



## Geneva, W. Aurora shine on opening day

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CHARLESTON - Shanice Andrews' victory was almost surreal for the local contingent at the Class 3A girls state track and field championship Friday afternoon at Eastern Illinois' O'Brien Stadium.

Natalie Tarter, the Batavia defending state champion in the 300 hurdles, was also the reigning two-time state runner-up in the 100 hurdles.

But Tarter was scratched in Andrews' first-heat race, and the West Aurora junior standout made sure there was area representation in the 100 finals.

Despite hitting two hurdles, Andrews earned an automatic berth to the final by winning her heat in 14.86 seconds.

"I wanted to make finals," Andrews said. "Now I think I'm going to try and break my personal record."

Even with Tarter, the eight-time state medal-winner, having her career end due to a hamstring injury, there were still plenty of quality performances by the area qualifiers.

Geneva and West Aurora put on highlight-reel individual legs of its two combined qualifying relays to highlight the sprinting portion of the state meet.

The Vikings' Erica Miller and Sammi Hill had stomach-turning thrills in the 1,600-meter relay; the duo took turns battling Lyons Township for what proved to be a new school record for Geneva.

"I did nip her at the wire," Hill said of her scintillating duel with Lyons' Emma Grimes down the stretch. The Vikings' time of 3 minutes, 54.61 seconds was sixth-hundreds quicker than its foes from LaGrange.

Evanston later forged the fastest time in the event, meaning the top three teams were within one-tenth of a second of each other.

"I was thinking I needed to stay in the lead," Hill said. "I needed to solidify that (lead Miller provided)." Alissa Dappas ran the second leg for Geneva, and the junior was on Cloud Nine after earning her third finals berth.

Dappas matched Andrews' feat in the 100 hurdles, and joined Batavia rival Melissa Norville in the 300 hurdles.

"A great day," Dappas said. "I didn't even know I was going to run the 100 hurdles at sectional."

Dappas said her achievements were based on a lack of high expectations.

"It was just going out to have fun," Dappas said.

In the Blackhawks' equally fierce showdown with Belleview West, West Aurora shaved two-plus seconds off its school record to advance.

Markesha Davis battled Belleview senior Chalsea Ewing all the way, only to fall in 1:41.75.

"We knew we had to get first or second (in our heat)," said second-leg member Kehlay Dunah.

"I knew the girl from Belleview West was tough," added Davis.

The Geneva and West Aurora programs were sensational all spring, and the schools were further awarded.

Andrews advanced in the triple jump for the Blackhawks; Allie Pace is in prime position for the pole vault for Geneva.

The Vikings' 3,200 relay also had a career day behind Kelly Whitley, Megan Heuer, Kelly Shogren and Rachel Hammond to advance for a second straight year.

Lizzy Hynes' quest for an improbable double retained its vitality as the St. Charles East star took first in her 1,600 heat.

"After the first lap it played out very well," said Hynes, timed in 5:03.89. "I didn't want to have to extend myself."

Norville ends her prep career with finals showdowns in the triple jump and 300 hurdles.

In the middle tier of the first-year three-class state tournament, Kaneland and Rosary are well-represented in the finals.

Kaneland standout Lindsay Gierke qualified for three finals in Class 2A - the 100 hurdles and dash as well as the 300 hurdles - for a second straight year.

Andie Strang also anchored the Knights' 3,200 relay, only to snag a second finals invite in the open 800.

Jordan Pinkston is alive in the pole vault for Kaneland.

Rosary seniors Nora Bowe and Monica English close out their careers today.

English is third in the discus seeks to improve to medal status in the shot put. Bowe has not yet missed in the high jump.

Burlington Central junior Maggie Gannon made the most of her debut appearance at the state girls track and field championship Friday morning at Eastern Illinois' O'Brien Stadium.

Gannon began her day with a blistering anchor leg on the Rockets' 3,200-meter relay, and the distance ace is in prime position in the Class 2A 1,600-meter run after posting the second-lowest time in the three heats with a new personal record of 5 minutes, 11.21 seconds.

"I wanted to make sure I won my heat and put myself in position for (today)," Gannon said.

In the 3,200 relay, Central lowered its season best by 13 seconds to cruise into the finals.

"We're very excited about that race," Gannon said. "The girls (Katie Puccio, Hannah Williams and Markelle Turk) put me position (to win). It was all due to them."

Central won the second heat of the event, which also featured Hampshire qualifying its quartet in the third heat, in a time of 9: 41.11.