

Coldwater's Ernst wins state high hurdles title

By JOHN SINGLER
Staff Writer

STURGIS — Overcome, or be overcome.

That was the reality of the situation in Saturday's State Class B Boys' and Girls' Track Meet at Sturgis High School.

Coldwater's Jeff Ernst took the first option, solving a season-long problem of slow starts out of the blocks just in time to win a state title in the 110-meter high hurdles.

For others, it was much more complicated.

Grand Rapids Christian's Joan DeMaat was overcome by the thrill of victory in the 1600. She openly wept with joy and later won the 800, which helped propel the Eagles to the girls' team title.

But DeMaat was felled by sharp pains in her side as she tried for her third victory of the day, and couldn't finish the 3200 after challenging briefly.

Gull Lake distance ace Kammy Louden was hampered by a painful muscle pull in her left thigh and, though she finished both the 1600 and 2000, she failed to place and never was a factor.

For others, they were overcome not by emotion ... not by injuries ... but by better athletes.

Ernst captured his preliminary heat in 15 seconds and tied Osceola's Les Dahl in the semifinals, again winning in 15 seconds. Ernst then worked his way through the final in 14.7, a mere .1 seconds in front of Holt's Wayne Coates. Dahl was fourth.

"My start has been slow all year

long," Ernst said, obviously pleased about his unusually fast exit from the starting blocks. "I discovered that I have been too high in the blocks," ... and too fast out of them for the six other finalists yesterday.

Ernst's triumph accounted for all 10 of Coldwater's points as the Cardinals tied Tecumseh, Hastings and Grosse Ile for 14th place among the 47 teams that scored at least one point.

Flint Beecher captured the team title with 57 points despite winning just one event. Paul Richmond took the 800 in 1:54.8. But Beecher managed three second-place finishes and outdistanced runner-up Dexter by 15 points.

Ernst later tried to double in the 300 low hurdles, but could manage just third in his heat and didn't place in the top six overall. A false start wasn't what bothered Ernst, a senior.

"I think it serves to relieve the tension, and it almost can be a help. My problem was that I was able to hit only the first hurdle right," he said, explaining that the timing of his strides over the barriers was all wrong for the remainder of the race.

"No way will I place," he said immediately after his heat, and he was right.

Hastings was paced by Kevin Echlinaw's second-place finish in the discus and a fifth-place showing by Kerry Allen in the 800.

Echlinaw hurled the discus 152 feet, 6 inches — considerably shorter than the 167.3 logged by Ron Finch of Mt. Pleasant. Finch was one of two multiple winners in the boys' meet, also winning the

shot put (56.7%).

Allen covered the 800 in 1:56.0. Dexter's powerful showing came on the strength of triple winner Andreas Laut. He captured the long jump, with a leap of 22-8 1/2, and both sprints — winning the 100 in 16.5 and the 200 in 21.5.

In girls' competition, Christian won the meet's final event — the 1600 relay — to overtake Beecher for the team title. The Eagles totaled 30 points and Beecher finished with 28.

Marshall's Jill Craig was the only area competitor to score points, earning two for the Redskins with her fifth-place finish in the discus (115-0). Ortonville-Brandon's Diana Mason won with an effort of 121-9.

It was the first time the Class B meet had been held on a metric track. There will be no official metric meet records until yesterday's times are compared with those logged in next year's meet.

Though area place-winners were few and far between, three performances were good enough to win preliminary heats.

Gull Lake's Merritt Greenman comfortably won his 440 prelim. Sturgis' Terr Sammey was victorious in a 100-meter hurdle preliminary, but could manage only fourth place in the semifinals — despite turning a faster time than in her preceding race — and failed to finish in the top six overall.

Alton's 400 relay team of Danielle Williamson, Debbie Burney, Pam Mitchell and Tammy Davis also was victorious in the prelims.

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Hurst, Loveberry win titles

St. Philip's Pat Hurst won the long jump with a leap of 22 feet, 1/2 inch, Saturday, pacing the Tigers to a fourth-place finish in the State Class D Track Meet at Grand Blanc.

Quincy's Karice Loveberry won a Class C title in the 200-yard low hurdles at Cassopolis and Athens' girls' team won a pair of relays en route to a second-place finish in the Class D meet. The Indians finished with 41 points, 1 shy of Ann Arbor Greenhills.

CLASS C GIRLS

Loveberry's winning time of 29.4 seconds was .5 faster than runner-up Jill Anderson of Haslett. Jonesville's Kim Kochendorfer took fourth in the discus with a heave of 115-8 1/2. Julie Ravery of Mason won at 124-1 1/2.

Penfield distance standout Jill Liebrandt came in sixth in the two-mile with a time of 12:07.3, some 20 seconds behind winner Connie Kidder of Burton Bendle.

CLASS C BOYS

At Middletown

Jonesville's Adam Pfeiffer and Olivet's Rob Bramer paced the area contingent with third-place showings. Pfeiffer's came in the 880, with a time of 1:56, and Bramer's in the 100, at 10.2.

Brian Oosterhouse of Middleville was third in the 110 high hurdles (14.8) and teammate Bob Vandenburg sixth in the mile (4:31.1).

Kandy Densmore of Penfield and Olivet's Scott DeBaun were part of a five-way tie for fifth in the high jump, each leaping 6-0.

CLASS D

At Grand Blanc

Mary Miller, Julie Kinney, Becky Carvine and Carrie VanHouten combined to win both the 800-meter relay, in 1:51.2, and the 400, in 53.45. Miller also placed second in the high jump and third in the 100.

Athens received a third-place performance from Mary Bottomley in the two-mile (12:27.0) and a sixth-place showing from Terr Warren in the shot put (33-8).

St. Philip's Shari Haan placed highly in all three events she qualified for and led the Tigers to a seventh-place finish with 20 points. Haan was second in the 100 hurdles (14.9), third in the long jump (17-4 1/2) and fourth in the 200 hurdles (39.21).

In addition to his winning effort, Hurst took fifth in the 300 low hurdles with a time of 40.81. Phil Mitchell aided the Tigers' cause with two fourth-place finishes, in the 100 (10.8) and 200 (22.5). St. Philip nabbed second in the 800 relay in 1:34.3.

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