

Versatile Miller Sets Precedent In State Track

By LEN HOYES

Laverne Miller didn't need much additional evidence to support a contention that he's the most versatile trackman in Flint's history.

But he has it.

The slim Southwestern senior will set a precedent Saturday when he competes in the long jump, high jump, low hurdles and high hurdles in the state Class A meet at East Lansing.

THAT IN ITSELF WON'T be an historic feat because it's been done at least twice previously.

But, the fact that Miller will be in four individual events for the second straight year is a "first." He competed in the same events while helping Southwestern to the 1966 state title.

Northern's Reg Gillard had the same repertoire in 1957. Otherwise, there's no record of any Flint trackmen competing in four individual events. Northern's Leon Burton (1953) and Gillard (1958) competed in three individual events and one relay.

There's almost no chance for the Colts to retain the crown because Miller and Mike Renick, a high hurdles contestant, are the school's only representatives. Inasmuch as Renick placed third in the regional, he'll have to hustle to get on the scoreboard.

MILLER IS A GOOD bet to score in all four events. He might have made it last year but failed to qualify for the low hurdles final when he hit a hurdle. He scored eight points with a third in the long jump and eighth in the high jump and high hurdles.

Because Pontiac Central's Bill Tipton is a shoo-in winner in both hurdles and because Flint Central's Freels Bacon has beaten Miller consistently in the high jump, it appears that his best chance for a state title lies in the long jump.

No one in the state has leaped 23 feet outdoors, according to the Michigan High School Track Coaches Association's latest listing. Miller came as close as possible with a 22-11 effort in last Friday's regional.

HE CLEARED 23 FEET indoors and last year twice did 23-7 outdoors so it's logical to think about the possibility on Saturday.

The chief deterrent is an ailing left leg which hasn't been right all spring.

He suffered a muscle pull in the indoor meet at Mount Pleasant. Although it gets bet-



Laverne Miller . . . Busy Colt Runner

ter every week, Coach Gordon Spencer said, "He knows it's there."

Miller rested for four weeks, then didn't try long jumping and hurdling until the city meet. He placed in four events in the Valley meet where he scored 17 points for the second straight year and last week accounted for 21 points with three firsts and a third in the regional.

AS ONE WRITER observed, "He's better than 13 teams in this meet all by himself."

A one-man "team" is nothing new to Miller who won the Michigan Amateur Athletic Union decathlon senior championship last summer after winning the junior title in 1965. He'll probably try for a repeat this year.

Spencer figures Miller for a good low hurdles effort on Saturday. "He ran exceptionally well last Friday and he has the speed," the coach explained. For the record, Miller has done 100 meters—that's about 109 yards—in 11.1 seconds.

Another good effort in his final prep appearance should make Miller a shoo-in for still another honor: Selection as Southwestern's most valuable runner for the third straight year.

No one will ever top that.