

Norton boys tie for second in Class 3A regional track meet

By DICK BOYD

Coach Bruce Graber's Norton Community High School boys track team performed at a high level on Friday to tie for second in the Class 3A Regional Track Meet in Beloit.

Beloit won the team championship with 76 points. Norton and Minneapolis were right behind with 71 points each. Phillipsburg placed fourth with 53 points, followed by Oakley, 52; Thomas More Prep-Marian of Hays, 48; Ellsworth, 48; Riley County, 29; Southeast of Saline, 29; Belleville, 24; Rock Creek, 18; Nemaha Valley, 17; Russell, 10; Sabetha, 10; Ellinwood, 2; Hoisington, 0.

The Blue Jay boys set two school records, 10 personal records and recorded three season's bests in the meet. Based on times and distances coming in as well as results from all four regionals, this regional meet was the toughest Class 3A regional meet in the state.

"Without a doubt, it was the toughest regional in the state," said Coach Graber. "In fact, it's the toughest any of my teams have competed in during my 30 years as a coach!"

"We knew it would be that way. We talked all week about it. I told them to just go out and compete hard like they have all year and some good things would happen. It was a hot, muggy day and that stakes its toll on some but our athletes chose to go out and compete. "We handled the pressure great and had an unbelievable day. It was phenomenal!"

Senior hurdler, jumper Jered Sloan had another outstanding performance as he set one school record in winning three gold medals and running on the second place 4 x 100 meter relay team. Sloan broke his own NCHS school record in the 110 meter hurdles when he was clocked in 14.20 seconds. He set the record of 14.26 in the regional meet last year en route to a state championship in both hurdles events.

Sloan also won the 300 meter intermediate hurdles with an outstanding time of 38.6 seconds, just .45 of a second off the school record he set in last year's regional meet.

"Sloan had a great day," said Coach Graber. "He hit all eight hurdles in the 300 meter race and still had a great time. He broke the first hurdle in half and had to go over the second hurdle with the wrong leg."

Sloan also won the high jump with a height of 6'4" and ran the third leg on the 4 x 100 meter relay which was timed in a season's best 43.6 seconds. Sloan was timed in 10.06, followed by senior Jared Foley, 10.47; freshman Blake VanEaton, 10.96; junior

Seth Mills, 12.12.

"I gave Jered Sloan the opportunity to choose his events," said Coach Graber. "He could have chosen four individual events and won all four. Instead, he chose the 4 x 100 meter relay over the long jump to give his teammates a chance to qualify for the state meet."

"I love that attitude of thinking about team instead of self."

Minneapolis edged Norton for the 4 x 100 meter gold medal with a 43.40 time.

Jared Foley also performed at a very high level. He set a new NCHS school record of 49.6 in the 400 meter dash. Evan Kahle of Oakley and Foley received the same time in the race but judges picked Kahle as the winner. Kirk Kasson, who now lives in Almena, held the previous Norton 400 meter record of 50.18 seconds which he set in a WaKeeney meet in 1986. Foley also placed second in the 200 meter dash with a personal best time of 22.5 seconds. Ryan Mortimer, Minneapolis, was declared the winner with a time of 21.90.

Foley was also a member of the Norton 4 x 400 meter relay team which placed seventh and just out of the points with a season's best time of 3:32.3, which was four seconds better than they'd run all year. Team members and time splits were: Foley, 51.22; Mills, 53.0; senior Nick McKee, 53.43 and VanEaton, 54.7.

"Jared Foley was just flat out awesome," said Coach Graber. "A lot of coaches will be glad that he graduated. He has a change of gears like no boy I've ever had on a track team."

"In the 4 x 100 meter relay, Sloan ran outstanding in the third leg to get us in position, and Foley anchored. Halfway through, he changed gears and was just edged at the finish line. We were running against a tremendous field."

"Everyone really ran hard on our 4 x 400 meter relay team. The best time going in was a 3:30 and ours was 3:36. I told our four runners that I thought each could shave a second off their time and get down to 3:32 and we'd be in the hunt. They did but other teams ran better, too."

Also qualifying for the state meet this Friday and Saturday at Cessna Stadium in Wichita was senior thrower Joel Griffiths. He placed third in the discus with a throw of 145'7". Griffiths also placed fifth in the shot put with a heave of 49'. He missed qualifying for state by one inch. Kurt Thomas, Phillipsburg, had a 49'1" effort.

"The shot put is really Joel's strongest event but he struggled in it and just missed going to the state meet," said Coach Graber. "He put

that disappointment behind him and qualified in the discus."

Junior Justin Shirk ran a personal best 15.6 to place fifth in the 110 meter high hurdles. "Justin really ran well," said Coach Graber. "He would have qualified for the state meet at any of the other 3A regionals. That's how tough this meet was."

Sophomore Lance Roe placed fifth in the pole vault with a personal record height of 13'. The third through sixth place finishers all cleared 13' but Roe was fifth based on number of misses. "Lance went 13 feet in the pole vault for the first time in his life and was bumped out of the state meet by number of misses," said Coach Graber.

In addition to running in the two relays, VanEaton ran the 800 meter run and placed fifth with a personal record time of 2:03.2. He was just 1 1/2 seconds from qualifying for the state meet in that event.

