

Novi thinclads lack sprinters

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By NEIL GEOGHEGAN
staff writer

Bob Smith, coach of the Novi boys' track team, is ever the optimist, but a few weeks ago he was anything but enthused about the Wildcats' upcoming season.

But now, after a few more weeks of work with his squad, Smith has regained his buoyant demeanor and just in time — the 1987 campaign is set to begin today (April 2) against Livonia Stevenson.

Smith believes a lack of depth will prevent Novi from challenging the Kensington Valley Conference (KVC) powerhouses, but he also believes that with the exception of a few events, the Wildcats can compete with anyone.

"We are in a lot better shape than I thought a couple of weeks ago," he said. "Our main goal isn't to win the KVC title, but to get as many individuals qualified for the state finals."

It appears Novi is quite solid in most areas, except the sprint events. The sprints were a void a year ago, and graduation losses may magnify the problem further.

"We're a solid team if we get over the sprinter blues," Smith commented. "With the exception of a couple races, we can run with anybody."

The team star may be junior Brian Schram, who is the league's top returning high jumper, and almost a shoe-in to qualify for the state championships. Schram was the league's number two jumper as a sophomore and can routinely top the 6-foot mark.

"He's the high jump heir in the KVC, but it's not apparent," Smith joked. "Brian will have to work very hard if he wants to be the league's best, but he can do it because he is so talented. He can look real bad and still clear 6-foot no problem."

Senior Marc Williams provides Novi with a solid 1-2 threat in the high jump. Williams cleared 5'10" as a junior.

The shot put and discus chores are in the capable hands of seniors Franz Samson and Matt Stahr. Both have reached the 40-foot mark in the shot and the 130-foot mark in the discus.

"We have a very good 1-2 punch in the weight events — especially

Smith: 'We're a solid team if we get over the sprinter blues. With the exception of a couple races, we can run with anybody.'

the shot," Smith said. "Nobody in the league is going to have two guys who can beat Samson and Stahr."

In the long jump, seniors Joel Finzel and Rob Wilson have both broken the 19-foot barrier and are poised to flirt with 20. They may be best long jump duo in the league. Rounding out the field events is junior pole vaulter Dave Samaan, who topped 11 feet as a sophomore. Smith believes he can get to 12 feet during the '87 campaign.

"Our field events are going to be as tough as nails," Smith predicted. "If we can just get through the sprints — the problem is you can't coach speed, and that's our biggest weakness."

In both the high and low hurdles, Schram is the number one performer, but he has some healthy competition from juniors Jeff Leininger and Mark Schaper. The distance events don't appear to be a major area of concern either with junior Craig Cowden and sophomore Rob Rassmussen around. Cowden has already broken 5-minutes in the mile in early workouts and is also a valuable runner in the two mile and two-mile relay. Rassmussen will likely excel in the two mile and will have help from Bret VanDyke and Mike Ducker.

The two-mile relay will feature Cowden, versatile senior Mark Snider and two of the following — Tim McBride (senior), Jeff Jeffress

Sprinters lacking

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In the event last season. Fitzpatrick also will compete in the mile relay (along with Schram, Jeffress and Keranen).

In the sprints, Fitzpatrick may be the team's best in the 200 meter dash, but overall talent and depth is lacking. In the 100, Smith will go with Fitzpatrick, Finzel and Brian Everett, a transfer student from Milford.

"I believe we could go 500 or better this season in the KVC," Smith predicted. "With our strength in the field events and our ability to hold our own from the quarter mile on up, we could do it."

(senior), Jay Keranen (senior), Jeff Morrison (freshman), Pat Parsons (junior) and Mike LaHate (senior). Snider will also be counted on in any number of events including the half-mile, mile, mile relay and even the 100-meter dash.

"Mark is our second fastest in the mile and the 100 and our top half miler," Smith said. "I think he can break two minutes in the half mile."

Sophomore Andy Fitzpatrick is the team standout in the quarter mile. He set a new freshman school record

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Wildcats of the Week



BRIAN SCHRAM

If the first track meet of the season is any indication, junior Brian Schram is probably Novi's top all-around performer. The 6-foot-6 junior competed in four events against a tough Livonia Stevenson squad last week and registered two two wins and two second place finishes. For this outstanding performance, Schram has been named a "Wildcat of the Week." Schram easily won the high jump as he stopped at a mere 5-10 without any misses. In the 300-meter low hurdles, Schram not only finished first but also shaved more than two seconds off his previous best. In the high hurdles, his second place finish could very well have been a win if wasn't for a slight mishap on the next to last hurdle.



