

Fertig finishes ninth in the shot put

By Kevin Gordon

COLUMBUS — Erik Fertig finished ninth in the shot put Friday morning during the Division II state track and field championships.

Fertig's best throw covered 50-10, just 2½ inches shy of All-Ohio honors.

The top eight finishers at state receive all-state recognition and are recognized on the awards stand.

Fertig entered the state meet with a personal-best of 53-4¼ earlier this season, the ninth-best throw in Division II this season. His regional distance of 53-1¾ was the fifth-best of the state qualifiers.

"It definitely leaves a bit of a sour taste in my mouth," Fertig said.

Fertig was eighth after the preliminaries and fell to ninth during the finals.

The athletes receive three throws during the prelims, with the top nine distances earning three more throws in an attempt to improve their distance.

Fertig appeared to have a throw in the range of 54 to 55 feet on his second attempt in the finals, but his foot hit the toeboard by inches and was ruled a foul.

"That was disappointing to foul on that one," Fertig said.

Fertig was competing at state for the first time, although the 6-foot, 220-pounder was at the meet as an alternate last season and won the state Division II-III hammer throw there the last two seasons.

"I'm happy I was able to get a few throws in, and I had a good time, throwing against some really good guys," Fertig said. "I learned a lot, being my first experience throwing at state. It was good to get some experience under my belt."

Bellaire junior Cole LaRoche won the shot with a distance of 55-11, while Perkins junior J'Andre Jackson was second at 55-5, and Steubenville senior Zach Akey was third at 53-10 ½.

"I've progressed in terms of how I approach the event from a mental aspect," Fertig said. "I was able to get psyched up for the events and make some big throws. I've improved my technique a lot this season. I'm excited for next year."

Fertig returns to the ring Saturday morning for the discus competition. He's third in the Division II this season with a distance of 166-9. His regional distance of 160-1 is fourth among the state qualifiers.

The 4x800 relay team of senior Billy Barker, juniors Alex Boyer and Jack Chappuies, and senior Daniel Trombly was 13th in 8:11.60. The time was just off their season best of 8:06.69 in the regional.

The 4x400 relay team of Alex Boyer, Jacob Hahn, Nate McCauley-Benner and Isaac Emahiser failed to make its final, despite a season-best time of 3:24.00 improving its previous best of 3:24.44 at the regional.

