

High schools

CLASS A TRACK

Cass Tech extends monopoly

Boys and girls both win clear triumphs, repeat as champs; Chadsey places second among boys.

By Tom Markowski
The Detroit News

SAGINAW — Chantelle Nagbe doesn't like to think. Not when she's running. It gets in her way. Little else got in the way of Nagbe and Detroit Cass Tech's girls track team Saturday at Saginaw High. The Lady Technicians captured their second straight Class A title and fourth in six years

Cass finished with 71 points. Ann Arbor Pioneer was second with 55, Flint Central third with 34 and Jenison fourth with 32.

Cass' boys team was not to be outdone. Also the defending champions, the Technicians came away with the title thanks to strong relay teams. Cass finished with 47 points, followed by Detroit Chadsey with 33. Flint Carman-Ainsworth and Pontiac Northern finished in a third-place tie with 26 each.

Rain delayed the start of the afternoon finals for an hour, and coupled with a strong wind, kept the runners' times down. Nagbe would have no part of it. She wasn't going to be the one making excuses.

Nagbe, a junior, was a triple winner, capturing the 200 meters (25.83), running the third leg of the winning 800 relay (1:41.0) and the anchor on the winning 400 relay (48.38).

"The weather you really can't think about," she said. "I don't think when I run. My coach said if you start thinking about anything while running) it takes away energy from your legs, so I don't think about anything."

Bertha Smiley is in her sixth season as coach at Cass. This year



Cass Tech's Tracie Ball is on the last leg to a victory in the 800-meter relay after baton pass from Chantelle Nagbe. Nagbe also anchored 400 relay win. Cass swept boys and girls 400 and 800 relays.

Jeff Kowalsky / Special to The Detroit News

Smiley loses two seniors — Emily Higgins and LaKeisha Snoddy. Her squad is immediately the favorite to win next year. Smiley clapped excitedly as her 1,600 relay team of underclassmen took first place in the meet's final event in 3:57.45.

"Every one of them are my children," Smiley said. "I can't believe Chantelle said that. She's giving away my secrets. Thinking takes away from running. I tell them to go out there and just run."

Cass' other winner was Kanisa Williams, a sophomore, in the 100 (12.3).

A Class A record was set in the girls discus. Suzie Von Bernuth of Okemos, with a throw of 146 feet, bettered the mark of 144-9 set in 1992 by Katja Pettinew of Lansing Eastern. Von Bernuth also won the shot put with a put of 42 feet, five inches.

Ayesha George of Pioneer won

the 100 hurdles (14.9), a fraction of a second ahead of Pam Grayer of Ypsilanti.

"I didn't get a good start," said George, a sophomore. "I felt the energy when I got to the third hurdle. I've beaten Pam twice this year, but she's got me a few times, too."

Thomas Wilcher is in his third season as boys head coach at Cass and has two state and Public School League titles. Wilcher said before the meet that the scoring would be low because poor weather at the regionals two weeks ago kept some of the top contenders' athletes from qualifying.

"I knew we'd be strong in the relays," said Wilcher. "Then (Steve) Jenkins came through with some points in the 100 (fifth), and Clarence (Williams) gave us help. He came in as healthy as he's ever been this year, and he gave us some

depth." Jenkins and Williams ran on the winning 800 and 400 relays. Nevan Smith ran on the winning 800 and 1,600 relays. Going into the 1,600, fourth was all the Technician needed to win.

Williams, a running back who was rated No. 4 on the Blue Chip list and has signed with Michigan, injured a hamstring in March and was sidelined for six weeks. Williams came through on the anchor leg.

There was one double winner in the boys individual events. Jamal Allen, a senior from Southfield-Lathrup, won the 100 (11.2) and 200 (22.60). In the 100, Allen trailed Jason Granger of Farmington Hills Harrison until the final few meters. Granger finished second.

New Haven boys, Hemlock are champs

By Don VanderVeen

AUBURN, Mich. — The rain stopped in time for Saturday's Class C track and field finals. But New Haven's reign in Class C is showing few signs of letting up.

New Haven, which won the boys Class C championship with four runners in 1994, successfully defended its title Saturday at Bay City Western High School.

With five first- and three second-place finishes, the Rockets accumulated 70 points, outdistancing runner-up Newaygo by 28 points. Charlevoix was third with 37, followed by Breckenridge (26) and Quincy (25).