ERIC POLINSKY

Not only does Novi netter Eric Polinsky have the team's smoothest strokes, he also has an early winning edge. After the season's first two meets, Polinsky is the only Wildcat tennis player to remain undefeated — and for his great start, the senior has been named a "Wildcat of the Week." In the opener against Pincney, Polinsky trounced Doug Flora 6-3, 6-1 at second singles to help his team post a 6-1 victory. Three days later, he stunned Northville's Doug Kamienecki 6-4, 3-6, 7-6, winning the third and deciding set in a 7-3 tie-breaker. In that final set, Polinsky actually fell behind 1-4 before mounting a comeback. "That's probably the best I've seen (Eric) play," Novi Coach Jim Newbold said.

Novi runners fall in season opener

By NEIL GEOGHEGAN
staff writer

The Novi boys track squad came away from its season-opening 86-51 loss to Livonia Stevenson on April 3 feeling pretty good about itself — so the loss is probably best categorized as a "moral victory."

Coach Bob Smith's Wildcat team was outnumbered from the start by the huge Spartan team — directly related to a large student body. But the Wildcats never gave up and competed hard throughout the meet.

"I knew we were going up against a good team, but we ran a lot better than I thought we would," Smith said. "We did a nice job. Stevenson had to earn it and that tells me we are better than I originally thought. We are now ready for the KVC."

Novi grabbed six firsts, and swept the top three places in two events, but the Spartans had the numbers and the depth.

The 'Cats strength in the high

jump was apparent when the team went 1-2-3 in the event. Junior standout Brian Schram topped the 5'10" mark without a miss and then didn't even attempt any higher because first place was already his. Mark Snider placed second (5-8) and Marc Williams was third (5-6).

Novi had a tougher time of things in the long jump, however, because top performer Joel Finsel was benched for disciplinary reasons. Rob Wilson's jump of 18-7½ was less than an inch away from first place, but he had to settle for a third.

The windy conditions made it difficult on the pole vaulters, but Novi's Tom McBride cleared 11-feet to finish third. In the shot put and discus, the Wildcats notched some good performances but were shutout in both events. In the shot, senior Franz Samson threw 42-1, within five inches of his all-time best, and yet he missed placing by a half inch. In the discus, Matt Stahr's 115-foot toss was fourth best.

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Smith's happy despite opening loss

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In the distance events, Novi had a lot of success. In the two mile run, three of Smith's cross-country stars swept the top three places. Sophomore Rob Rasmussen came in first (10:36.87), Craig Cowden was next (10:39.18) and Bret Van Dyke (11:00.00) followed. Then Cowden came back strong to win the mile run (4:56.1) with Van Dyke in third place (5:03.8). In the two-mile relay, McBride, Jay Keranen, Pat Parsons and Snider combined for a 9:09.01 and second place, while Lee McMann's

Jeff Jeffress, Andy Fitzpatrick and Schram placed second in the mile relay (3:45.27).

Schram continued his assault with a first in the low hurdles (42.3) and a second in the high hurdles (16.5). His time in the lows was more than two full seconds faster than his previous personal best a personal best time (22.22) with a win in the 200-meter dash and added a third in the 100 (11.64). The 400-meter relay team of Brian Everett, Matt Koneda, Wilson and Fitzpatrick placed second (47.56), but the 800 relay squad was disqualified

for an exchange zone violation.

"I'll tell you, our team is picking up their third and performances exactly where they left off at the end of last season," Smith reported. "I was worried about this meet because I didn't want to get hammered and have our team be discouraged from the start, but it didn't happen. We made a few mistakes but it was a lot closer than anybody thought it would be."

The Novi thinclads take on their first Kalamazoo Valley Conference opponent today (April 9) when they play host to Brighton.

Brighton nips Wildcat thinclads

By NEIL GEOGHEGAN
staff writer

Bob Smith was elated with the effort. In fact, the veteran coach of the Novi boys' track team was just about as pleased with a loss as he has ever been.

Smith saw his Wildcat thinclads come within a whisker of knocking off Brighton in the Kensington Valley Conference (KVC) opener for both teams on April 9. Coming that close is quite a feat for a team that didn't win a single KVC meet last year and is still fighting to gain respectability.

With the score tied 66-66 heading into the final event, the 'Cats needed a win in this mile relay to preserve the lead they had held almost all day. Despite a great third leg by Jeff Jeffress (53.26) and a good anchor leg by Brian Schram (54.3), the Novi

quartet finished second to the Bulldogs by a slim margin of less than five yards. Brighton went home a 71-66 winner.