"VanEaton really ran hard for a rookie," said Coach Graber. "His 800 meter time was almost five seconds better than his previous best."

Another freshman, Nathan Broeckelman set a personal record in the 300 meter hurdles with a time of 42.7 seconds to place sixth. He was just 1 1/2 seconds from qualifying for the state meet.

"Nathan ran the hurdles two seconds faster than he ever has and won his heat but it was a slower heat and that placed his time sixth best," said Coach Graber.

Scoring in the distance events for Norton were junior Derek Volgamore, who placed sixth in the 1600 meter run with a season's best time of 4:50.4 and freshman Logan Keiswetter, who placed sixth in the 3200 meter run with a personal record time of 11:03.

Also setting personal records but not placing were sophomore Heath Vincent with a 42'10" distance in the shot put and freshman Kent Mann with a time of 11:09 in the 3200 meter run.

The top four finishers in each event qualified for the State Track Meet this weekend in Wichita. Norton qualifiers were Jered Sloan, Jered Foley, Seth Mills, Blake VanEaton and Joel Griffiths. Nathan Broeckelman and Nick McKee will be alternates for the 4 x 100 meter relay team.

"I'm so proud of these athletes," said Coach Graber. "They've been so much fun to be around."

"By getting out of the toughest regional meet in the state they have a great chance at the state meet but I told them that they have no guarantees. They will have to go and perform. And, I'm sure they will because they have all season."



Norton sophomore Chelle Donovan was the winner of the pole vault in Friday's Class 3A Regional Track Meet in Beloit with a personal best height of 9-feet, 6-inches. Donovan is pictured here winning the pole vault in the Mid-Continent League Meet in Hill City on May 14.

— Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

Norton girls qualify two for state

By DICK BOYD

Coach Bruce Graber's Norton Community High School girls track team placed 11th in the tough Class 3A Regional Track Meet on Friday in Beloit.

Beloit dominated with 103 points, followed by Belleville, 73.5; Riley County, 72.5; Minneapolis, 63; Sabetha, 50; Southeast of Saline, 48; Roack Creek, 22; Ellsworth, 32; Nemaha Valley, 25.5; Oakley, 21.5; Norton, 21; Ellinwood, 8; Thomas Moore Prep-Marian of Hays, 4; Russell, 2; Phillipsburg, 0; Hoisington, 0.

The highlight of the day for Norton was the Lady Jay pole vaulters, both of whom qualified for this weekend's Kansas State High School Track and Field Meet at Cessna Stadium in Wichita.

Sophomore Chelle Donovan set a personal record with a 9'6" vault to win the gold medal. Sophomore Amanda Antrim vaulted 8'6" to place third. The top four finishers in each regional event qualified for the state meet.

"Our pole vaulters were great," said Coach Graber. "Chelle was amazing. She kept having trouble with her steps but fought through adversity to win with a personal best height."

Sophomore Karlie Jones set a personal best time with a 2:31.4 clocking to place fifth in the 800 meter run and just missing qualifying for the state meet. "Karlie would have qualified in any of the other three regionals and would have won the Fredonia regional," said Coach Graber.

Jones also ran on all three

Norton relay teams and recorded the fastest time in two of the three. The Norton 4 x 100 meter relay team placed fifth with a season's best time of 52.72 seconds. Jones was timed in 12.38, followed by sophomore Chelsea Cox, 12.7; freshman Hannah Mills, 13.52; Antrim, 14.12. The Norton quartet was less than a second behind Beloit's fourth place team who was timed in 51.80. The Lady Jays would have qualified for the state meet in two of the other three regional meets.

Norton's 4 x 400 meter relay team placed sixth with a season's best time of 4:21.7 and also would have qualified for the state meet in two of the other three regionals. Team members and time splits were: Cox, 63.96; Antrim, 65.58; sophomore Naomi Streck, 65.82 and Jones, 66.34.

The Lady Jays' 4 x 800 meter relay team placed seventh with a time of 10:57 and also would have qualified for the state meet in two of the other three regionals. Team members and time splits were: Jones, 2:34; sophomore Amber

Overlease, 2:42; sophomore Whitney Newell, 2:46; sophomore Rachael Lentz, 2:55.

"Our three relay teams ran very well," said Coach Graber. "Being in such a tough regional kept us from qualifying for the state meet."

"Karlie Jones had an unbelievable day. In addition to her fast 800 meter time, she was one of the fastest on our relay teams."

Junior Amber Engelbert ran a season's best 53.5 in the 300 meter intermediate hurdles but did not place in a strong field. Alyssa George, Minneapolis, the winner of the race, recorded the fastest time of any of the four regionals.

Events in which Norton girls competed but did not place were: Antrim, 13.6, 100 meter dash; senior Amy Myers, 14:17, 3200 meter run; freshman Lacey Roe, 104'5", javelin; Cox, 30' 11 1/2", triple jump.

"I'm so proud of our girls," said Coach Graber. "We had a young team and didn't place high in meets but, if they keep working, they will see lots of success in future seasons."



Norton junior Derek Volgamore crosses the finish line to place sixth in the 1,600-meter run with a season's best time of 4-minutes, 50.4-seconds in the Class 3A Regional Track Meet on Friday in Beloit.

— Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

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