

2005 State...



News-Messenger/Diane Cebula

ELON SIMMS of Fremont Ross, second from right, competes during a recent track meet in the 110-meter hurdles. Simms is one of many area athletes competing in the state track meet at Jesse Owens Memorial Stadium in Columbus today.

One hurdle left to clear

State track meet
last stop of year
for area athletes

By MATTHEW HORN
Sports Writer

If not for a seemingly innocent run-off for a spot on the 3,200-meter relay as a freshman, Kelly Gephart may not be going to Columbus in the Division II 1,600 this season.

The Oak Harbor junior came into the Rocket track program as a sprinter but will undoubtedly depart as one of the better distance runners in the state.

"Had she lost that run-off who knows if she would have switched to distance events," Oak Harbor coach John McKittrick said.

Gephart also advanced to Columbus in cross country this year — only her second in the sport — and finished 49th despite a stress fracture in her foot.

Elon Simms advanced in the Division I 110 hurdles and 800, and Adam Wilhelm qualified in the 200 and 400 for Fremont Ross. Each will also run on an 800 and 1,600 relay with Julius Salgado.

Austin Young rounds out the 1,600 and Andre Velez was on the qualifying 800 entry for Ross.

Wilhelm has qualified for state all four of his years.

"I kind of feel like the old man of the team," he said. "I can share my experiences with the guys on the relays and maybe calm their nerves a little. I won't be as nervous because I know what it's all about. I'll be able to calm us down and get us ready beforehand."

Simms had not run the 800 until midway through the current season and set a school record at regionals.

"It's exciting to have him healthy in four events at state," Wilhelm said of Simms. "He adds a lot of depth. A top three finish (in the 800) is a possibility.

I was kind of shocked how he just came out under 2 minutes right away. You could almost see it early on that he was going to get that record. If he does what he has to do mentally I think he can get on the podium. It takes a good athlete to start in an event they've never run and be

as good as he's been this year."

Simms and Wilhelm will likely keep a close eye on Freddie Lenix and Jeff See as the Little Giants are looking for a top three team finish this weekend.

Lenix of Glenville was second in the 100 and third in the 200 (21.67), and was also part of a winning 800 and 1,600 relay (3:18.27). The 800 relay set a meet record at 1:25.30. See of Middletown was first in the 800 (1:54.33) and 1,600 and a member of the winning 3,200 relay.

He helped a 1,600 relay advance to the finals but was replaced by Andre Amos as the new four-some won the event in 3:22.59.

Jared Martin qualified in both Division II hurdle events and is a member of 800 and 1,600 relays that advanced to Columbus, and Meghan Gill won the high jump at regionals for Clyde. Erik Birkholz, Jeremy Liska and Andy Sherman rounded out the 800, and Birkholz, Liska and Ryan Hackenbush comprise the 1,600.

Bellevue's Greg Keys qualified in the 110 hurdles — a tenth of a second off the regional record — and as a member of 400 and 800 relays. Keys will only run on the 800 relay if the entry makes the finals and won't run in the 400 (replaced by Jordan Manlet) because of a hamstring injury incurred a month and a half ago at Toledo Central Catholic which he tweaked at regionals.

Keys is 26-1 in the 110s the last two years with his only loss coming at state last season in a race he led until the final hurdle.

"I'm trying to stay low key," said Keys, who has a friendly rivalry with Martin. "I got too big a head last season and things caught up with me."

Christian Butz, Cody Koselke and Matt Tallman round out the qualifying 800 relay, and Koselke, Butz and Derrick Berberick comprise the rest of the qualifying 400. Berberick also qualified in the 100 and Lee Miller in the pole vault.

Kelly Beamer qualified with a meet record pole vault and Emily Mays advanced in the high jump for the Lady Red.

Derek Schleha advanced in the 800 and will run on the Division III 1,600 relay with Tyler Rosenberger, Chase Ault and Justin Kassner for Woodmore.



News-Messenger/Diane Cebula

JARED MARTIN of Clyde races to the finish of a 110 hurdles competition earlier this year. Martin will represent Clyde in four events at this weekend's state track meet in Columbus.

Jeremy Schroeder, Austin Dean, Rosenberger and Schleha also comprise a qualifying 3,200 relay.

Mark Pittman advanced in the pole vault, Alexis Marquette moved on in the 400 and defending state champion sophomore Emily Pendleton in the discus for the Wildcats.

