

## Shank 5<sup>th</sup> in pole vault, Lauer 8<sup>th</sup> in discus; Poiry advances to 110 hurdles final, Oliver qualifies for 400 final

### By Kevin Gordon

LEXINGTON — Cullen Shank's season came to an end Thursday night.

The Eastwood High School sophomore finished fifth in the pole vault and narrowly missed earn a berth in the state during Thursday's Division II regional track and field meet at Lexington High School, near Mansfield.

The top four finishers in each event at the regional and two at-large qualifiers advanced to state. The two at-large berths in each event go to the next two best times/heights/distances, regardless of region.

The state meet is May 31-June 1 at Welcome Stadium in Dayton.

The top eight finishers in each event at regional are recognized on the awards stand.

Eagle sophomore Hunter Lauer also earned a spot on the awards stand with an eighth-place finish in the discus.

Also, for Eastwood, juniors Jesse Poiry and Dayquan Oliver qualified for the finals. Poiry advanced in the 110 hurdles, and Oliver moved on in the 400. The finals are Saturday.



All Photo Credits: Danielle DeFalco Athlete: Shank

### Shank finishes fifth in pole vault

Shank cleared 13-8 to finish fifth.

Brandon Hogg of Fredericktown also jumped 13-8, but he earned fourth place on fewer misses.

Liberty-Benton's Stefan Kolan won with a vault of 16-2 to break the regional record of 16-1½ set by Bellevue's Matt Rowland in 2012. Caledonia River Valley's Cooper Miller was second at 14-8, and Licking Valley's Cooper Hornfeck was fourth at 14-0.

The two at-large qualifiers both jumped 14-0.

"I jumped pretty well, but I didn't have the best day," said Shank, who almost landed off the right side of the pit twice.

Shank's best jump this season cleared 14-1 to put him in sixth place on Eastwood's top ten list.

"I still had a really good year," said Shank, who finished 13<sup>th</sup> in the regional last season with a vault of 13-6. "I definitely learned how to handle myself at championship events.

"I've learned a lot of techniques and how to put those altogether, and I'll carry that over to next year. This year was another step forward. My confidence really grew this year." Eastwood junior Hayden Hoelter finished 15<sup>th</sup> in the pole vault, clearing 12-0.

"The biggest thing for me is to remain consistent because I know the next big jump is coming," said Hoelter, whose best this season was 12-6. "I wish it would have come this year, but I'll keep working hard, so I can keep improving."



*Yes, this is a picture of shot put and not discus ;)*

### **Lauer places eighth in discus**

Lauer threw 136-6 for eighth place in the discus. He was coming off a 14-foot personal record after he threw 144-2 in the district meet.

“I wish I would have thrown better, but I’m happy I was on the podium,” Lauer said.

Licking Valley’s Trevor Croak finished first with a throw of 162-5. Caledonia River Valley’s Ethan Lyon was second at 156-6, followed by Shelby’s Graham Yeager at 155-11 and Heath’s Carter Higgins at 153-5.

“The biggest thing for me this year is I learned how to put it all together,” Lauer said. “I’ve improved my techniques, and, now, I’m putting everything together.

“I’m excited about next year and looking forward to it,” Lauer said. “This will motivate me for next year, to keep working hard and to keep improving.

Hopefully, I can throw even better and get back

here again and do even better.”

### **4x800 relay finishes 15<sup>th</sup>**

Eastwood’s 4x800 relay team of Henry Howard, Austin Miller, Ben Buehler and A.J. O’Brien finished 15<sup>th</sup> with a time of 8:34.88.

Jonathan Alder won in 7:57.79, while Ontario was second in 7:58.04 with Columbus Bexley third in 8:06.17 and Shelby fourth in 8:06.29.

“We didn’t run a (personal record), but we did run competitively, and it was a good, new experience,” Howard said.

“We all gave effort, but some days just aren’t top tier and not every day is going to be amazing,” Buehler said.

The team’s regional time was its third-fastest of the season, behind clockings of 8:20.33 at the district meet and 8:30.14 at the Oak Harbor Invitational May 3. The quartet had run three straight times of 8:41 or 8:42 at one point in the season, but dropped 22 seconds off its best time late in the season.

“It was a tough race, but it was good competition,” O’Brien said. “It’s great to run here, and the experience will help us in the future. Being here will help us, assuming we get back here. The competition was great, we’ll know what to expect, and we’ll know what the environment is like.”

All four Eagles said the race was a great learning experience. The race was physical as they were boxed in several times, and the handoffs at the finish line often featured 10 teams jockeying for position at one time.

“Coming into next season, we know what we have to do in terms of maneuvering and outsmarting the other teams and just flat out run,” Miller said. “This race is about putting yourself in the right position.