"On one hand I was elated how close we came to winning, but on the other hand you never want to be happy with a loss," Smith said. "I really didn't know what to tell the guys. We came as close as you can get, and we performed great against a super team."

The 'Cats performed extremely well in certain areas like the field events, but fell short in all four relays. After the five field events, Novi held what appeared to be a solid 29-16 lead. Matt Stahr had an outstanding day with wins in both the discus (122'10") and shot put (44'5 1/4"). And Wildcat teammate Franz Samson was the runner-up in both events as well with a throw of 115'6" in the

discus and a put of 43' 1/4".

The high jump was the most exciting event of the day. It featured a showdown of sorts between two of the better jumpers in the KVC — Novi's Brian Schram and Brighton's Glen VarnHagen. Both topped 6'2" without a miss but Schram went on to clear 6'4" on his third attempt to set a new personal-best jump, while VarnHagen failed all three times. The Wildcats picked up extra points in the event as Mark Snider added a third (5'8") to go along with Schram's win.

Rob Wilson (18'5") and sophomore Jeffery LaFontaine (18' 1/2") placed second and third respectively in the long jump to keep pace with Brighton, and Tim McBride notched a second in the pole vault (11 feet). But soon, the Bulldogs were catching up in the rest of the events. Schram registered his second win of

the day in the 110-meter high hurdles (school metric record of 15.44), but no other Novi hurdler placed. The two-mile and 800-meter relay teams were both beaten by Brighton's best, but the Wildcats did receive a pleasant surprise in the 100-meter dash as Brian Everett finished first (11.51) and Bill Lethemish came in second (11.72).

A 1-3 finish in the mile helped Novi maintain a slowly shrinking lead as Craig Cowden came in first (4:47.25) and Snider finished third (4:50.52). But the 400-meter relay team dropped another place, missing first by a mere a quarter of a second.

Jeffress then came out of nowhere to place second in the 400-meter dash (1:00.07) but the 'Cats were then shut out in the 800 meters as Brighton

went 1-2-3. Andy Fitzpatrick (24.47) and Stahr (26.14) placed 2-3 in the 300-meter dash, Schram was the runner-up in the 300 low hurdles (42.49), and Rob Rasmussen (19:27.58) and Cowden (19:29.63) held off the Bulldogs in the two-mile race. Stahr set up the final relay as the deciding race.

"I was hoping it wouldn't come down to the mile relay, but it did and I felt fortunate to be that close," Smith said. "I really didn't expect us to be in a position to beat them in the final event."

The Novi tracksters wrapped up the week with a fourth place finish in the five-team Milan Relays last Saturday (April 11). Farmington Harrison won the team title, and despite the lowly finish, the 'Cats were just 12 points out of second place.

Again, the field events proved to be the team's strong suit as they took first place in three of four events. Stahr and Samson combined for a total put of 87'9" to give the Wildcats

a first in the shot put. The same two also grabbed a first in the discus with a combined throw of 265'4".

The high jump team of Schram and Mark Williams also placed first, thanks to Schram's 6'5" effort. The latter jumping sensation cleared 6'2" without a miss and then set a new career mark before retiring. Unfortunately, the pole vault and long jump teams failed to place (top three).

The 4-by-1000 meter relay team of Mike Ducker, Rasmussen, Bret VanDyke and Snider placed third with a 29:58 effort, the 4-by-300 relay squad (Pat Parsons, Jeffress, Cowden and Snider) placed third, and the distance medley crew (Parsons, Jay Keranea, Dicker and Cowden) also placed third (11:24.74).

After what Smith considered a solid performance last week, his mind began drifting back to the glory years of Novi track during the 1962-64 seasons. The inevitable comparison followed.

"Track in Novi is Novi," he said. "We are going back to where we were three or four years ago."

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Wildcats of the Week



MATT STAHR

Senior trackster Matt Stahr quietly had one outstanding performance after another last week and, as a result, is our choice for "Wildcat of the Week" honors. In Nov's 71-66 loss to Brighton, Stahr placed first in both the discus (122' 12") and shot put (44' 5 1/2") and even helped the team out in a sprint event by taking second place in the 200-meter dash (25.14). Two days later at the Milan Relays, Stahr teamed up with fellow senior Franz Samson to notch two more firsts in the discus and shot put relay events. "We were forced to use (Stahr) in a sprint against Brighton and what does he do — he gets a second for us," Novi Coach Bob Smith said. "It was amazing."



