

Pioneer wins 4th straight; Southfield earns boys title

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YPSILANTI — The girls Class A track championship seems to run in cycles. In the mid-1970s, Detroit Cass Tech won three straight girls titles. In the late '70s and early '80s, Flint Northern captured three consecutive titles.

Now it is Ann Arbor Pioneer's cycle and there is no telling when it will stop.

Pioneer became the first team to win four straight girls Class A titles Saturday at Eastern Michigan's Rynearson Stadium.

In the boys competition Southfield ended Lansing Sexton's two-year reign with the Blue Jays' first track title.

Using an outstanding performance from junior Crystal Braddock, Pioneer compiled 82 points. Cass Tech was second with 60, followed by Ann Arbor Huron (39) and Detroit Cooley (28).

Braddock needed to set a record in the 100-meter dash (11.70) to edge defending champ Patrice Verdun of Flint Central (11.76).

"I'm very surprised by this," Braddock said. "Last year I placed seventh. It was so hot and I was sitting out all day and I felt faint. This year the weather is nicer. I didn't know I was going to win until the very end. I've been working on leaning because I thought this would be close."

A couple of hours later, after anchoring the winning 400-meter relay team and before she helped Pioneer's 1,600-meter relay team to a second,

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Braddock won the 200 and she surprised herself again in beating Verdun.

"I've really been concentrating on the 100," Braddock said. "My mind was more mentally set for the 100, but I thought I had a chance. Running against a state champ like Patrice was really an honor."

Southfield's boys finished with 58 points. Jackson was second with 34, followed by Kalamazoo Central and Cooley (32 each).

"Coming into this meet I thought there were five teams that were just about even," said Southfield coach Tom Eschmann. "I thought the team that didn't make mistakes and ran to its potential would win it. With the exception of one mistake we made in the two-mile relay we did what we were supposed to. In the 400-meter, 800-meter and 1,600-meter relays we ran our best times of the year.

"Jeff Reynolds (200) came on the right time to win his state championship. Even though Cassidy Wright wasn't a champion he finished second in the 110-meter hurdles and third in 300-meter hurdles. When you start scoring in every event you can, you're going to pile up some points."

Rick Gledhill of Mt. Clemens Chipewa Valley broke the state record in the 800 by almost two seconds (1:50.6).