

C4 ■ PREP SPORTS



NEWS PHOTOS • COLLEEN FITZGERALD

In one of the boys' feature races, the 100-yard dash, Lincoln's Kevin Hayes (center) edges Willow Run's Robert Harris (second from left) and Huron's Franklin Gay (second from right).

# A Day for the Champions

## Boys' events prove to be nip-and-tuck affairs

By DAVI RIGAN  
 NEWS SPORTS REPORTER

BRIGHTON — It seemed as if the competitors wanted to give the judges and timers fits most of Tuesday in the boys' division of the 13th annual Ann Arbor News Track Meet of Champions.

After Pinckney beat Brighton by more than a second in the two-mile relay and potential state champ Millard Thomas of Belleville flew past the field in the 120-yard high hurdles, the 100-yard dash was anybody's guess.

It was a photo finish with Willow Run's Robert Harris and Lincoln's Kevin Hicks battling it out to the wire, only to see Huron's Franklin Gay sneak up at the finish to make things even closer.

After a brief consultation among officials, Hayes was declared the winner with Harris second. Both were clocked in :10.0.

Gay, who was clocked at :10.5, was confused with teammate Rod Gray, and was only given fifth place. But that was changed to third after Gray spoke up to the officials.

"We both leaned," Hayes said of himself and Harris, "but I knew I had him beat. If there was any question it would have been the guy on the left from Huron. He was right next to me."

The Hailsplitter star was named outstanding performer of the meet in the track events on a vote of the coaches. The versatile athlete also ran on the winning 400 relay with Lazon Hicks, Kevin Yates and Ray Adams.

Hayes did not run in his specialty, the 120 high hurdles, leaving that to Thomas, who also

won the 220 in :22.6, with Gay nipping Harris for second as both were timed in :22.8.

Following the 800 relay, won by the Huron quartet of Jerry Douglas, Earl Flanagan and Kevin Hudson in 1:31.3, a real battle developed in the mile.

Dave Dubin of Greenhills and Dave Feighner of Howell fought each other down the final straightaway with Dubin leaning at the line for an apparent victory, even though both were timed in 4:22.6.

After a consultation it was ruled a dead heat because their bodies finished crossing the line together.

Darrel Randle of Pioneer was involved in two more tight finishes. In the 440 he edged Lavelle VanHorn of Ypsilanti, who had the fastest time in the area going in to the meet. Randle, who is a tight end for the football team and a center in basketball, managed to pull away slightly at the end to finish in :50.3, with Reggie Shelley of Huron and VanHorn both timed in :50.9.

Then in the mile relay, Randle took the baton in the anchor leg with about a five yard lead of Hans Braun of Huron. The smaller but gully Braun managed to stay close until the final turn when he tried to make a move. He wasn't able to speed past his rival until the final 30 yards.

"I was attempting to get around him, but he held me off," said Braun of his move with about half a lap left. "At the final turn I tried to maintain my position. He had a little more left than I expected."

Braun also won the half in 1:58.0. River Rat coach Kent Overbey called him the best potential for Huron points at Saturday's state meet in

Flint, but he didn't qualify in the half after of getting boxed in early at regionals and finishing fourth.

Other members of the winning mile relay were Shelley, Hudson and Douglas.

David Jones of Milan was named outstanding performer in the field events for finishing second in the shot put with a throw of 48-2/4 and first in the discus in 139-2. In the latter event he beat defending state champ Matt Larcinese of Belleville.

"He's awesome," said Jones of Larcinese. "He fouled on his first three throws and they all were over 160 feet. I think I'm the first person to beat him since he was a sophomore."

"This is the most enjoyable meet of the year because there's no pressure on the athletes. I was really psyched up for it. I'm going to have to have an exceptional day to place at state, but I usually do good in the big meets."

In balloting for coach of the year the winner was David Mitchell of Pinckney, whose team jumped from 6-5 in dual meets last year to 9-1 this year.