STEPHANIE GROOM

After the first week of play, junior forward Stephanie Groom has been the main offensive threat for the Novi girls' soccer team. Well, actually, she has been the only goal-scoring threat. Groom scored every single goal in the team's first three matches, and even though it adds up to a grand total of two, it's two more goals than anybody else on the squad has managed so far. In the team's season opener, Groom accounted for Novi's only goal in a 4-1 loss to Belleville. Later in the week, she notched another goal during a 3-1 loss to Milford. For the effort, Groom has been honored as a "Wildcat of the Week."

Thinclads fall just short — again

"The best losing team in Southeastern Michigan."

That's how Bob Smith described the 1987 edition of the Novi boys track team after the Wildcats dropped a pair of Kensington Valley Conference (KVC) meets in action last week.

Powerful Lakeland handed the Wildcats a 96-41 setback on Tuesday. But the heartbreaker came Thursday when the Wildcats dropped a 69-68 decision to Hartland in a meet that had Smith fretting over how he could have scratched out the one additional point which would have propelled his Wildcats into the victory column.

"That was the third time this season the meet has come down to the final race and the third time we've come up short," moaned the veteran Wildcat track coach. "We're 1-4 in the KVC (1-5 overall), but we could just as easily be 4-1. We lost by one point to Hartland, three points to Milford and three-or-four points to Brighton. That's how close things have been for us this year.

"Fortunately, the kids know we have a good team and we're having a good year. Even though our record doesn't show it, we've definitely turned the corner."

Smith was not at all concerned about the 96-41 loss to Lakeland. In fact, he said it's considered something of an honor not to be "centuried" (100 points) by the powerful Eagle contingent which has not lost a dual meet in four years.

"They're the premier team in the KVC and one of the best teams in the

state," reported Smith. "It wasn't a matter of beating Lakeland; it was a matter of not being 'centuried' by them."

Despite the lop-sided score, the Wildcats managed to win four events against Lakeland. Brian Schram cleared 6'2" to win the high jump, Matt Stahr won the discus with a 133'8" effort, Andy Fitzpatrick, only a sophomore, took the 200 meters with a time of 23.9 and the 800 meter relay team of Bill Lethemon, Matt Koned, Brian Everett and Fitzpatrick got to the tape first with a time of 1:43.27.

Registering second-place finishes for the Wildcats were Schram in both the 110 high hurdles (15.7) and the 300 low hurdles (41.5), Stahr in the shot put (43'7"), Rob Wilson in the long jump (19'1") and Mark Snider in the 800 meters (2:03.51).

Adding third-place points against Lakeland were Snider in the high jump (6'0"), Franz Samson in the discus (126'5"), Everett in the 100 meters (11.56), Fitzpatrick in the 400 meters (55.02), Craig Cowden in the 1600 meters (4:39.83) and Rob Rasmussen in the 3200 meters (10:33.6).

The heartbreaker came two days later on Thursday when the Wildcats were upended 69-68 by Hartland.

"You need 69 points to win a meet, and we had a 68-55 lead with two events still remaining," reported Smith. "But they swept us in the two mile and then came back to win the mile relay to win the meet 69-68.

"It was a tough loss, but I can't fault my kids. They busted their guts

out there and almost pulled off another upset."

Once again, the Wildcats were led by Schram who accounted for two first-place finishes. Schram took the high jump with a jump of 6'0" and then came back to win the 110 high hurdles with a time of 15.63.

Matt Stahr gave Novi another first by winning the shot put (41'5"). The Wildcats also got first-place finishes from Rob Wilson in the long jump (19'1"), Brian Everett in the 100 meters (11.57), Andy Fitzpatrick in the 400 meters (53.03) and Mark Snider in the 800 meters (2:05.51).

Novi also won the 400 and 800 meter relays. Bill Lethemon, Matt Koned, Wilson and Everett took the 400 meter relay (46.64), while Lethemon, Koned, Everett and Fitzpatrick won the 800 meter relay (1:36.82).

Adding second-place finishes were Stahr in the discus (132'9"), Franz Samson in the shot put (40'8"), Snider in the high jump (5'10"), Fitzpatrick in the 200 meters (23.9) and Schram in the 300 meter hurdles (40.91).

