

Michelle Bews stops the watches and the show

JOHNETTE HOWARD
Press Staff Writer

That the Michigan High School Athletic Association will refuse to recognize Michelle Bews' tingling run did little to dampen the moment for the people who watched it and sensed it was something remarkable even before the men with stop watches provided the indisputable proof.

When Bews last Thursday completed her irritating two-mile, eight-lap orbit around the Lawson High track more than six seconds faster than any Michigan high school girl ever was, the Australian exchange student added yet another highlight to her stunning one-year career at Birmingham Seaholm High — not to mention one of the most amazing performances ever at an Oakland County track and field championship.

IN A MEET notable for top-flight performances and a successful team title defense by Pontiac Northern, the 11th annual girls county championships will be most remembered for Bews' stunning two-mile run of 10:33.5 and her dogged determination of her chief rival, Tere Stouffer, of Royal Oak Shrine, without whom Bews never could have made it happen.

Bews recognized as much after the race as he rushed to meet the grimacing Stouffer when the Shrine star crossed the finish line 22 seconds late and tumbled to the ground, doubled over in pain.

With an 880-yard relay leg and a winning time of 5:02 — a meet record — in the mile already out of the way, Stouffer was uncertain about coming back to run again in the two-mile. But just before the race was to begin, Stouffer jogged over to a hopeful bystander and said, "You wanted a race, you've got it."

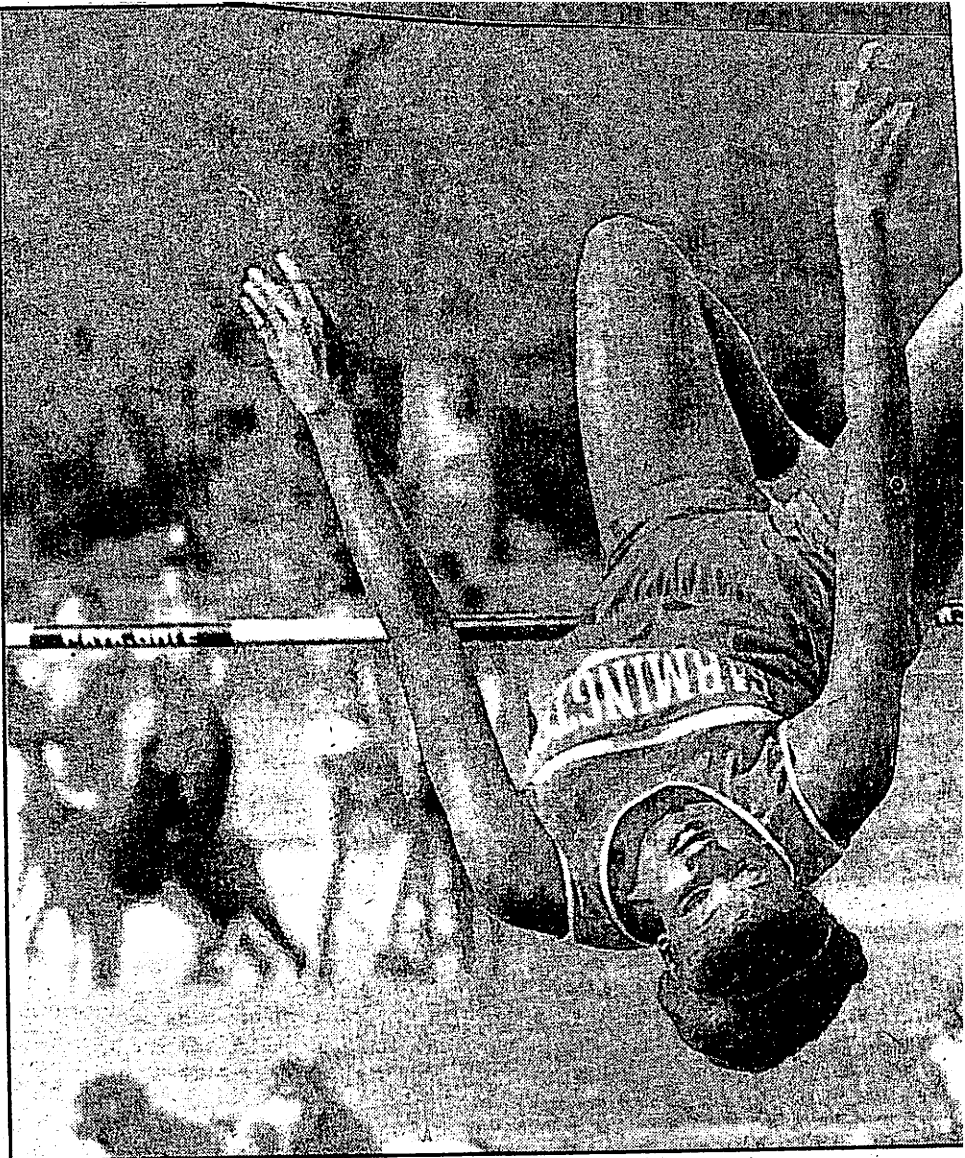
After all, the much-anticipated matchup between Bews and Stouffer — the Class A and Class B state cross country champions — seemed to be in jeopardy after Bews bypassed the mile to concentrate on the two-mile and 3200-meter relay. Bews and Stouffer didn't face each other during the track regular season and this was their last chance to meet unless both run at the Midwest Meet of Champions. Stouffer, always fond of a good fight, took up the challenge.

