



Geneva 2nd, Saints 3rd at Streamwood sectional

By Kevin McGavin and Brian Schaumburg | Daily Herald Correspondents

Published: 5/17/2009 12:43 AM | Updated: 5/17/2009 12:47 AM

Lizzy Hynes and Natalie Tarter traversed the emotional spectrum in their final girls track and field sectional on Saturday at Millennium Field.

Hynes, the St. Charles East senior distance maven, tuned back quality fields in both the 1,600- and 3,200-meter runs at the Class 3A Streamwood sectional to place herself in prime position for a potential double state championship next weekend in Charleston.

For Tarter, however, an opportunity to defend her state championship in the 300 hurdles was sabotaged by a left hamstring injury.

The most decorated female athlete in Batavia school history gutted her way to victory in the 100 hurdles to earn her sole ticket to Eastern Illinois University.

There were 11 combined at-large qualifiers in the two longest open runs, but Hynes displayed a devastating kick in both races to win going away.

"The two-mile was definitely about winning," the Boston College recruit said of her splendid time of 10 minutes, 55.9 seconds. "I knew there were some very talented runners (in both races), and I didn't want to underestimate any of their capabilities. I was trying to practice my state tactics."

Hynes headlined nine qualifiers in the mile to win in 5:02.9.

Geneva was vanquished for the team title for the first time this outdoor season; the Vikings fell 6 points short of Hoffman Estates (99-93).

But Erica Miller ended the running portion of the meet in grand fashion for Geneva.

The Vikings' junior standout overcame Schaumburg sophomore Britten Petrey in the final 20 meters of the 1,600 relay to clinch her second victory of the rain-delayed and wind-swept meet.

"We deserved to get first in that," Miller said of the Vikings' mile relay quartet that included Taylor Wickware, Alissa Dappas and Sammi Hill. "It's not the time we wanted, but we'll take it."

Geneva qualified seven individuals in five events; the Vikings also had the only two relays to make the state cut among the four local schools competing.

Allie Pace soared 11 feet, 6 inches to clinch the pole-vault title with ease, and Dappas earned at-large berths in both hurdles events.

Sarah Heuer and Liza Tauscher made the cut in the 3,200 run; Meghan Heuer and Kelly Shogren, who were members of the Vikings' 3,200-meter relay runner-up, also double qualified in the open mile.

"(Dappas) was probably our star of the day," Geneva coach Peter Raak said. "She was the only triple qualifier we had."

St. Charles East junior Maya Rittmanic duplicated Dappas' achievement by qualifying in all three jumping events.

Rittmanic won the high jump at 5-3, was second in the long jump and made the state standard in the triple jump.

"I was most pleased with the triple," Rittmanic said. "I didn't even know I was going to do it today."

Danielle Kuzniewski captured the Saints' fourth title with a razor-thin win in the open 200 meters, and the Saints' state splash was capped by Allie Devor in the shot put, Jess Nier in the 300 hurdles and Mallory Abel in the 3,200.

Batavia entered the outdoor season with eyes on a state title, but injuries to Tarter and fellow returning all-staters Kathryn Warner and Alexis Sampson proved too intractable.

"I have to try and keep a positive attitude," Tarter said. "There was hope still (to compete at 300 hurdles), but after the 100 hurdles it couldn't happen."

Melissa Norville salvaged the Bulldogs' sixth-place finish by qualifying in both hurdles and the triple jump.

St. Charles North sophomore Meredith Beird was the lone qualifier (pole vault) for the North Stars.

By the time the final of the triple jump came around Saturday, Bartlett's Becca Cronin had nothing left in her legs.

The good news was it didn't matter.

Cronin already had qualified for next week's state meet with a jump of 36 feet, 1 1/2 inches in the preliminaries at the Class 3A Streamwood sectional.

"I was just exhausted," Cronin said. "I was waiting around the whole meet and right at the end it was everything at once."

Cronin sat around Millennium Field and cheered on her teammates until the final 45 minutes. The senior finished second and qualified for the state meet in the 300-meter hurdles in a time of 45.1 seconds. She then rushed over to the preliminaries of the triple jump. When she finished that, Cronin ran back to the track to run the anchor leg of the 1,600 relay.

After a short rest, she competed in the finals of the triple jump, where was unable to beat her preliminary jump.

This was the first year Cronin went out for track and qualifying for the state meet at O'Brien Stadium in Charleston in two events made the decision worth it.

"It's amazing," Cronin said. "I wish I would have done track all four years."

Two other area seniors and two sophomores also will be joining Cronin at state.

Elgin's Fatima Diabate won the triple jump with a jump of 36-7. Streamwood sophomore Megan McGlone passed the state qualifying mark on her final preliminary jump, 35-7 1/2.

Larkin's Britney Whitehead qualified by finishing third in the 800 run in 2:20.1, four-tenths of a second better than the state qualifying time.

"I wanted to get a better time, but the wind was (bad)," said Whitehead, a senior making her first trip to state. "I worked so hard this year and the last few years. A great feeling to end my high school career doing that."

Bartlett sophomore Alyssa Schneider will be making a second trip to state in the 1,600 run. Schneider, who finished 10th at state in the 1,600 last year, finished second in a time of 5:10.5.

"I'm so happy to be going back another year," Schneider said. "It's going to be a great experience. I'm looking forward to it."