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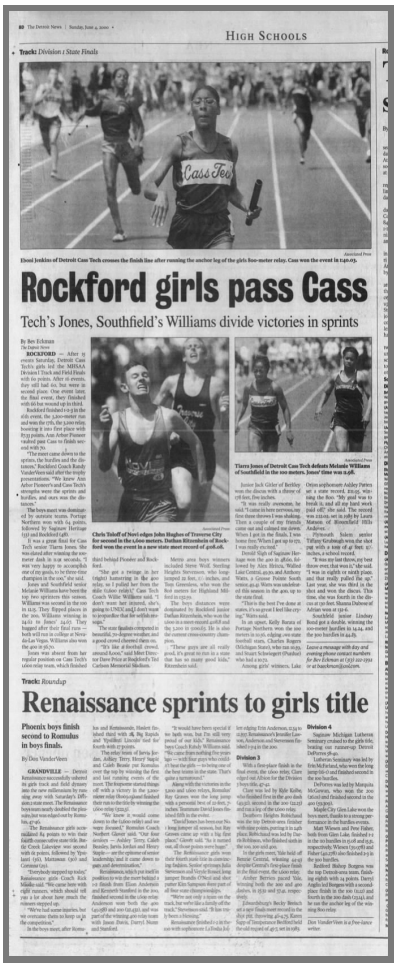

HIGH SCHOOLS

Track: Division 1 State Finals

Cass Tech

Elonzi Jenkins of Detroit Cass Tech crosses the finish line after running the anchor leg of the girls 800-meter relay. Cass won the event in 1:40.03.

Rockford girls pass Cass

Tech's Jones, Southfield's Williams divide victories in sprints

By Ben Eckman
The Detroit News

ROCKFORD — After 15 events Saturday, Detroit Cass Tech and the MHSAA Division 1 Track and Field Finals with 60 points. After 16 events, they still had 60, but were in second place. One event later, the final event, they finished with 60 but wound up in third.

Rockford finished 1-2-3 in the 16th event, the 3,200-meter run. Rockford's Chris Tuloff finished crossing it into first place with 67.33 points. Ann Arbor Pioneer vaulted past Cass to finish second with 70.

"The meet came down to the sprints, the hurdles and the distances," Rockford Coach Randy VanderVeen said after the trophy presentation. "Cass Tech, Ann Arbor Pioneer and Cass Tech's strengths were the sprints and hurdles, and ours was the distances."

The boys meet was dominated by sprinters from various. Portage Northern won with 64 points, followed by Saginaw Heritage with 63 and Cass Tech with 62.

It was a great final for Cass Tech's senior Tiarra Jones. She was elated after winning the 100-meter dash in 11.91 seconds. "I was very happy to accomplish one of my goals, to be three-time champion in the 100," she said.

Jones and Southfield senior Melanie Williams were the only two sprinters this season. Williams was second in the 100 in 12.15. They flipped places in the 200. Williams winning in 24.62 to Jones' 24.67. They hugged after their final race — both will run in college at Nevada-Las Vegas. Williams also won the 400 in 57.61.

Jones was absent from her regular position on Cass Tech's 1,600-relay team, which finished third behind Pioneer and Rockford.

"She got a twinge in her (right) hamstring in the 400-relay, so I pulled her from the 1,600-relay," Cass Tech Coach Willie Williams said. "I don't want her injured, she's going to UNLV, and I don't want to jeopardize that for softball either."

The state finalists competed in beautiful, 70-degree weather, and a good crowd cheered them on.

"It's a big meet, the biggest annual Kenny," said Mike Donovan Dave Price at Rockford's Ted Carlson Memorial Stadium.

Chris Tuloff of Novi edges John Hughes of Traverse City for second in the 3,200 meters. Durhan Rittenhouse of Rockford won the event in a new state meet record of 9:06.06.

Tiarra Jones of Detroit Cass Tech defeats Melanie Williams of Southfield in the 100 meters. Jones' time was 11.96.

Junior Jack Grier of Berkley won the discus with a throw of 178 feet, five inches.

"It was really awesome, he said. "I came in here nervous, my first three throws I was shaking. Then a couple of my friends came out and calmed me down. I told myself, 'Let's get a home run.' When I got up to it, I was really excited."

Donald Vigh of Saginaw Heritage won the pole vault, followed by Alex Rivera, Walled Lake Central, 14-06, and Anthony Watts, a Grosse Pointe South senior, 14-03. Watts was undefeated in the pole vault up to the state final.

"This is the best I've done at states, it's so great I feel like crying," Watts said.

In an upset, Kelly Bursia of Portage Northern was the top thrower in 1A-2A, edging out state football stars, Charles Rogers (Detroit Southwestern) who ran 10.83, and Desiree Rogers (Pontiac) who had a 10.71.

Among girls' winners, Lake Orion sophomore Ashley Pipkin set a state record, 125.04, winning the 800. "My goal was to break it, and all my hard work paid off," she said. The record was 2:10.06, set in 1987 by Laura Manson of Bloomfield Hills Andover.

Plymouth Salem junior Tiffany Kavabaugh won the shot put with a toss of 48 feet, 4½ inches, a school record.

