



Most of the favorites qualify for Class 2A finals

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CHARLESTON - To say Logan Markuson completed any of his events cleanly would be inaccurate.

The Kaneland junior missed pole vault attempts at 12 feet, 6 inches, and at 13 feet. He was left behind in the 110 hurdles and messed up his steps in the 300 hurdles.

Yet there he was, securing final berths in each for today's Class 2A finals at the 115th boys track and field state meet at Eastern Illinois University.

"It was great competition here today," he said after the 300s. "I think that's what pulled me around."

Markuson joins 11 Class 2A competitors at the pole vault cutoff at 13 feet. His time of 15.13 seconds in the 110 hurdles ranks him eighth of nine. He ran the sixth-best time in the 300s at 39.25.

"On the start I got off with the wrong lead leg, next hurdle hit the wrong lead leg, finally got to 15 steps around the curve. It wasn't the cleanest," he said.

Markuson anchored the Knights' 1,600 relay, which failed to reach Saturday's finals. That would have lifted Kaneland to a tie for third-most finalists, with 7. Hillcrest, the favorite coming in, heads the field with 14 followed by two-time Class AA champ Cahokia next with 12.

Kaneland also advanced senior Josh Bloome in pole vault and Nick Sinon in high jump, at 6-2.

West Aurora is among six teams with 5 qualifiers in 3A, following four more with 6 - all chasing York's 8.

Senior Josh Zinzer ran the fastest time in the 200-meter dash, matching his sectional time of 21.56 seconds. He also anchored qualifying 400 and 800 relays. Kevin Costin is seeded eighth in shot put at 54 feet, 103/4 inches and Aviance King advanced in high jump.

"I don't really jump two days in a row," said the junior, who placed seventh at 6-4 last year. "That's what kind of hurt me last year, but I think I'm prepared."

That included staying off his legs with a Friday night regimen of Wi and X-Box video games.

St. Charles North senior Max Clink got out of a box of runners himself - "I had to be patient," he said - to qualify in the 800, while Geneva's Andrew Nelson and Marmion's Andrew Larsen battled in the same heat of the 1,600 to qualify.

"I'll take it, and I've got my focus race tomorrow, the (3,200)," Larsen said. "So, I was happy with today.

Nelson, who anchored a qualifying 3,200 relay and joined Vikings shot putter Frank Boenzi in the finals, didn't see the back-to-back workload as too debilitating.

"I don't think so," said the senior. "We've got a 24-hour rest and we'll see how that goes."

Batavia's Bai Kabba saved his best for last. After qualifying in both the 100 and the 400, the Ambrose State recruit overtook quality Wheaton North runner Jon Frano over the last 180 meters to earn the Bulldogs the fastest time in the 1,600 relay, 3 minutes, 18. 59 seconds.

That portion was nothing like his open 400.

"It's the only race I get nervous for," Kabba said. "It's one of those races where everybody knows who you are when

you're in that race, and you get on the track and it's like everybody is expecting you to do something good."

Kabba did. He ran the fastest qualifying 400 time, of 47.91 seconds.

St. Charles East seniors Wes Allen and Luke Ploszek didn't make it in the 800 relay. That didn't dim their satisfaction.

"We really just made it our goal to get down here one last time and get our spikes blue on the bottom, just make the most of it," Ploszek said of O'Brien Stadium's blue surface. "And we did that this year. We're going out with our heads held high. we had a fun year."