New Haven Coach Frank Reed brought a larger team to the state finals this year. It was seven strong.

For New Haven, it was a "Mack-nificent" seven. Junior John Mack achieved a state-finals grand slam with victories in four events.

"When you get a lot of first and seconds, the points add up," Mack said. He and Billy Chenault were the lone returnees from last year's champions.

New Haven's big finish was a 1-2 showing in the 200, with Mack finishing first (21.97) and Chenault second (22.20). Mack also won the 400 (48.99) and anchored the Rockets to victory in the 800 relay (1:30.83).

Mack has won three Class C championships in the 400 meters and still has a year of high school left.

He made up 20 meters on the bell lap and — despite getting hit by another runner's baton — blew past the competition on the anchor leg to help the Rockets win the 1,600 relay in 3:29.95.

New Haven was the first boys team to repeat in Class C since Detroit Lutheran West in 1987-88.

"It's the greatest feeling in the world," Mack said.

Hemlock won the Class C girls title with 64 points, edging defending champion Clare by 11. Addison was third with 32, followed by Almont (30), Reading (27) and Quincy (26).

Hemlock's Liz Mulvaney was a double winner in the shot and discus. Teammate Heidi Goodenough took the 400 in 58.33 and led Hemlock to victory in the 1,600-meter relay.

Clare's Jessica Champine was a three-event winner.

Quincy's Jeremy Stempian repeated as Class C shot-put champion and added a state discus championship medal to his collection.

Almont's Wendy Feldman was first in the girls 100 and 300 hurdle races. Valley Lutheran freshman

Bethany Brewster won the 1,600 and the 3,200.

Class D

Pittsford's boys and Maple City Glen Lake's girls both repeated as Class D track champions at Bay City John Glenn Saturday.

Pittsford (57 points) outdid New Buffalo and Au Gres Sims (37 each), Central Lake (35), Baldwin (30) and Ann Arbor Gabriel Richard (29).

Matt Miller (15.04) won the 110 high hurdles for Pittsford, which got seconds from Nick Salazar (400 run, 52.18), Miller (300 low hurdles, 40.97) and Mark Caswell (800 run, 2:01.27).

For the girls, it was all Glen Lake (60), which led Grass Lake (52), Fowler (49), McBain Northern Michigan Christian (41) and Battle Creek St. Philips (29).

Glen Lake's Erin Gearhart, Kelly MacMillan, Tanya Wilcox and Erin Attwood won the 800 relay in 1:50.28. Gearhart, MacMillan, Chris Lyr and Attwood took the 400 relay in 52.78.

Don VanderVeen is a free-lance writer. Detroit News staff contributed.

Comstock repeats; Caledonia girls win

By Dan Wetzel

MIDLAND — The Comstock boys finished what they started last year. They dominated the Class B championship for the second consecutive year.

"We were talking about this year last year," four-event winner Randy Hunt said. "We really only lost one person from last year's team, so we came into this season with a lot of confidence."

There was so much confidence that Comstock won even though J.B. Thomas pulled up with a hamstring injury on the second leg of the 800-meter relay. In the 400-meter relay, not even two poor handoffs could keep the Colts from winning handily.

Caledonia won the girls championship with 41 points. Otisville Lake and River Rouge each had 32, Ypsilanti Willow Run 30, and Battle Creek Pennfield and Tecumseh 26 each.

A deep cast of sprinters helped Comstock amass 70 points. Fremont had 28.1, Dowagiac Union and Muskegon Heights 25 each, and Corunna 23.

The only person having an easier time on the Midland Stadium track was Lynn Charnell, a senior from Ypsilanti Willow Run.

Charnell dominated the girls sprints, sweeping the 100 (12.64), the 200 (25.70) and the 400 (57.45).

"I wish I were in Class A because there would have been better competition," said Charnell, who will

attend Eastern Michigan on a full athletic scholarship.

"(Lynn) is amazing," said Tecumseh High's Angie Stanifer, who finished second to Charnell.

Caledonia, the defending girls cross-country champion, used superior distance runners to outlast Willow Run and River Rouge.

None of Caledonia's distance runners could catch Carrie Gould, a junior from Flint Powers Catholic, who won the 1,600 meters (5:05.20) and 3,200 meters (11:05.27).

River Rouge was led by junior Kenyetta Grisgby, who won the 100-meter hurdles (14.68) and the 300-meter hurdles (45.55).

Dan Wetzel is a free-lance writer.