

Cass Tech takes home two titles

By Chris McCosky

MIDLAND — Thomas Wilcher made a promise to his freshman class when he took over the Detroit Cass Tech track team three years ago.

"He told us we would be runners-up as juniors and that we would be state champions as seniors," senior Dewayne Fuqua said. "We messed up last year, but Coach Wilcher still believed in us. We wanted to do it for him."

The Technicians made Wilcher a prophet Saturday at Midland High School. Their deep sprint and relay units drove to the school's first Class A state title since 1978.

Cass Tech outdistanced Ann Arbor Pioneer, 74-53. Pontiac Northern was third (35), Detroit Cooley fourth (27) and University of Detroit Jesuit fifth (24).

It was a clean sweep for Cass. The girls team won its third straight Class A title, outscoring Detroit Martin Luther King, 65-42. Ann Arbor Pioneer was third (37), Lansing Sexton fourth (32) and Jenison fifth (28.5).

"Our season is complete now," said Wilcher, who still holds the state's 110 hurdles record. "We knew if we stayed calm and run like we can run, we'd win it. The guys did what they were supposed to do, and they got what they were supposed to get — the state title."

The quartet of Fuqua, Fred Wilkerson, Clarence Williams and Jabari Johnson did the bulk of the scoring for Cass.

They set a Class A state-meet record in the 800-meter relay, and but for a quirk in the timing it might have been a national record. Hand-held clocks timed them at 1:24.8, which would have beaten the

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national record of 1:24.9. The automatic timing mechanism had it at 1:24.94, which had to be rounded off to 1:25.0 because of a malfunction.

"That was very disappointing," Wilkerson said. "Our goal was to set records in all the relays."

Cass settled for a first in the 1,600 relay (3:17.03) with the same foursome, and a second in the 400 relay (42.43).

Wilkerson was second to Bay City Central's Micah Morris in the 100 dash.

Morris ran a 10.4, which tied the meet record, and Wilkerson a 10.5. Wilkerson was third in the 400 (47.8).

Johnson, Williams and Darryl Rankins placed second, fifth and sixth, respectively, in the 200 dash. Morris won the 200 in 21.43.

"We don't have any standouts on this team," Wilkerson said. "There's no star like a Tyrone Wheatley."

Brandon Guinn of Jackson set a Class A meet record in the 300 intermediate hurdles, running a 37.5.

Cass Tech's girls used the same formula as the boys: depth and speed.

The 800 relay team of Chantelle Nagbe, Julie Ford, Emily Higgins and Felicia Baker set a meet record, winning in 1:38.4.

The 400 relay team of Lakesha Snoddy, Tiffany McNair, Higgins and Nagbe won in 48.5.

Ford, a freshman, won the 400 in 55.1. Higgins won the 100 in 11.8.

Lansing Sexton's Deanna Bouyer won the 100 hurdles (14.3) and 300 hurdles (44.0).

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