FROM THAT MOMENT the two-mile race was almost guaranteed to bring a smashing time and, of course, it did.

Bews roared off to a torrid 5:10 split after one mile, and Stouffer was right on the Australian's shoulder. Though Stouffer began to fade after 1½ miles, her heroic second-place effort of 10:55.3 also shattered the former county mark of 11:17.9, set in 1979.

"I couldn't have done it without Tere. She just did a fantastic job," Bews said later. "I was so sick of running by myself in races. I needed the competition and it helped a lot to have Tere."

Bews' time not only broke the county meet record by 24 seconds it obliterated Miriam



Farmington's Sambia Shivers goes over high-jump bar during prelims

Boyd's 1978 record time of 10:40.2 (converted from meters) by more than six seconds. It also is believed to be one of the top 10 times in the nation this season.

No matter — Bews' effort will not go into the state record books simply because the MHSAA recognizes only performances achieved at its state championship meet. But the senior can overcome that wrinkle in logic Saturday right under the MHSAA officials' noses with a similar effort at the Class A meet in Jackson.

Bews could probably win the 1600 (the metric equivalent of the mile) as well as the 3200-meter run at the state meet if she decided to double. Though still undecided, she has been leaning toward concentrating on the 3200 in recent weeks. "I really feel that's my race, and I'd like to set the state record," Bews said.

Laura Matson may have helped make up Bews' mind two days before the county meet with a stunning defeat of Bews in the 1600-meter run at the Southeastern Michigan Association league meet. Matson, a coltish sophomore from Bloomfield Hills Andover, missed the team bus to the SMA meet, cut her knee hurdling a chair, then got her sister to ride her to Southfield, where she shaved three seconds off her best 1600 time to hand Bews her first defeat outdoors.

"Oooh, thank God the cops didn't see us on our way over," said Matson. "We were hurrying."

At the county meet, Matson won the 880-yard run, took second in the mile run, and anchored Andover to second places in the mile relay and two-mile relay with a late kick that has become her trademark. Matson then revealed her secret to getting in shape is dutifully running the "billions and billions" of sprints ordered by Andover coach Steve Price.

"This is great conditioning. I just keep getting better and better," Matson said excitedly.

The same goes for defending champion Pontiac Northern, which easily outdistanced Southfield, 83 points to 51, to wrap up the team crown. Northern's Lisa McCoy, despite suffering from painful tendinitis in her legs, won the 220-yard dash in 25.9 and placed third in the 100 behind winning teammate Andrea Brooks. Tonya Tarpley won the 440 dash, and freshman Capriest Hunt stepped in for ailing Felicia Lee to run strong legs for Northern's winning 880 and mile relays.

"Andrea Brooks did another super job and Lisa McCoy ran on pure guts today," said Northern coach Jimmy King. "I was really worried about this meet, but Capriest filled in beautifully."

