

## Eagles ready for state indoor meet

By Kevin Gordon

Eastwood's boys and girls track and field teams are ready for the showcase event of their indoor season.

The Eagles will compete in the Division II-III state championships Saturday at the SPIRE Institute in Geneva.

They qualified nine individuals and three relay teams for the meet.

The boys qualifiers consisted of five individuals and all three relay teams.

The individual qualifiers were senior Erik Fertig in weight throw and the shot put, junior Austin Kieper in the weight throw, junior Jaden Rayford in the long jump, junior Logan Wendt in the 60-meter hurdles and senior Alex Boyer in the 800.

The qualifying relay teams were:

- 4x800 — Boyer, senior Jack Chappuies, sophomore David Russell and junior Lucas Pease.
- 4x200 — Wendt, senior Jack Arman, junior Nate McCauley-Benner and sophomore Dylan Jump.
- 4x400 — Boyer, Arman, Chappuies and McCauley-Benner.

In the girls meet, four Eagles will compete. They are junior Ashley Hodulik and freshman Ava Kiefer in the weight throw, senior Shaunna Jubenville in the triple jump and freshman Felicia Cassaubon in the long jump.

"This meet is just more experience," boys head coach Brian Sabo said.

"To be in the top 24 is a big deal. Not every school does indoor track and that's cool, but it's still a big deal to qualify for this meet. I love watching our kids compete, and I love watching our kids compete against elite competition. Our goal is the same, to run really hard and compete really hard, and see where we fall."

"To be in a big meet like this, and have an experience that is in a similar format to the (Northern Buckeye Conference) meet and the district meet is something they'll be able to pull from," girls head coach Nikki Sabo said.

Fertig is the defending champion in the weight throw and was second in the shot put last season.

The University of Louisville recruit ranks second in Division II-III and fifth overall in the state regardless of division in the weight throw, and fifth in Division II-III and ninth overall in the shot.

Fertig had his career-best throw in both events earlier this season. He threw 68-5½ in the weight throw and 53-7 in the shot.

Fertig also won outdoor Division II state championships in the discus and the hammer throw in June.

"His goal is to hit a big throw," Sabo said. "He wants to place, and, obviously, he wants to win, but he also wants to hit a big throw."

Also in the field events, Rayford ranks 17<sup>th</sup> in the division in the long jump, 20-1¾; and Kieper is 20<sup>th</sup> in the weight throw, 44-8¼. Wendt is 24<sup>th</sup> in the 60 hurdles, 8.97; and Boyer is 32<sup>nd</sup> in the 800, 2:06.80.

The 4x400 relay is seventh at 3:42.92, while the 4x800 team is 17<sup>th</sup> at 8:53.81 and the 4x200 team is 19<sup>th</sup> at 1:38.25.

"For some, the goal is to try to place," Brian Sabo said. "If we run well, I know how we typically improve over a season, and I'll be excited. It'll tell me what we're capable of at the end of the year."

The state meet ends Eastwood's indoor season. The Eagles start outdoor practice Monday. Their first meet is March 26.

"I'll enjoy this meet because we'll have some young guys competing in a state meet for the first time ... and that's exciting," Brian Sabo said. "It's great to be around the guys again."

"It's a big meet. Sure, they'll be nervous," Brian Sabo added. "But they'll know they've competed against good competition the next time they're in a big meet. That's really valuable. Let's have a PR (personal record), a lifetime best. Let's have our best time which sets us up well for the start of the outdoor season."

In the girls meet, Hodulik is eighth in the state in the weight throw with a distance of 40-3 ½ and Kiefer is 14<sup>th</sup> at 37-9¼.

Also for the Eagles, Jubenville is 13<sup>th</sup> in the triple jump, 30-¾; and Cassaubon is tied for 35<sup>th</sup> in the long jump, 14-10.

"They'll go after PRs this weekend," Nikki Sabo said.

Eastwood has a young team this season, and returns only five athletes (three seniors, two juniors) who competed in the majority of the team's big meets last season.

"The majority of the people who did indoor this season were freshmen which has never happened before," Nikki Sabo said. "That's very exciting. To have those experiences at a high school meet, to already have an idea of what to expect going into the season, it's been beneficial."

"The freshmen have been in the weight room, too," Nikki Sabo added.

"They've been attacking the weight room, showing up for indoor practices, meets, giving us an optimistic feel for the start of the season."

All three relays and the 13 individual events at the state meet will have 24 entrants.

The top 40 performers in each event are eligible to compete at state, with only 24 entries in each event. Athletes in the top 40 in each event who planned on competing at state had to declare their intention to do so by 6 p.m. Tuesday.

When the declaration period closed, the top 24 performers remaining in each event earned a spot in the state meet. Athletes whose schools don't recognize indoor track, even as a club sport, are ineligible to compete in the state meet. Some athletes don't compete at state because of other commitments. Indoor track is a club sport at Eastwood.

The Eagle girls had two individuals and two relay teams finish in contention for the state meet by finishing in the top 40.

- Triple jump: Cassaubon, 35<sup>th</sup>, 25-11½.
- 60 hurdles: junior Shelby Getz, 35<sup>th</sup>, 10.36.
- 4x200 relay: Getz, Jubenville, freshman Mikayla Hoelter and senior Brianne Kwiatkowski, 40<sup>th</sup>, 2:00.19.
- 4x400 relay: Hoelter, freshmen Maisy Stevenson and Megan Graham, and Cassaubon, 31<sup>st</sup>, 4:45.45.

The meet is conducted by the Ohio Association of Track and Cross Country Coaches. Indoor track isn't sanctioned by the Ohio High School Athletic Association.

"They do a good job of making this a prestigious-type meet. That's really neat," Brian Sabo said.

The field events and the running events both start at 3:45 p.m.

## **MEET INFORMATION**

Updates will be available at: <https://twitter.com/EastwoodTF>

Meet program and live results: <https://lightningtiming.com/>

Live coverage: <http://live3.milesplit.com/#/event/7891-2019-oatccc-indoor-state-championships>