



Lizzy Hynes takes her first state championship

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Published: 5/23/2009 11:19 PM

CHARLESTON - The recipe was nearly identical to their conference showdown, and Lizzy Hynes triumphantly made good on a vow.

The St. Charles East senior said at the Upstate Eight Conference indoor championship last March that she had not "truly showed what I could do in the two mile."

Pitted against league stalwart and cross country ace state champion Lindsay Flanagan of Lake Park in the finals of the Class 3A girls state track and field championship Saturday afternoon at Eastern Illinois' O'Brien Stadium, Hynes, the Boston College recruit, shadowed the University of Washington-bound Flanagan for five consecutive laps. But Hynes made her move with 280 meters to go, overwhelming Flanagan down the stretch and raising her arms in exultation at the wire with her first state championship.

Hynes was runner-up, third and fifth in three previous Class AA distance incarnations.

"Ever since I came to high school this was my biggest dream," said Hynes, her voice cracking. "I figured if I couldn't win this, I couldn't win the mile. I know exactly how (Flanagan) runs. I'm either going to win (the mile) or die trying."

Hynes won the 3,200 run in 10 minutes, 35.02 seconds, defeating Flanagan by seven seconds; the spread was nine when the two gladiators met for the conference title.

Hynes had been training all season for a potential double, and the 1,600-run proved to be a defining moment of the weekend. Hynes was not the only superlative athlete looking for a repeat win as Benet junior McKinzie Schulz was aiming to double her output after a scintillating win at 800 meters. But Barrington senior Rebecca Tracy had a different agenda.

The three were virtually shoulder to shoulder at the gun lap, and Hynes maintained her slender lead over the next 150 meters. But first Schulz and then Tracy passed Hynes, and Tracy missed the state record by one-hundredth of a second to derail Schulz at the wire.

"They both ran phenomenal races (in their respective wins) and inspired me," said the Notre Dame-bound Tracy. "I guess there is a third champion." "

It just wasn't in the cards," Hynes said. "I didn't have much of a kick."

Tracy was clocked in 4:49.35, four-tenths in front of Schulz; Hynes came in at 4:54.13.

Maya Rittmanic was eighth in the high jump to account for the Saints' final output of 19 points, good for a four-way tie for 13th. Geneva concluded its groundbreaking seasonal performance by tying Whitney Young for 10th place.

Allie Pace was in the running for another pole vault state title for the Vikings, attempting to recreate the magic of former two-time champion Sarah Ross. Pace never missed in overcoming every obstacle in creating a new personal high of 12 feet, but the junior settled for runner-up after Lincoln-Way junior Megan Weller upped her by three inches.

"I had some of the best vaults of the whole season," Pace said. "I'm not even thinking about next year at all."

The Vikings' mile relay continued its onslaught on the school record books; the Erica Miller, Taylor Wickware, Alissa Dappas and Sammi Hill quartet lowered it once again in placing fourth at 3:54.58. "We wanted to stay off the grass (that is, sixth place or better)," said Wickware.

"We'll all be back next year," said Miller.

The Vikings were sixth in the 3,200 relay, and Dappas was eighth and ninth, respectively, in the two hurdles events.

West Aurora was top 25 to further its equally noteworthy season. Shanice Andrews' fourth-place result in the 100 hurdles was later augmented with her third career medal in the triple jump. Markesha Davis anchored the Blackhawks' 800-meter team to sixth. "Every year we keep getting better," said Davis, who made it downstate in relays all four years. "It feels good to end my career with a medal."

Melissa Norville leapfrogged a host of triple-jump competitors to finish third in the event. The Batavia senior accounted for all 12 of the Bulldogs' points with another medal in the long hurdles.

Kaneland garnered top-10 status in Class 2A, and the program bid four-year star Lindsay Gierke adieu in the process. Gierke won her seventh career medal with a runner-up at 100 hurdles, third-place result at 300 hurdles and a fourth in the 100 dash. "The 300s I was hoping to win," said Gierke. "I was kind of disappointed. It all came down to the end. I was happy with the 100 (hurdles)."

Jordan Pinkston (pole vault) and the Knights' 3,200 relay also placed. Rosary seniors Nora Bowe and Monica English paced the Royals' 21st-place effort with a runner-up in the high jump and third in the discus, respectively.