IN ADDITION to the meet records set by Bews and Stouffer, two other county records fell. Two-time Class C champion and state record holder Kristi Jackson won her specialty, the 110-yard hurdles, in 15.2, and Clarkston's Jennifer Farough won the 330-yard hurdles in 45.7.

Other county champions included: Kimball's Robin Nash in the long jump (17-3); Athens Allana Cummings in the shot put (36-10¾); Farmington's Beth Sherman in the discus (117-2½); and Lisa Neubacher of Waterford Mott in the high jump (5-5). Rochester's Berni Branton turned in a stirring anchor leg to give the Falcons their only victory, in the 440-yard relay.

Pete Mazzera of regional champion Southfield was voted girls coach of the year by his peers. Mazzera's team was undefeated in the dual meets this year and won both SMA and regional team titles.

Pontiac Northern boys shine at a rainy track meet

By JOHNETTE HOWARD

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The 25th running of the boys county track and field championships will probably be remembered for the torrential rains, which turned a promising evening into a fitful wet T-shirt contest, and for Pontiac Northern, the team that supplied all the lightning.

Northern kept right on rolling toward Saturday's Class A state meet in Jackson with yet another dominant performance from its corps of outstanding sprinters Friday at the county meet at Bloomfield Hills Lahser High. The Huskies won three of the meet's four relays — at 400, 800 and 1600 meters — and got a school-record performance from shot putter Antonio Smith to win the county title with 88 points. Troy was second, with 57½, followed by Southfield (51) and Rochester (47).

THE EXPECTED DUEL for the team title between Northern and Southfield — both regional champions blessed with fine sprinters — failed to materialize when four key members of coach Tom Eschmann's Blue Jay team opted to indulge in senior "Skip Day" rather than attend the county meet.

Under high school rules, an athlete must attend school to

compete in athletic activities that day, and Southfield competed Friday without Jerome Greear (the favorite in the long jump), sprinters Greg Towns and Darryl Sailor, and hurdler Jerome Moore.

"How do I feel?" Eschmann repeated. "Just say I'm not all that excited about this."

Those who did show up for Southfield did well. Sophomore Torin Dorn powered his way to a win in the 100-meter dash (10.9) ahead of Northern regional champ John Washington, and Blue Jay Garrett Dunn took the 110-meter high hurdles title in 15 flat. Dunn, who showed up at the girls county meet a night earlier with more medals on his letterjacket than a five-star general, also took a second in the 300-meter hurdles behind Chris Woehrlé of Troy.

COACH TONY PIZZA knew his Northern team had the meet so well in hand that he lit his celebratory pipe even before the final race was over. It was quite a departure for the excitable Pizza, who earlier in the night stood on the infield grass and cheered his runners down the homestretch. "I haven't got a finish time yet," he admitted somewhat sheepishly as the meet neared its end.

Burly Antonio Smith, a noseguard who intends to play

football for Wayne State, was perhaps Northern's most excited winner. Making good on a promise to Pizza to "get that school record," Smith did Friday. Smith shattered the former school shot put mark by three feet with a winning toss of 55-8 to also outclass an old nemesis, runner-up Brad Audet of Rochester.

Audet came back to win the discus with a best of 157-11, and teammate Jeff Bechtel won the pole vault, on the basis of fewer misses, at 13-9. Ray Jansen and Darryl Henderson, of Troy, and John Hutchinson, of Lakeland, also cleared 13-9.

Rochester's Bob Thompson breezed to the county 3200-meter title with a time of 9:25, and Cranbrook all-stater Mark Kring won the 1600-meter run in 4:23.8. As expected, James Danforth of West Bloomfield won the 400 meter dash going away, in 49.5 seconds. Ed Wilcox of Oak Park won his second consecutive high jump title over a tough field, with a leap of 6-7. Wilcox, Brother Rice's Pat Coll (second at 6-5) and Neil Morehouse of Kimball all entered the meet with personal bests of 6-9, which would have tied the county record.

Hazel Park's Andy Steele held off John Artz of Andover to win the 800-meter run in a fine 1:54.8, and Rodney Lackey of Royal Oak Shrine beat a strong field in the 200 with a time of 22.1.

For complete results, see Scoreboard.