



West Aurora Blackhawks win own John Bell invitational

By Dave Oberhelman | Daily Herald Staff

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West Aurora's recent track and field success has been built around speed, jumps and throws.

Veteran Blackhawks such as sprinter Josh Zinzer, high jumper Aviance King and weight man Kevin Costin certainly didn't disappoint Saturday at West Aurora's own ninth annual John Bell Invitational.

Also helping capture the 16-team meet a second straight year was sophomore Steve Loran's 3,200-meter win, a distance event.

"The program's gotten off to a great start," Loran said. "If we keep doing everything right we'll have a lot of strong guys coming back next year. I think good things will come in no time."

In his first outdoor "two-mile" of 2009, Loran's fully automated time of 9 minutes, 45.09, a personal-best, came after passing three runners with about 500 meters left.

"I think they've ran faster times than me going into here, so I thought the pace was going to go out a lot faster," Loran said. "I was just trying to hang in and then use my advantage the last 500, which is a strength of me, to get out and go."

Loran admitted running against distance dynamo Neuqua Valley was a motivator. So did St. Charles East's Nick Cramer, who anchored the Saints' 3,200-meter relay for Tim Johnson, Jacob Zahn and Jared Eads.

"That had been our goal from the start, to keep up with Neuqua," Cramer said.

Over his second 400 meters Cramer found another gear and survived a grueling final 70 meters to win in 8:04.77. Cramer, Plainfield South's Juliano Lodi and Downers Grove North's Dan Phistry all crossed the line within about a half-second.

"I didn't want to let my team down, lose anything," said Cramer, the sole senior of his relay squad. "I just worked as hard as I could. And it paid off."

Another relay - the 400 group of Wes Allen, Dillon Mugge, Michael Brown and Luke Ploszek - placed third, helping the Saints finish eighth overall.

West Aurora, whose 117 points topped Neuqua Valley (84) and Wheaton Warrenville South (74), saw great results by the usual suspects.

The unsinkable Zinzer blistered the field to win the 200-meter dash in 22.18 seconds. He anchored teammates Darron Guyton, Leon Spears and Dominique Vaughn to win the 800 relay and, in a substate qualifying 43.01, the 400 relay.

King wasn't the happiest he's been, but his high jump of 6 feet, 6 inches took second. Costin won discus at 153-3 then went 1-2 with fellow Blackhawks senior Jayson Eddy to win shot put with Costin's best attempt this season, 54 feet.

"We make each other work hard," Costin said of Eddy. "We lift together and we throw together, so we're always pushing each other. And it's good to have a teammate like that next to you."

Such togetherness was a good thing Saturday.

"It's nice to win your home meet," said coach Cortney Lamb. "But as I was telling the guys, this is a starting point."