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Area Thinclads Set Three State Records

Bear Relayers Among Frustrated

By JIM DeLAND

State competition brought out the best in southwestern Michigan trackmen this year, but in many cases it still wasn't quite good enough. No one realizes that fact more than the four members of St. Joseph's mile relay team who produced an all-time record for this area but failed to even place in the top 10 during the Class A state meet at Flint Northwestern.

Area representatives were somewhat more successful in the Class B, C and D meets at three other sites Saturday, but of six efforts that rank as the season's best for southwestern Michigan, only two were good enough to win the event.

Probably the most outstanding performance of the day — and the season — was turned in by John Bennett of Canonsville in the Class C meet at Mount Pleasant.

Matched against regional rival Bill Fries of Hartford again in the 100-yard run, Bennett rocketed to a new Class C state record of 1:34.3 in the process breaking the all-time southwestern Michigan record of 1:37.0 shared by George Lindenberg of Dowagiac and Bob Crocker of Paw Paw.

Dave Barish of South Haven also broke the old record while placing fourth in the Class B meet at Michigan State University with a time of 1:34.9 and Fries just missed while running second to Bennett in 1:37.4.

Bennett also won the 400-yard dash in 51 seconds flat to join Decatur's dazzling dashmen as double winners.

The Decatur quartet of Tom Craggan, Scott Alhey, Doug Alhey and Steve Janssen set a new Class C state record by winning the 800-yard relay in 2:22.3.

Other state champions include Chuck Wend of Lakeshore, Tim Huff and John Gast of Bridgman and Chester Harding of Covert.

Wend became the only Class B champion from this area by winning the low hurdles in 20.3 seconds while Huff won the shot put at 48-1 and teammate Gast took the high jump at 6-1 in the Class D meet at Caro.

Harding also won his championship in the Class D meet with a 13.3 clocking in the 100-yard dash, but his best effort of the day — a 21-10 long jump that ranks No. 1 on the 1972 area honor roll — fell half an inch short of victory.

St. Joseph's mile relay quartet of Bill Babin, Dave Busch, Bruce Marschke and Mark Nisbet could claim the ultimate frustration after running a super 3:24.7 — more than a full second better than the all-time area record set by another St. Joe team back in 1960 — only to miss an official place by four-tenths of a second.

Splits on the relay included a 81.4 for Babin, 51.7 for Busch, 63.1 for Marschke and 50.5 for Nisbet.

That event was won by Detroit Pershing in a sensational 3:19.3 — one of 29 records that were broken or tied in the four classes of competition.

Other Class A records included a 69 high jump by Reggie Ferguson of host Flint Northwestern, a senior in his first year of track competition, and the first 15-foot pole vault in Michigan prep history by Nat Durham of Farmington.

Ferguson, incidentally, was talked into coming out for track this season by fellow high jumper Doug Gibbs of Northwestern, who placed second in Saturday's meet and would have won the championship had Ferguson not been around.

Durham almost had his historic pole vault performance taken away because an official unthinkingly grabbed his pole before it fell, possibly preventing it from dropping into the landing pit or falling against one of the standards — either of which would have been illegal. Fortunately, it was decided not to penalize him for the official's mistake.

The Class A mile relay just back against the wall after kicking away a doubleheader here Saturday afternoon.

Two one-run defeats at the hands of Muskegon knocked the Tigers out of first place in the Conference standings and left them with the challenge of 'sweeping their final four league games to salvage a certain share of the title.

while going 4-for-6 with five RBI's.

He also had to accept a share of responsibility for the errors that doomed the Tigers in both games.

Davis opened the first game by leading off with his first home run, but two errors in the bottom of the inning gave Muskegon four runs on three singles and the Tigers never led again.

The Tigers got their second unearned run the rest of the way, but Benton Harbor never could catch up.

A five-run explosion in the fourth included Davis' final round-tripper and singles by Gary Phillips, Carlson and Dave Erman while the final tally came in the sixth on a double by Gramell, a balk and Howard Ingraham's sacrifice fly.

Among their other miseries.



REPEAT PERFORMANCE: This was the scene May 13 as John Bennett (left) of Canonsville beat out Bill Fries of Hartford in 800-yard run during Class C regional track meet at Watervliet. They repeated their one-two finish Saturday in Class C state meet at Mount Pleasant with Bennett setting an all-time southwestern Michigan record of 1:34.3. (Staff photo)

Track Results
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BEST EVER: These four runners from St. Joseph high school put together the fastest mile relay in southwestern Michigan history Saturday afternoon in the Class A state track meet at Flint. From left are Bill Babin, Dave Busch, Bruce Marschke and Mark Nisbet, who were timed in 3:24.7 — more than a full second under the former area record.

Harbor Is Tumbled From LMAC Lead

Tony Davis Hits Three Home Runs

MUSKEGON — Benton Harbor's baseball team has its back against the wall after kicking away a doubleheader here Saturday afternoon.

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Rotary Track Meet Tonight

The finest high school track stars in southwestern Michigan will put their talents on display tonight in the Twin City Rotary Club's 15th annual all-

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