

High Jumpers Make Ypsilanti a Threat In State Track Meet

BY HAL SCHRAM
Free Press Sports Writer

It's a big weekend for track and field on the Michigan high school front. And in these modern days you count the girls in — not out.

Saturday there'll be 43 regional meets across both peninsulas and the girls event will be run concurrently with the boys.

On this regional weekend everyone tries to qualify for the big show — the state championships — which follow the first Saturday in June. More than 30,000 schoolboys and schoolgirls will go to the line Friday and Saturday.

The points are split so many ways that's its virtually impossible anymore to get a line on the probable winners.

Out at Ypsilanti High, for instance, coach Levi Simpson and his Braves, 34 strong, would like to feel they have a chance.

"We've been up among the contenders many times," says Simpson, "we've finished as high as third but never won it as a Class A school.

"You know how it goes," Simpson continued. "We've got some fine individuals but there's a lot of ifs-and-ands when you're battling 180 other schools for a state title. Naturally everything would have to go our way."

SIMPSON IS BLESSED with a bevy of fine

high jumpers the most celebrated of whom is Victor Freeman, a 6-foot-5½ 165-pound senior who earned some national attention two weeks ago when he jumped 6 feet 11¾ inches in the Wayne Invitational.

That's almost three inches better than the current state Class A record and Simpson naturally feels the gangling youngster has a shot at the mark. "That's the only time he's gone that high but he's consistently been over 6-9 all season long," says Simpson.

But Freeman has a lot of company at the high jump pit. Dennis Lewis has cleared 6-9 himself and Robbie Robinson, the school's best basketball player the past season, has hit 6-foot-6½.

They score eight places in each individual event and if Freeman could win, and Lewis and Robinson place, it would give the Braves quite a boost in the team chase.

This is a mediocre year in the shot put but Jeff Hewitt, with a toss of 57 feet 5½ inches to his credit, has proven that he is as capable as anyone else on the peninsula.

Hurdler Ron White can go with the best in his specialty. White has been clocked in 19.3 in the 180-yard low hurdles, three tenths of a second off the state record.

There's also a possibility that Ypsilanti's



Free Press Photo
Ypsilanti High track coach Levi Simpson huddles with star high jumpers (from left) Robbie Robinson, Dennis Lewis and Victor Freeman.

mile relay team of Calvin and James Jones, Terry Dogan and Fred Williams can improve on its best time of 3:23.6 and pick up some points in this toughest of all events.

Flint Southwestern is the defending state champion in the boys' division but Pontiac Central is generally regarded as the best team in the Saginaw Valley.

JOSEPHINE HOBBS, THE state's premier

girl sprinter, is expected to defend her state titles in both the 100 and 220-yard dashes while Cass Tech will be bidding for a third straight girls' Class A trophy.

Regionals Saturday in the Detroit area will be held at Ypsilanti, Southgate, Detroit Central, Warren Lincoln, Farmington, Walled Lake Western, Romeo, New Boston-Huron, Clarenceville, Oxford and Harper Woods. At most centers finals start at 1:30 p.m.



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