

Boys perform well in third-place finish at Oak Harbor



All photo credits: Danielle DeFalco

By Kevin Gordon

OAK HARBOR — Eastwood High School's boys track and field team likes the way it's performing. The team's timing is perfect.

The Eagles' next meet is the Northern Buckeye Conference Championships.

They finished second in the Oak Harbor Invitational Friday night, their final meet before the conference meet in less than a week.

Eastwood scored 95 points to edge Milan Edison with 92 and Clyde with 87 for second place in the 11-team meet. Toledo St. John's won with 123½.

Dalton Hesselbart won the pole vault, Cory Jay was first in the 1,600, and Bryce Koprowski-Kistner won the long jump for the Eagles, who scored in 16 of the 17 events. Also for Eastwood, Ryder Boice was second in the 200, and Noah Smith was third in the 110 hurdles.

"I feel good about our team," Eastwood head coach Brian Sabo said. "We talked about some things this week, and we just wanted them to come in here and compete. There was some good competition, and we just wanted them to hit (personal records) and get better."

The Eagles host the NBC Championships Saturday when they will seek to win their 20th straight conference title. Eastwood won the final 11 championships in the now-defunct Suburban Lakes League and the first eight championships in the NBC.

"I really think they did that, and if they didn't, they're fixable things," Sabo said. "They really went after it, but it's still fixable and not a lack of talent. I'm excited for the league meet. We'll get after it in practice this week, we'll get fresh and we'll get better."

The Eagles have performed well in their last three meets, including victories over Fostoria and Lake April 27, and Elmwood Tuesday.

"We ran very consistent times, and we battled," Sabo said. "I'm really excited about this group, and it's growing together. I was very proud of them today. When you ask for those things and they do it, that makes you proud."



Ryder Boice

The Eagles fared well, despite adverse weather conditions. The field events started at 4 p.m., but the meet was suspended for 45 minutes at 4:30 p.m. because of severe weather. The teams went to OH's auxiliary gym or their busses to wait out the delay.

Athletes had only 15 minutes to prepare for the start of the running events after the severe weather passed, although another heavy shower passed through the area shortly after the meet resumed. The field event athletes faced slick conditions in their venues.

The weather made it a hard to post great times, heights or distances.

"We told them to embrace the weather because we knew it was coming," Sabo said. "It didn't bother us. We came right back out, got focused, got our warmups in and got after it. They came ready. They came wanting to do well. They were focused. We just battled. We weren't always in good heats, but they still ran hard, knowing they could still score, and they did."

Hesselbart wins in a jumpoff

Hesselbart won the pole vault by clearing 13-0 in a jumpoff. The sophomore and Woodmore's Cameron

Overmyer both cleared 12-6, then both missed all three of their attempts at 13-0 and were still tied on the number of overall misses to create the jumpoff.

Hesselbart cleared 13-0 on his fourth attempt, and Overmyer appeared to clear the height, but his pole knocked the bar down to give Hesselbart first place.

"That was a gutsy performance. He persevered," Sabo said, adding Hesselbart was battling back pain after he bottomed out on one of his vaults at Elmwood.

At one point during the Oak Harbor meet, when the bar was around 12-0, Sabo and Hesselbart even talked about passing his final jumps. Had he stopped competing, the Eagles would have finished third.

"We did a couple things and he said he was good," Sabo said. "He cleared the next bar, and was in the top two, and just kept competing. He stuck with it."

Hesselbart has vaulted consistently well this season, clearing at least 12-0 in every meet and PRing four times, most recently 13-6 at Elmwood. After clearing 13-6, he missed all three attempts at 14-0, but made two great attempts at the height, Sabo said.

Hesselbart is on the verge of cracking the school's all-time Top 10 in the event. A jump of 13-9 is needed to make the list.

"He still has more in him," Sabo said. "14-0 is there. It's in him. Sticking with seven strides and getting on the right poles, there's still more in the tank."



Zander Ramsey

Jay earns 1,600 victory with strong start

Jay won the 1,600 in 4:44.34, a PR to beat his previous best of 4:46.66. He took the lead a lap and a half into the four-lap race, and never relinquished first place. Jay won by 1.39 seconds. "I could have cared less about what the total time was or what the outcome was of the race," Sabo said. "When he took the lead, I was happy. I thought he's just going to go after it, and that's who we are."

"The fact he said, 'I'm going out hard, and if you guys beat me, you beat me, but I'm going to run a good time. We believe that's in him. There's a lot more in him. He'll go out hard again and finish even better. I loved his attitude of 'I'm going after it'. That's just who we are, and that's how you get better."

Koprowski-Kistner takes long jump

Koprowski-Kistner, a sophomore, won the long jump with a distance of 19-10½. The event was one of the events interrupted by the delay.

"He's been really consistent," Sabo said. "What I

liked about this meet is there was a rain delay, and he came right back out and was ready to jump. He's been working on some things to have that big jump we know he's capable of.

"He didn't get frustrated because of the rain and his jump wasn't his best, but it was a good enough jump for us to win, and those 10 points were important," Sabo added.

Koprowski-Kistner has won his event in nine of Eastwood's 10 meets this season, the only exception was April 9 at the Whitmer Invitational. He's PR'd four times. His most recent PR of 21-2 came against Lake and Fostoria.

"He knows he has some bigger jumps in him," Sabo said. "I'm excited to see those happen."

PRs and points

In addition to the three first-place finishes, the Eagles had two of the top eight finishers in six of the 13 individual events. The top eight finishers in each event scored points for the team.

Boice was second in the 200 in 24.00, beating the senior's previous best of 24.13, while Smith was third in the 110 hurdles with a PR time of 16.42 to better the sophomore's best of 16.97.

The Eagles had a total of six PRs in the meet, not including relay splits.

"We had PRs, but we also had a lot of guys who finished second through fifth or sixth, double placers in a lot of events, and that's how you keep adding points," Sabo said. "I've always said don't let something happen, whether it's bad or good, early that affects the outcome later in the meet."

“They just tallied points,” Sabo added. “We just competed, and we competed with a PR mindset, and that was after the rain, and they were wet. Some had PRs, and some were really, really close to a PR. That tells me there’s a jump coming.”

Senior Mason Steele PRd in the shot put with a throw of 42-5 for fifth place, improving his best of 42-2½.

Junior Devin Good had a PR in the 800 of 2:13.08, his previous best being 2:16.46. Junior

Xander Ramsey PRd in the 400 with a time of 57.01, his previous best being 57.25.

Good and Ramsey both ran PR splits in the 4x400 relay after they were added to the team late in the meet. Junior Jake Limes and freshman Noah Haar also ran on the team which finished fifth in 3:43.08.

Complete results of the meet are available at:

<https://www.baumspage.com/track/oakharbor/2021/Results.pdf>