"We improved a lot," he said of his team. "We don't have a Kevin Hayes, but we picked up a lot of seconds and thirds. From the quarter-mile up is our real strength."

Other winners in the meet were Jason Colvin, a ninth grader from the Ann Arbor Track Club, in the two-mile, and Max Strychar of South Lyon in the 330 lows. In field events, Eric Garrett of Huron won the long jump in 22-1/4, Chris Pope of Milan leaped 6-1 in the high jump and David Chapman of Huron did 13-0 in the pole vault.



Belleville's Millard Thomas leads the pack in the 120-yard high hurdles.

## No surprise: Dominating Pioneer girls leave little leftovers in meet

By PEGGY PAGI  
 NEWS SPECIAL WRITER

BRIGHTON — A fan pointed to the Huron girls hugging each other after the two-mile relay and said, "It must have been a big-time personal record. They're going wild."

The River Rat relay team, running in the 13th annual Ann Arbor News Track Meet of Champions Tuesday, not only broke the school record by nearly five seconds with a time of 9:33.6, it upset Pioneer's squad by :02.4 seconds.

"We really wanted to beat them, and we ran as hard as we could," said Tracy Boudreau, the River Rat anchor whose relay-mates were Amy Bennett, Laura Simmering and Mara Matuszak. Boudreau, who along with Matuszak had a season best relay split, passed Pioneer's Danielle Harpell just before the back stretch, and Harpell didn't have the kick later on to catch her.

To understand the River Rats' joy, you have to understand how dominant Pioneer has been in track this season.

Pioneer, the defending state champion and favorite at the state meet Saturday, won 10-of-16 events at this meet involving 20 area schools. Pioneer also won the regional and the South Central Conference meet by 72 and 54 points, respectively, over Huron.

Pioneer Sabrina Jordan, who won both hurdle events convincingly and ran on two winning relays, was named outstanding track performer.

"My times were slower than usual because it was so wet," said Jordan. "The temperature felt good, but my spikes were soaked and felt heavy."

Pioneer coach Bryan Westfield said, "We ran as well as we have all year, but our 4-by-800 relay had better get in gear. At the state meet, we've just gotta make sure we don't relax when we're out in front like we did tonight."

Westfield, who was named the area's top

coach for the second straight year, gave his trophy to assistant coach Glen Virgin, who is a mentor to field performers such as Lisa Hughes and Lisa Waite, both of whom are the top two discus throwers in the area. Waite broke Hughes's 1985 meet-record toss with a throw of 124-9 1/2 Tuesday.

But the queen of the throwers is Huron's Sonya Payne, one of the top high school shot putters in the nation. She was named outstanding field performer for the second consecutive year.

Payne, the defending meet record holder in the event, won with a record toss of 46-8 1/4. That was nearly seven feet farther than second place, and it wasn't even her career best. She has broken the 48-foot mark twice in the last two weeks.

Lincoln sophomore April Chenault, who won the 220 and was third in the 100, was the only Class B athlete to take home a first-place medal.

The 220 was one of the closest girls' races. Chenault, who won three dashes at the Southeastern Conference meet, came from behind — as usual — to nip Pioneer's Ratenna Paige by one-tenth of a second at the ribbon.

But Paige took the 100, defeating Ypsilanti's Monica Ball, who was second over Chenault in a judges' decision.

Two races other than the 200 got the fans' hearts pumping. Ypsilanti and Brighton were both timed in 1:49.8 in the 800 relay. The Bulldogs were third and the Braves fourth on a judges' decision.

In the mile relay, Tia Hunter of Ypsilanti passed Boudreau in the first curve of the anchor lap and held on for second place by :01.2 seconds.

"I just ran," said Hunter, who had a personal record relay split. "I knew she was behind me, and that kept me going."

The two other athletes taking home firsts were Kenya Patterson of Ypsilanti in the high jump and Shelley Harrah of Brighton in the long jump.



Pioneer's Ratenna Paige (right) crosses the finish line of the 100-yard dash, nipping Ypsilanti's Monica Ball.