

# Top runner aims to erase past letdowns

By David Mayo  
The Grand Rapids Press

Brian Hyde has become the Jim Ryun of Michigan high school middle-distance running. Though clearly the best in the state, his personal forte is his well-practiced ability to deal with disappointment.

Hyde finally hopes to demonstrate how he deals with success in Saturday's Class A state track and field meet at Houseman Field.



Hyde, of East Kentwood High School, is the undisputed middle-distance king of Michigan high schools, particularly at 1,600 meters. Yet his only state ti-

tle has come in cross country.

The 1,600 has been the event he most dominates — until the state meet.

Last year, in a major upset, Hyde lost the state final by less than a half-second to Marcelo Ortiz of Dearborn Fordson (4:14.04 to 4:14.46).

In 1989, Hyde twisted his ankle in the final 100 meters when he stepped on the curb. He was among three runners who were well ahead of the pack at the time of the mishap.



PRESS PHOTO/CHRIS CLARK

Kentwood's Brian Hyde, left, beats Traverse City's Jay Namboothel in the regionals.

Yet even for his state meet disappointments, Hyde doesn't spend sleepless nights of regret. "I've had my share of hard luck — or no luck — but it doesn't really bother me," he said. "It just keeps me hungry."

"He runs his best," said Chuck Drnek, the East Kentwood coach, "and if that's good enough to win it, that's fine. It's not a matter of life or death for Brian."

Hyde's last chance at a state track title will be

Saturday, when he competes in the 800, 1,600 and 3,200 relay. He has a chance to win state titles in all three.

But one stands above the others.

"My main goal is to win the 1,600," he said. "I've wanted for the longest time to win that one and I haven't won it yet. I'm not going to deny myself. I'm not going to let anything happen."

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# TRACK

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I'm just going to give everything I've got in the 1,600 and whatever happens in the 800 happens.

"My goal is just to win. But I'd like a quick time in the 1,600. Whatever I have left for the 800, that's what I have left."

Hyde is the runaway favorite in the 1,600. His season-best time at that distance, 4:10.9, is almost 14 seconds better than the state's second-best time. And his regional qualifying time of 4:20.6 is more than four seconds ahead of the second-best regional time, 4:24.8 by John Cowan of Birmingham Brother Rice.

Competition will be tougher in the 800. Hyde is seeded second to Detroit Cooley freshman David Norman, whose 1:55.9 regional time was two-tenths of a second faster than Hyde's. Hyde has a season-best time of 1:53.1, however.

And in the 3,200 relay, Drnek expects East Kentwood to have a strong chance of winning. The Falcons are seeded first, with Traverse City second. Both ran 8:00.6 in the regionals, though East Kentwood won the race by less than one-tenth of a second.

"I feel very good about that group — and they have run five seconds faster than their seed time," Drnek said.

Ross DeGraaf, Stu Palmer, Dan Reed and Hyde have run 7:55.8 this year.

Hyde chose to run the relay rather than the 3,200-meter run, though he also would've been heavily favored at that distance. His season-best of 9:13.1 is more than 13 seconds ahead of the second-best time in the state.

"I haven't run the two-mile (3,200) since indoor, and I wanted to do the half-mile (800)," Hyde said in explaining his decision. "I thought it would be easier to run (the 800, 1,600 and 3,200 relay)."

It was a decision Drnek allowed Hyde to make in mid-season. Drnek said he exerted no influence on Hyde's decision, largely because of his respect for Hyde's level-headedness.

"You couldn't ask for a better kid to coach," Drnek said of Hyde, who has accepted a track scholarship to William & Mary College in Williamsburg, Va. "Whatever you ask, he'll do. When he's tired he tells you he's tired. And he understands running. He's just a very coachable kid."

At Saturday's state meet, Hyde will first run the

## Class A finals

**WHAT:** Class A Lower Peninsula high school track and field championships.

**WHEN:** Saturday

**WHERE:** Houseman Field.

**ADMISSION:** \$4 per person.

**SCHEDULE:** 10 a.m. field events and running preliminaries; 11 a.m. 3,200-meter relay finals; 12:25 p.m. running semifinals; 1 p.m. field events; 1:55 p.m. national anthem; 2 p.m. running finals.

**TEAM DEFENDING CHAMPIONS:** Pontiac Northern (boys) and Ann Arbor Pioneer (girls). Pontiac Northern won its first title. Pioneer set a state record by winning its sixth title in a row.

**INDIVIDUAL DEFENDING CHAMPIONS: BOYS** — Howard Triplett, Lansing Sexton (hurdles). **GIRLS** — Bridgett Mann, Ann Arbor Pioneer (1,600, 3,200); Ijnaya Alhamisi, Detroit Henry Ford (400).

**TOP AREA INDIVIDUALS: BOYS** — Brian Hyde, East Kentwood (800, 1,600); Brett Organek, Grandville (discus, shotput), Jeff Kerr, East Kentwood (pole vault), Steve Poretta, Holland (pole vault); Brad Fields, East Kentwood (100, 200); Nolan Moore, GR Christian (100, 200); Brad Haverkamp, GR Christian (3,200). **GIRLS** — Mary Beth Mount, Greenville (high jump, hurdles); Julie Walker, Ottawa Hills (100); Moly Lori, East Kentwood (1,600, 3,200); Sara Minier, Greenville (800); Missy Hills, Grandville (hurdles).

relay, then the 1,600 and finally the 800.

All athletes face the pressure of competition in this weekend's state meets. But the pressure to actually win affects only a small percentage.

And the pressure of being expected to win — and win easily — affects precious few.

In the 1,600, Hyde is one of those few. Yet he adamantly denies that he feels extra weight because of the expectations.

"In fact, it gives me confidence that everyone thinks I should win it," he said. "And when my competition hears over and over that I should win it, they start to believe it themselves."

But if something happens again this weekend, and Hyde again falls short in his quest for the 1,600-meter state title, Drnek doesn't expect it to faze him.

"We've had him for four years," Drnek said, "and he never ceases to amaze me. His perspective on things, his team leadership ... he's just been a great kid to have around."