“This was, by far, bigger than any race we’ve run before,” Miller added. “It was far different than anything we’ve had before. Our roughest races have been nowhere near



*Ben Buehler*

as complex and as fast than anything we've run before. There's a lot of strategy involved in this race."

Howard, Miller, Buehler and O'Brien already are excited about next season since all four will return. O'Brien is a junior, while Howard and Miller are sophomores, and Buehler is a freshman.

"We're super excited about next year. Things can only get better," Howard said.

"Just to be in that mix at the regional, even this year, was amazing," Miller said. "Hopefully, we'll be further ahead next year, and we'll really get after it next year."

"This will take the nerves out of us next year," Buehler said. "That'll make it a little easier. If we can keep dropping times, we'll have a chance to get back here and maybe even get to state."

### **Poiry advances to 110 hurdles final**

Poiry ran the second-best time of his career to advance to the finals of the 110 hurdles. He had a time of 15.36, the sixth-fastest of the eighth finalists after finishing second in his heat.

The two finishers in each heat, and the next four fastest times overall, regardless of heat, advanced to the finals.

"Definitely excited to be in the finals," Poiry said. "You never know if you're going to make finals, so I came in hungry and got the job done.

"I banged a few hurdles, but this gives me more motivation for the finals," Poiry added.

"I ran well and I got off to a good start, but I need to clean things up. I know I'm right there time-wise in terms of making state, but anything can happen in the finals."

Poiry's best time this season was a 15.12 clocking at last week's district meet. He's the No. 6 seed for the regional, based on district times.

Poiry, who also found time to hold the starting blocks for a handful of random runners (meaning non-Eastwood runners) during the meet, is a two-time regional qualifier. He finished seventh in the 300 hurdles last season.

### **Oliver qualifies for 400 final**

Oliver is headed for the 400 final after posting a time of 50.03, third-fastest in his heat and the fourth-fastest of the finalists. The time was the third-best of his career.

"It's great to be in the finals," Oliver said. "I tried to take it out as hard as I could, but maybe I took it out a little too hard. I came back in that last 50 meters, though. Overall, it was a good race."

Oliver appeared tired during the final 50 meters, but he said he felt fine overall.

"I felt tight, but I was fine," Oliver said. "The last 50, 75 meters, you really have to focus on knee drive and focus on contact into the ground."

“Today, I felt like I sprinted the first 300 meters,” Oliver added. “But Saturday, I’ll rip the curve at the start, take it out and float a little on the backstretch, and then come back hard during the final 150 meters. I’m going to attack Saturday’s race a little smarter.” Oliver’s best time this season of 49.72 is the second-best Eastwood history. He also ran 50.19 in the district meet. He’s only one of two Eagles to break the 50-second mark in the event. The other is Bob Gay, who set the Eagle record of 48.86 in 1987. Oliver’s the No. 6 seed in the regional, based on district times. “I like the way I’m running right now,” Oliver said. “If I run well, I can get in the top four and make it to state.”



4x400: K. Lewis, Oliver, Miller, A. Lewis

### **4x100, 4x400 relays, Andre Lewis compete**

Eastwood’s 4x100 relay team of junior Andre Lewis, Oliver, senior Kaiden Sanchez and junior Kevin Lewis ran a time of 43.96 to miss a spot in the finals by only .19. Their time was the ninth-fastest during the semifinals.

The time was just off their season-best of 43.61 at the district meet.

“That was a good race,” Oliver said.

“That’s crazy — we ran a good time, but we can’t control what the other teams do.

We can only control ourselves. We gave it our best. You just have to give it 100 percent and whatever happens, happens.”

The Eagles’ 4x400 team of Andre Lewis, Oliver, Kevin Lewis and Miller also narrowly missed a spot in the finals. The team had a time of 3:29.26 to fall shy of the finals by only .71. Eastwood had the ninth-fastest time during the semifinals.

Eastwood’s time was its second best of the season. Its best was a 3:27.80 clocking during the district meet.

“We ran well. We ran hard,” Oliver said. “We just came up a little bit short.”

Andre Lewis had a time of 41.06 in the 300 hurdles to miss a spot in the finals by two-tenths of a second. His time was just shy of his PR of 40.65 in the district meet and the ninth-fastest during the semifinals.

## **LEXINGTON REGIONAL INFORMATION AND RESULTS**

<https://oh.milesplit.com/meets/568342-ohsaa-division-2-region-6-lexington-2024>

## **STATE MEET INFORMATION**

<https://www.ohsaa.org/Sports-Tournaments/Track-Field/2024-Track-and-Field/2024-State-Tournament-Coverage>