

## Boys have solid day at state indoor meet



By Kevin Gordon  
GENEVA — Erik Fertig enhanced his already impressive résumé Saturday. The Eastwood High School senior finished second in the weight throw and sixth in the shot put during the Division II-III state indoor track and field championships at the SPIRE Institute. Fertig threw 66-6½ in the weight throw and 50-10¼ in the shot, although both distances were shy of his career bests

earlier this season. His bests are 68-5½ in the weight throw and 53-7 in the shot.

"Two podium finishes, not a lot to be sad about," Fertig said. "But definitely not the throws I wanted. You want to throw PRs (personal records) in the biggest meet of the year."

The top eight finishers in each event at state were recognized on the awards stand. They also earned All-Ohio recognition.

Fertig qualified for state in the weight throw every season. He was the defending state champion in the event after finishing fourth as a sophomore and 12<sup>th</sup> as a freshman. He also was second in the shot last season.

"He's our leader, and he's had a good career," Eastwood coach Brian Sabo said.

Fertig was the runnerup in the weight throw to Van Buren junior Tyler Arbaugh, who won with a distance of 68-10.

In the shot, Fertig moved from eighth to sixth during the finals. His best throw during the preliminaries covered 49-4¾.

The 24 state qualifiers were divided into two flights of 12 at state. They received three throws each during the prelims, with the top nine distances advancing to the finals where they received three more throws in an attempt to improve their distance.

"I had the jitters early on in the meet, but I settled in and had some better throws later in the series," Fertig said.

Fertig likes where he's at heading into the Eagles' outdoor season. Practice begins Monday, with the team's first meet set for March 26.

The University of Louisville recruit is the defending Division II state outdoor champion in the discus and the hammer throw, and he finished ninth in the shot at the meet.

Fertig will compete in the New Balance Nationals indoor meet in New York City this weekend.

The hammer throw isn't a state-sanctioned event, but a state championship is held the day after the outdoor OHSAA meet.

"I'm in a good spot going into the outdoor season," Fertig said. "I've really improved my strength, and my technique isn't too shabby. I need to get the rust off with the discus, but I'm in a good spot with my strength and the shot."

Eastwood's Austin Kieper also had a strong day in the weight throw. The junior had a career-best throw of 46-3 for 17<sup>th</sup> place.

He competed in the weight throw for the first time this season, and had career-best throws in each of the team's four meets.

"He's had a great indoor season," Sabo said. "He took a risk to go after a PR today, and I appreciate that because that's who we are."

### **Relays run well**

All three Eastwood relay teams ran well, highlighted by an eighth-place finish by the 4x400 team of seniors Alex Boyer and Jack Chappuies, junior Nate McCauley-Benner and senior Jack Arman. The team had a time of 3:37.54, beating its previous best by 6.38 seconds to earn a spot on the awards podium. Chaney won the relay in 3:29.72, while Dayton Dunbar was second in 3:30.18, and Heath was third in 3:30.89.

"It's the last event, and you want to leave with a smile on your face, seeing some great effort, and that's what we saw," Sabo said. "I'm very excited for those guys because they run hard and deserve that moment."

"I told them right before the race, 'I don't care if you place, but I want you to have that look in your eye, and you warm up and you compete hard,' and they were determined," Sabo said. "I appreciate that, and they came close. They fought and ran hard. They made all of the guys who have run the 4x400 at Eastwood proud."

The 4x800 team of Boyer, Chappuies, sophomore David Russell and junior Lucas Pease just missed a spot on the podium. The team was 10<sup>th</sup> in 8:37.57, 3.09 seconds shy of eighth place. But Eastwood's time still was 16.24 seconds faster than its previous best.

"Those guys went out hard and ran well," Sabo said.

The 4x200 team of junior Logan Wendt, Arman, sophomore Dylan Jump and McCauley-Benner was 21<sup>st</sup> in 1:39.88, just off its previous best of 1:38:25.

"We were happy to be here," Sabo said. "I wanted to see them run, and it was great to see some of the younger guys run here."

### **Boyer, Wendt compete individually**

Boyer was 15<sup>th</sup> in the 800 in 2:06.13, and Wendt was 17<sup>th</sup> in the 60 hurdles in 9.03.

Boyer's time beat his previous best of 2:06.8. He had a physical demanding day, running the 4x800 relay at 4:15 p.m., followed by the 800 at 6:55 p.m. and the 4x400 relay at 8:15 p.m.

"He just works hard," Sabo said. "You know you're always going to get great effort. That's not the time he wanted, but you can't fault him because he ran three really hard races against great competition. He always gives great effort, and you appreciate that."

Wendt just missed his personal best in the hurdles which is 8.97. He ran the hurdles just 15 minutes after his leg of the 4x200 relay.

"I'm happy with him, and that's what we need from him," Sabo said. "I was really impressed with him. We need that out of him — I know I'm tired, but I'm going to go out and run hard."

### **Indoor season wrapup**

The state meet completed a solid indoor season for the Eagles, whose first outdoor meet is March 26.

"I loved the looks and the effort, and what we did today," Sabo said. "This is what we were looking for to set us up for the spring season. This is great. We had more reps (repetitions), gained more confidence today. It lets you know where we're at, and we're at a good place in a lot of events."

"We use the indoor season to get in shape and race a little bit. We got a lot of good work in today. It's good to compete, to get in that competition mindset, and that we can be good in certain events. It gives you confidence."

Complete results are available at: <https://lightningtiming.com/>