Third-place finishes were registered by Samson in the discus (124'9"), Jeffre LaFontaine in the long jump (17'8½"), Jeff Leininger in the 110 hurdles (17.48), Lethemon in the 100 meters (12.04), Everett in the 200 meters (24.32), freshman Lee McMains in the 400 meters (54.67), Jay Keranen in the 800 meters (2:13.56) and Craig Cowden in the 1600 meters (4:44.0).

"When we had that 68-55 lead after the 200 meters, I thought we would be

able to get one more point to clinch the victory, but it just didn't happen," said Smith.

"We had Rob Rasmussen going for us in the 3200 meters and Rob has had a strong season. But Hartland had a super-strong cross-country team and they swept the two-mile on us.

"That made it 68-64 and meant that the winner of the mile relay would win the meet. And they got us again.

"One of the things that hurt us was that we lost Jeff Jeffress, one of our best quarter-milers, for the rest of the season with a fractured pelvis last week and we're feeling that loss every week. When you're as thin as we are, every man is critical.

"Lee McMains, Brian Schram, Andy Fitzpatrick and Mark Snider did an outstanding job in the mile relay, but they just couldn't pull it out. I'm not faulting them; they did a super job. They busted their guts out there."

Smith also said he was pleased that the Wildcats came as close as they did to winning the meet. "I told the kids before the meet that it would be close, but I didn't really think it would be as close as it was," said the Wildcat track mentor. "I thought Hartland could win by as much as 10 to 15 points, so to lose by just a single point isn't too bad."

The Wildcats' next action will come this Friday when they travel to Eastern Michigan University to participate in the MHSAA Class A Regionals. Prelims begin at 3:30 p.m. with the finals slated to get under way at 6:30 p.m.

Wildcats of the Week



MARK SNIDER

Senior Mark Snider has been a quiet leader and unsung performer for the Novi track team all season long. You don't notice him very much and then at the end of the meet you see he has been a very valuable point-getter for the team. Take last week's action for example — it was nothing fancy, he just got the job done. In two dual meets, Snider accounted for three firsts, a second and third and for that reason he's been named a "Wildcat of the Week." In a 93-44 win over Northville, Snider won the 800-meter run (2:06.9), was a member of the winning 3200-meter relay team (8:47.62) and placed third in the high jump (5'8"). In a loss to South Lyon, Snider won the 800 (2:06.17) and was second in the mile (5:01.4).



LISA McCARTHY

Junior catcher Lisa McCarthy has put together another outstanding campaign and is a deserving recipient of "Wildcat of the Week" honors. In action last week, McCarthy did what she's been doing all season long — getting the key hits and providing what many consider the finest defensive catching in the area. In an impressive 3-2 win over Hartland, McCarthy delivered a key hit. In the opener of a doubleheader with Howell, she doubled in a run but the team eventually lost 6-5. Then in the nightcap, McCarthy's triple sparked an extra-inning rally and spurred the team to a 5-4 victory. In KVC play, McCarthy has a .400 batting average (12-for-30) and an on-base percentage of .581 (25-for-43).

Sunshine Meet brings rays of hope

Nobody has ever accused Bob Smith of being a pessimist. In fact, the veteran coach of the Novi boys track team has something of a reputation for his upbeat attitude.

But Smith's optimism about the future seemed well-founded after Novi finished second in the Sunshine Invitational for freshman and sophomores at South Lyon on Saturday.

"It's sort of like a mini-KVC meet — except it's limited to freshmen and sophomores," reported Smith, who was one of the state's premier middle-distance runners during his own prep career at South Lyon in the mid-1970s.

"All the teams in the KVC were there except Hartland, and Northville took their place, so we finished second out of seven teams.

"That tells me we have a real strong corps of underclassmen and the future looks real bright. Our weakness was in the field events, but we looked strong on the track. If it had been a track meet instead of a track-and-field meet, we would have won it."

Brighton won the team title with 121 points, nine more than Novi which finished second with 112.

Third place went to Milford, followed by Northville, Lakeland, South Lyon and Howell.

The outstanding individual performance for Novi was turned in by Andy Fitzpatrick who won two events. Fitzpatrick won the 200 meters in 23.29 and then came back to win the 400 meters with a time of 53.61. Fitzpatrick added a second-place finish in the 100 meters (11.61).

Fitzpatrick also played a key role in the other highlight for Novi, anchoring Lee McMains, Chad Guyot and Matt Konedo to a second-place finish in the 1600 meter relay.

"We just might have the fastest freshman/sophomore mile relay team in Oakland County," said Smith. "Our freshman mile relay team finished fourth in the county last year, and this year's team is seven seconds faster than the squad we had last year.

