the distance kids and they responded,” Howard said. “It was a really hard day for a lot of our kids, and they kept coming back and competing hard.”

Field events fare well

The Eastwood field events had a solid day.

- Shot put: freshman Harper Rollins-Morlock, seventh, 30-2½.
- Discus: sophomore Kennedy Ameling, fifth, 100-0.
- High jump (in addition to Foos): junior Lilly Mullholand, tied for fifth, 4-10.
- Long jump: junior Addie Hartman, sixth, 15-9; and junior Bella Provo, seventh, 15-8. Both jumps were PRs, and the previous best for both was 14-5.
- Pole vault: junior Kyrie Henline, fifth, 8-6; and sophomore Piper Sutton, tied for seventh, 7-0.



Photo: D. DeFalco Athlete: H. Morlock-Rollins

“The field events really had a good day,” Howard said. “High jump, they got over the hump and jumped really well. I didn’t expect anything out of the long jump, and they both jumped really well. Our throwers came through and did better than expected.”

NEXT

The Eagles compete in the Division II district meet Thursday and Saturday at Oak Harbor High School.

NBC CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS

<https://www.baumspage.com/track/trevent.php?peventid=420&table=C>

OAK HARBOR DISTRICT INFORMATION

<https://oh.milesplit.com/meets/607611-ohsaa-division-2-district-oak-harbor-2024>