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Pioneers rule in Class C

The Clare girls track team snares its second state title in three years.

GREG MANCINA
 ■ THE SAGINAW NEWS

COMSTOCK PARK — Jessica Champine can always run faster, or so it seemed at the Class C state track finals here Saturday.

The Clare High School senior had just finished her third run to a Class C track state title, but she still couldn't believe the second-place finish she had in the 800-meter relay to a team that ran in another heat.

"I don't understand how (winners Lutheran Westland) got in the slow heat," Champine said.

"I would've liked to have run against them."

Champine successfully defended her title in the 100-meter dash in 12.21 seconds, and the 200 dash in 25.33 seconds, which is one-tenth of a second off a state record.

Her three individual titles paced the Pioneers to their second Class C state team title in three years, finishing with 58 points. Hemlock, the defending champion, was second with 43. Champine's speed overcame Hemlock's strength in the field events.

"If there is a girl in front of me, I just reach down and go faster," said Champine, who will run for Western Michigan University next year.

Champine came from behind in all three of her victories, including the 400 relay.

"Somehow I just dig down," she said. "I'm better with better competition."

Champine already holds the area record of 11.86 seconds in the 100, which she clocked last week.

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Hemlock second

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"(I get my speed) from my parents, they were both track stars," she said. "My dad (Jeff) still holds the record at Romeo High for the 100, and my mom (Sherry) ran the 200 in high school."

Clare had set its sights on the state title after Hemlock wrestled it away last season.

Clare coach Judith Johnson said her team had "bad luck" last season with illness and injuries.

"On the way home on the bus last year the girls were mad, they were hungry and they said they were going to win it (this year)."

Clare won the 3200 relay in 9 minutes, 42.58 seconds, with Michelle Schepperley, Meghan McNeilly, Beth Wolfe and Kylie Schultz.

Audrey Jelenek, Jill Jelenek and Meghan Smith ran with Champine in the winning 400 relay.

Hemlock was second on the shoulders of two-time repeat champion Liz Mulvaney and sophomore sprinter Christy Tedrow.

Mulvaney won the shot put and discuss while Tedrow was second in the long jump with a school-record leap of 17 feet, ½ inch, and second in the 400 dash. ■