"When you have that many good sophomore and freshman quarter-milers, it's a good sign for the future."

Freshman standout Rob Rasmussen also fared well in the Sunshine Invitational, winning the 3,200 meters (10:39.4) and placing second in the 1600 meters (4:52.9).

Jeff Mielke added a second-place finish in the pole vault (9'6"), while thirds were registered by Jeff LaFontaine in the long jump (17'11½"), Mark Skodack in the pole vault (9'0"), Lee McMains in the 400 meters (55.69), Jeff Morrison in the 800 meters (2:14.9) and the 800 meter relay team of Bill Lethemon, Konedo, Guyot and McMains.

Fourth-place finishes were registered by Chris Koth in the high jump (5'2"), Rosh Yohatgi in the 800 meters (2:15.6), the 400 meter relay team of LaFontaine, Lethemon, Koth and Konedo (47.96) and the 3200 meter relay team of Rohatgi, Mielke, Chad Estep and Jeff Morrison (9:09.7)

Fifth-place finishes were added by Lethemon in the 100 meters (11.86) and Steve Scrivener in the shot put (34'9½"), while sixth place points were contributed by John Robert in the 110 high hurdles (19.75) and Brett VanDyke in the 3200 meters (11:36.1).

"It was a good meet, particularly in the running events," observed Smith. "We know we have some decent runners coming up in the future. What we have to do now is work on skill development in the field events."

Schram's triple paces thinclads

Brian Schram won three events to lead Novi to a convincing 93-44 victory over Northville last Monday, but the Wildcat thinclads were nowhere near as successful two days later when they returned to Kensington Valley Conference (KVC) action and dropped an 80-57 decision to South Lyon.

The Wildcats are now 1-5 in the KVC and 2-6 overall.

Not surprisingly, Coach Bob Smith said the victory over Northville was a lot more fun.

"It's good for our team to see that they're pretty darn solid in comparison with non-KVC schools," said the veteran Novi track coach.

Indeed. The Wildcats won 12 of 17 events against the Mustangs en route to the 93-44 conquest. And nobody played a bigger role than "Schrambo" who personally accounted for three of the 12 Novi firsts.

The talented junior led a Novi sweep in the high jump, clearing 6'2" to finish ahead of teammates Mark Williams (5'10") and Mark Snider (5'8"). Schram then came back in the track events to post victories in the 110 high hurdles (15.54) and the 300 low hurdles (42.96).

The meet was in marked contrast to last year's Novi/Northville clash

when the Wildcats built up a huge 44-1 lead in the field events and still managed to lose the meet. "We wanted to make sure that didn't happen again this year," remarked Smith.

The Wildcats again dominated the field events, however, winning all five events. In addition to sweeping the high jump, Novi finished first and second in the shot put, discus and pole vault. The dynamic duo of Matt Stahr and Franz Samson took honors in the weight events with Stahr winning the discus (134'9") and the shot (41'7½") and Samson finishing second in both events (123'5" and 40'7½").

Tim McBride and Dave Samaan contributed the 1-2 finish in the pole vault. Both cleared 10'6" with McBride taking first place on the basis of fewer misses. Robb Wilson rounded out Novi's firsts in the field events by winning the long jump (18'5½").

Novi continued to show its dominance during the track events. In addition to Schram's firsts in the hurdles, the Wildcats got first place finishes from Andy Fitzpatrick in the 200 meters (24.29), Mark Snider in the 800 meters (2:06.9) and Craig Cowden in the 1600 meters (4:52.31).

In fact, Cowden led a Wildcat sweep of the 1600, finishing ahead of Rob Rasmussen (4:58.67) and Brett VanDyke (5:07.24).

Novi also won two relays. Bill Lethemon, Matt Koneda, Brian Everett and Fitzpatrick joined forces to win the 800 meter relay (1:38.19), while McBride, Jay Keranen, Cowden and Snider took the 3200 meter relay (8:47.62).

Adding second-place points against Northville were Lethemon in the 100 meters (12.13), Lee McMains in the 400 (55.02), McBride in the 800 (2:09.6) and Rasmussen in the 3200 (10:17.24).

Third-place finishes were contributed by Jeff Leininger in both the 110 high hurdles (17.25) and 300 low hurdles (44.04), Wilson in the 200 meters (24.94) and VanDyke in the 3200 (10:59.23).

The Wildcats returned to KVC action on Wednesday when they suffered an 80-57 setback at the hands of South Lyon in a meet that Smith claimed was a lot closer than the final score.

