

Midland Dow's Hill soars to

By Tom Markowski
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TRACK

GRAND RAPIDS — Above all other individual accomplishments Saturday, the performance of Stephan Hill of Midland Dow in the pole vault stands tallest. His vault of 16 feet, ½-inch set an all-class record during the Class A track and field championships at Houseman Field.

But Hill's feat still was one of many. Outstanding accomplishments by Mike Spaulding and Erica Shepard went a long way toward bringing their respective schools a state championship.

Spaulding won the 300 low hurdles and placed second in the 110 high hurdles for a total of 18 points as Flint Carman-Ainsworth won the school's first track championship with 44.5 points. Detroit Mumford was second with 41.

Shepard placed first in the 800 run, anchored the winning 800 relay and ran third on the winning mile relay as Detroit Cass Tech easily defended its title. The Lady Technicians had 65 points. Plymouth Salem was second with 36.

"We have a lot of guys who are all hard workers," Spaulding said. "I was really disappointed in the 100s because I wanted first. I knew I had to get first in the 300s if we had a chance to win."

Carman-Ainsworth had first-place finishers in the high jump (Chuck Thrash) and 400 relay (42.6). Jerron Mosley ran the anchor and had to hold off Santori Rogers of Detroit Mumford at the finish line. Mumford was second at 42.9.

"As soon as I took a peek and crossed the finish line, I knew we'd won," Mosley said. "We knew we could do this. We weren't going to lose today."

Thrash's jump of 6-8 is a career

best. After battling a case of the nerves, the junior was ready to do his best.

"The first couple of jumps I was nervous," he said. "But then I calmed down and after I cleared 6-5 I was relaxed. Hey, it's the state meet. It was my last time to jump."

For Shepard, the Lady Technicians' lone senior, it was a long, exhausting but satisfying afternoon. She was the defending champion in the 800, and the 1,600 relay team also won last season, so the pressure was on.

"My legs tightened up a bit after running the 800," she said. "But I had to forget about it for the mile (relay)."

Hill said his vault, which exceeded the previous record of 15-10 set by Toby VanPelt of Owosso in 1988, was assisted by switching to a different pole three weeks ago.

"I wanted to set a record today," he said. "Nothing less. After getting to 15-7, I didn't want to go for 15-11 to beat the record. I wanted 16. You get about six good jumps in a meet and I was running out."

"The new pole helped. It's bigger and longer. The pole definitely had something to do with it, but it's not going to make you a champion. It's what you put into it."

Chandra Burns of Detroit Northern won the 100 and 200 dashes. She also won both events in the regional and Public School League meet. Her only loss in the 100 this season came in Operation Friendship last Saturday, and she didn't want to end the season that way.

"My time (11.8) was my best," she said. "Walking around before the race, some of the athletes and my coach told me I was the best. I just convinced myself I wouldn't be beat."

Russell of Southfield placed first with a jump of 17-7½. Just a sophomore, Russell finished the season undefeated in the event. Her best jump (18-4¾) came in the West Bloomfield Invitational.

"Coming in, I was putting everything together," said Russell, who

Christy Goodison of Sterling Heights Stevenson also was a double winner as she duplicated her performance of a year ago, winning the 1,600 and 3,200 runs.

"I guess I could top this by setting a record next year," said Goodison, a junior. "I really wanted to set a record in the 3,200, so I'm not totally satisfied."

Detroit Mumford's two-mile relay team of Joe Stevens, Shelby Thomas, Keenan Thomas and Eric Williams completed an undefeated season with a winning time of 7:53.95 despite a poor first exchange. Thomas had to stop to secure the pass from Stevens but passed the runners from Monroe and Flint Central to give Tindle a 5-meter lead. Tindle extended that to 20 meters and Williams made it stand.

"They made my job a lot easier," Williams said. "Just one time this season have I had to come from behind, and that was at the Dayton Relays."

In the girls two-mile relay, Brighton's team of Lindsay Towne, Katie Szopo, Hilary Green and Andrea Boyer led from start to finish in a school-record 9:34.29. Towne, a freshman, gave Szopo, also a freshman, a five-second lead.

"This was probably my fastest time," Towne said. "I wanted to take the lead and keep it."

Said Green, a sophomore: "It's awesome knowing we'll all be back, not only for track, but we run cross country as well."

Boyer, a junior, is the veteran of the team.

Nick Kallas of Detroit Catholic Central set a personal best by 3 feet in the shot put (55-7½), but it was good for only second place as Al Barnett of Belleville won the event with a put of 59 feet, 11½ inches.

In the girls long jump, Mwanza

placed third last season. "The best parts of all my jumps came together today."

Class B

Boys: William Brooks, Jim Krol, Edzra Gibson and Chris Polk set a meet record of 1:28.23 in the 800 relay, leading

U-D Jesuit to the team title. Polk also won the 400 and the 200, and teamed with Gibson, Brooks and Kareem Dillard to win the 1,600 relay. Highland Park's 400 relay of Alville Greene, Andre Crosby, Dedan Jackson and Anthony Brown prevailed.

Girls: Inkster, led by the outstanding effort of Charnell Lynn, won by six points over River Rouge. Lynn won the 100, 200 and 400 and teamed with Tameka Gibson, Mariah Tatum and Faith Henderson to win the 400 relay.

Class C

Boys: Eau Claire won the team title, Harper Woods Lutheran East's George Powell was sixth in the shot put and Riverview Gabriel Richard was sixth in the 1,600 relay.

Girls: Taking firsts were Jeni Brewer of Southgate Aquinas in the 800 and Trena Cook of Harper Woods Lutheran East in the shot put. Shepherd won the championship.

Class D

Boys: It was a close finish, but Akron-Fairgrove prevailed by two points over Litchfield and by four over Pittsford. Ann Arbor Gabriel Richard finished fifth, led by Jeff Beuche's first in the 800 (1:57.00).

Girls: Royal Oak Shrine was seventh, behind victories in the 400 and 800 relay, and Litchfield won the team title.

■ Detroit News staff contributed.