"It was my last throw, my best throw ever, that was it," she said. "I was in eighth or ninth place, and that really pulled me up." Last year, she was third in the shot put. "I was so close," she said. "This year, she was fourth in the discus at 131 feet. Shanna Dubose of Adrian won at 136-6.

Southfield junior Lindsey Boyd got a double, winning the 100-meter hurdles in 14.44, and the 300 hurdles in 44.81.

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Track: Roundup

Renaissance sprints to girls title

Phoenix boys finish second to Romulus in boys finals.

By Don VanderVeen

GRANDVILLE — Detroit Renaissance successfully defended its girls track and field dynasty into the new millennium by running away with Saturday's Division 1 meet. The Renaissance boys team nearly doubled the points but was edged out by Romulus, 48-47.

The Renaissance girls accumulated 84 points to win their fourth-consecutive state title. Becky Crook Lakeview was second with 56 points, followed by Ypsilanti (56), Manistee (50) and Coleman (50).

"Everybody stepped up today," Renaissance girls Coach Rick Rogers said. "We had a couple of eight runners, which should tell you a lot about how much the element stepped up.

"We've had some injuries, but we overcame them to keep up in the competition."

In the boys meet, after Romulus and Renaissance, Hudsonville finished third with 46, Big Rapids and Ypsilanti Lincoln tied for fourth with 27 points.

The other team of Jarvis Jordan, Ryan Ellis, Jeff Hayes and Caleb Baxter ran Romulus over the top by winning the first and last running events of the meet. The frosh-soph squad finished off with a victory in the 3,200-meter relay (8:00.13) and finished their run to the title by winning the 1,600-relay (3:29.35).

"We knew we would come down to the 1,600-relay and we were doomed," Romulus Coach Norbert Glaser said. "Our four seniors — Ashley Terry, Caleb Beasley, Jarvis Jordan and Henry Staple — are the epitome of senior leadership, and it came down to guts and determination."

Renaissance, which put itself in position to win the meet behind a 1-2 finish in the 400-relay and discus-throw, finished second in the 1,600-relay and third in the 3,200-relay. Andermott won both the 400 (49.08) and 800 (1:55.42), and was part of the winning 400-relay team with Jason Davis, Darryl Nunn and Stanford.

"It would have been special if we both won, but I'm still very proud of our kids," Renaissance boys Coach Ralph Williams said. "We came from nothing five years ago. We've been in the top three of the girls — we're one of the best teams in the state. That's quite a turnaround."

Along with the victories in the 1,600 and 1,600-relays, Romulus' Ray Graves won the long jump with a personal best of 22-feet, 7-inches. Teammate David Jones finished second in the 100.

"David Jones has been our No. 1 long jumper all season, but Ray Graves came up with a big-fish performance," Glaser said. "As a senior, all those points were huge."

The Renaissance girls won their fourth state title in convincing fashion. Senior sprinters Julie Stevenson and Vonyie Rouse-Long jumped Brandis O'Neal and shot putter Jessica Hall to account for all their team championships.

"We've not only a team on the track, but we're like a family off the track," Stevenson said. "It has truly been a blessing."

Renaissance finished 1-2 in the race with sophomore LaTrisha Jol-

lett edging Erin Anderson, 17.34 to 17.87. Renaissance's Jennifer Lawson, Anderson and Stevenson finished 1-2-3 in the 200.

Division 3

With a first-place finish in the final event, the 1,600-relay, Clare edged out Alcona for the Division 3 title, 47-42.

Clare was led by Kyle Kolbe, who finished first in the 400 (49.58), second in the 200 (22.53) and ran a leg of the 1,600-relay.

Clare's Dwayne Strickland was the top hurdler in the state with time in 16.60, putting it in sixth place. Kolbe's brief was led by Dustin Robinson, who finished sixth in the 100, 200 and 400.

In the girls meet, Yale held off Bessie Central, winning 49-48 despite Central's first-place finish in the final event, the 1,600-relay.

Archer Berrien paced Yale, which had 20 points in the 100-meters, 15 in 400 (1st, 2nd) respectively.

Edwardsburg's Becky Betsch set a new state meet record in the shot put, throwing 46-4.75. Kara Sage of Temperance Bedford had the old record of 46-3, set in 1989.

Division 4

Saginaw Michigan Lutheran Seminary cruised to the girls title, beating out runner-up Detroit DeHaven 78-40.

MLS Seminary was led by Erica McFarland, who won the long jump (17-3) and finished second in the 100-hurdles.

DeHaven was led by Marquita McGowan, who won the 200 (26.02) and finished second in the 400 (59.90).

Maple City Glen Lake won the boys meet, thanks to a strong performance by the hurdlers in 1A.

Glen Lake's Jeff Hayes and Ben Soth from Glen Lake, finished 1-2 in the 110-hurdles in 15.08 and 15.31, respectively. Watson (57.08) and Fisher (40.58) also finished 3-4 in the 300-hurdles.

Reshford Bishop Borgess was the top Detroit-area team, finishing eighth with 24 points. Darryl Nunn, Borgess' lone state champion, place finish in the 100 (11.22) and fourth in the 200 dash (23.14), and he ran the anchor leg of the winning 800 relay.

Don VanderVeen is a Free Press writer.

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