"They dominated us in the sprints and we dominated them in the distances," reported Smith. "We traded the lead back and forth most of the meet. There was only a six-

point difference through the 800 meters, so it was a fairly close meet despite the final score."

In contrast to the Northville meet when Novi won 12 events, the Wildcats were able to register just six firsts against the Lions.

Stahr and Samson accounted for 16 of Novi's 57 points by finishing first and second respectively in both the discus and shot put. Stahr's winning efforts were 140'2¼ in the discus and 41'4" in the shot, while Samson took second in both events with efforts of 119'11" and 38'10½."

The Wildcats picked up 18 more points by sweeping both the 1600 and 3200 meter runs. Cowden (4:55.41), Snider (5:01.4) and Rasmussen (5:02) finished 1-2-3 in the 1600, while Mike Ducker (10:53.8), Rasmussen (10:54.0) and VanDyke finished 1-2-3 in the 3200.

The only other Novi firsts were earned by Schram in the high jump (6'0") and Snider in the 800 (2:06.17).

Second-place finishes were registered by Schram in both the 100 highs (15.7) and 300 lows (41.3) and Everett in the 100 (11.3). Registering third place finishes were Wilson in the long jump (18'9½"), Fitzpatrick in the 400 (53.4) and McBride in the 800 (2:09.3).

Wildcats stumble in KVC meet

Categorized most of the season as a solid dual-meet team, the Novi boys' tracksters showed that they are not as impressive as a tournament squad during the Kensington Valley Conference (KVC) Championships on May 20.

The Wildcats placed sixth in the seven-team KVC meet with 39 points, exactly 100 points behind first place Lakeland. And Bob Smith, coach of the Wildcat thinclads, thought the meet went just about as expected.

"I think we did about as we expected," he said. "We are not a good big-meet team. We're solid in every event, but we don't have many of the super-super stars who are guaranteed wins."

The closest thing Smith has to a star is junior high jumper Brian Schram, but his second-place finish in the KVC meet was something of a disappointment. All season, Schram was touted as the elite of the league, but his best jump of 6'3" wasn't enough to catch Brighton's Glen VarnHagen (6'5").

"Brian jumped pretty good — 6'3" is close to his best," Smith pointed out. "I was hoping he'd peak for this meet, but deep down I really want to see him do his best at the state meet. He just didn't have it for the KVC."

Schram added a sixth in the 100-meter hurdles (15.86) and just missed placing in the 300-meter hurdles. Senior Matt Stahr also grabbed runner-up honors in the discus (140'2"), while teammate Franz Samson chipped in with a sixth (119'0").

Middle distance runner Mark Snider found himself boxed in on the curve of the 800-meter run, but still managed to place fourth (2:01.75), and Brian Everett placed sixth in the 100-meter dash (11.83). But those were the only other individual places from the Novi team.

Three of the four Wildcat relay teams did place among the top six, led by the 400-meter team of Bill Lethemon, Matt Koneda, Rob Wilson and Everett who came in third (46.06). The 800-meter relay squad — featuring Lethemon, Koneda, Everett and Andy Fitzpatrick — placed fourth (1:38.22) as did the two mile relay team of Craig Cowden, Tim McBride, Jay Keranen and Snider (8:29.50).

Novi then wrapped up its '87 season on May 22 at the Oakland County Championships with mixed results. All competitors must qualify for the county meet and, according to Smith, the standards are very tough. Only three Wildcats — Schram (high jump), Snider (800-meters) and Stahr (discus) — made the rigid qualifying cutoffs.

"Just being chosen to go to the

Oakland County meet is an honor," Smith said. "Many times, this meet is as good or better than the quality at the state meet."

Of the three Novi competitors, Schram was the only one to place among the top six. Unfortunately, it wasn't a very impressive effort as he cleared just 6'1" and then barely missed 6'3" several times. He had to settle for a fourth place tie.

Stahr and Snider didn't have much success, either. Stahr fouled

out on all three of his attempts and Snider placed seventh with a disappointing time of 2:02.05.

"I think both Stahr and Snider were a little tentative," Smith said. "Both just barely made the qualifying cut-offs and were a little overwhelmed with the caliber of the competition. I just wish they were both juniors instead of seniors because it was their first time there and most of the time you need to experience it once before you can ex-

cel in a big meet like this."

Schram is Novi's only state qualifier and will compete in the high jump at the state meet for the second straight year. Snider would have made it to Alma too if the qualifying rules hadn't been changed this season. In previous years, the top three competitors in each region made it to the state meet, but this season the rules were modified to take only the top two. Snider placed third in the 800-meter run in regional competition.

Schram qualifies for state

Brian Schram is the only member of the Novi boys track team to qualify for the MHSAA State Championships at Alma College on May 30.

Schram earned the right to compete for the state title in the high jump by finishing in a tie for fifth place during regional competition at Eastern Michigan University.

In a sense, Schram was fortunate to qualify for the state meet. The MHSAA has revised its rules this year so that only the top two finishers in each event in the regionals advance to state.

Schram will be headed for Alma, however, because the MHSAA decided that anyone who meets or surpasses certain qualifying heights and times in the regionals, will also qualify for state.

Despite finishing fifth in the high jump in the regionals with a jump of 6'3", Schram bettered the qualifying

mark to earn the right to advance.

"Brian's jump of 6'3" was the same as the regional champion, but he was placed fifth on the basis of more misses," reported Bob Smith, coach of the Wildcat thinclads. "I'm glad he's going because he's definitely a state-caliber high jumper."

Smith was not at all pleased with the rules change which reduced the number of state qualifiers from the top three to the top two finishers in the regionals. And the veteran coach of the Novi thinclads says the rules change cost him at least one additional state qualifier.

"Mark Snider came in third in a really good field in the 800 meters with a time of 2:00.4 so he just missed qualifying for state," reported Smith. "That kind of time is state-caliber in anybody's book. It's really unfortunate because Mark has really blossomed this year and deserves to

be going to state.

The only other Wildcat who earned points in the regionals was Tim McBride in the pole vault. McBride cleared the bar at 10'9" to end up in a tie for fourth place.

Smith's unhappiness with the rules change notwithstanding, the fact remains that Schram will be the only Wildcat representative in the state meet, and the Novi coach believes his star high jumper can do well.

"Brian has had a confidence problem the last couple of weeks," said Smith. "He went from a 6'5" high jumper to a 6'2" high jumper.

"In the regionals, he missed his first two attempts at six-three, which is a height he can clear without much difficulty.

"We had a little talk before his third jump. We talked about envisioning a 6'5" jump and that's what did it."

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Schram foiled by high-jump slump

Novi track Coach Bob Smith believes the high jump is a peculiar event.

And after the MHSAA State Championship Meet at Alma College last weekend, you can be sure that Wildcat junior Brian Schram knows exactly what his coach is talking about.

Schram, who entered the '87 track season as one of the finest underclassmen high jumpers in the state, completed his month-long slump last Saturday at Alma College by failing to clear the opening height of 6-foot-3.

"The high jump is different from a lot of the other events in track," Smith said. "A lot of it is mental, and I think that's been Brian's problem

ever since the 10-day layoff during Easter break."

As a sophomore in '86, Schram finished second in the KVC to Milford's Steve Pitcher, but did qualify for the state meet. This season, he began the campaign impressively and at the midway point of the season, he topped the 6'5" mark for the first time in competition and was routinely clearing 6'4". That was back during the second week in April.

Soon after that, the team took a lengthy break for the holidays, and ever since returning to action, Schram has had problems returning to his prior form. Suddenly, he was struggling to get over the bar at 6'3".

"Brian needs to jump in competition or he loses his momentum and

has problems with his mechanics," Smith said. "The break obviously hurt him because he never did get to 6'4" again. He was jumping real well in the middle of the season, but once you start failing to improve, you start to second-guess yourself. It's a mental thing really."

Schram had three tries at 6'3" at Alma and came close on the second jump, but couldn't quite make it. Lansing Sexton's Orlando Scott took first place with a 6'9" jump. And if Schram could have topped the opening height, he would have immediately placed in a tie for seventh.

"For a week before the meet, we worked Brian really hard," Smith said. "We worked him harder than he's been worked the whole season.

Unfortunately, we weren't successful in getting him to peak. His peak was in early April, but it wasn't because of a lack of effort on his part."

Smith plans to send Schram to a high jumper's camp this summer in hopes of preparing him for a run at the state crown in '88.

Paul Mootie, a 1984 Novi High School graduate, went to the same camp between his junior and senior seasons and improved his best jump by five inches. Mootie still holds the KVC Meet record in the long jump (6'7").

"Mootie went to the camp jumping 6'2" and came back jumping 6'7" so I'm really high on this camp," Smith said. "I think Brian will come back stronger and better than ever."