Gibsonburg's Rebekah Paul qualified in the 400.

Jimmy Sisi qualified in the 400 and long jump for Old Fort. Lisa Ortiz moved on in the 3,200, and Ortiz, Becky Miller, Morgan Magers and Kelsey Molyet qualified in the 3,200 for the Stockaders.

Ron Diaz won the long jump at regionals and Kyle Dussel advanced in the 800 for Lakota. Jessie Naderer and Cami

Wasserman qualified in the pole vault.

McKittrick has been thoroughly impressed with Gephart's receptiveness to change in her Rocket career. "She's put herself in a good position by working hard, changing events and not just doing what's easy for her," he said. "Sometimes kids don't want to move around and find an event they're best suited for. She wanted to find the event she was really good at and she found it."

"With Kelly it's really nice to see somebody who works so hard and deserves the chance have it pay off. She's worked very hard. She's pretty driven and pretty special."

See STATE, B2

State track begins today in Columbus

Continued from B1

"This is what she talks about at the dinner table."

And it would certainly be reasonable for a healthy Gephart to make the podium in the 1,600. Gephart narrowly missed advancing out of regionals in the event last season.

"A lot of kids who get down there are just happy to be there," McKitrick said. "I don't think for Kelly it will be about just being there. First and foremost she wants to make the podium. I think right now she has a really good chance."

Gephart ran a 4:15 at regionals to finish fourth. Four girls were bunched together with approximately 200 meters remaining and Gephart pulled away but ultimately spent herself just a bit too early according to McKitrick.

"We're hoping she goes down and competes well," McKitrick said. "The

mile is a head game and a battle for position early on. And a battle for the right spot at the end."

McKitrick said Gephart's season times group her with about six girls just behind the top three in the state.

McKitrick said he has been approached by countless people telling him how enjoyable it is to watch Gephart run — which isn't necessarily often a compliment issued to track athletes.

"She's 4-foot-11 if you stretch her out and barely 90-plus pounds," McKitrick said. "It's a lot of fun to watch her race. Some girls are stepping on her heels with their long legs and she'll find herself boxed in. She has to run smarter and more aggressive and is fun to watch. Everybody who sees her run says she's fun to watch. Hopefully some girls feel otherwise this weekend."

Locals have success at state

Pendleton repeats as discus champ

By MATTHEW HORN
Sports Writer

COLUMBUS — When the public address announcer at Jesse Owens Memorial Stadium on the campus of Ohio State University announced Woodmore's Emily Pendleton as the young lady who repeated as Division III discus champion, there was no emphasis placed on the word "young."

There was no reason to.

Pendleton won the discus title for a second consecutive season with a throw of 145-feet, 2-inches — not all that impressive by the sophomore's standards — to win by almost six feet.

Pendleton said she was relieved with the result.

"It's over with," she said. "The second time is over with and I'm ready to enjoy the rest of the meet."

The rest of the meet included Woodmore's Mark Pittman tying for fifth in the pole vault finals by clearing 13 feet and freshman Alexis Marquette finishing ninth in the 400 preliminaries for the Wildcats. Jeremy Schroeder, Austin Dean, Tyler Rosenberger and Derek Schleale were 13th in the 3,200 relay finals, and Schleale, Rosenberger, Chase Ault and Justin Kassnel were seventh in the first heat of the 1,600 prelims.

Adam Wilhelm was second in his 400 prelim heat and third in his 200 heat to qualify for today's finals in each event for Fremont Ross.

Wilhelm, Elon Simms, Austin Young and Julius Salgado were third in their 1,600 relay prelim to advance to today. Wilhelm and Simms had an un-



News-Messenger/Ben French

ADAM WILHELM of Fremont Ross competes during Friday's state track meet at Jesse Owens Memorial Stadium in Columbus. Wilhelm advanced to three state finals today in Division I while Woodmore's Emily Pendleton successfully defended her discus title in Division III.

characteristically bad exchange in the 800 relay.

"I'm really disappointed about the (800 relay)," Wilhelm said. "It was a bad exchange between Elon and I. We dropped the baton. I'll take the blame. I'm pretty sure we would have made the finals."

Wilhelm, who placed in the 200 and 400 at state last year, was excited about his other

three events however.

"I'm happy we made it out in the other three," he said. "I'd like to be No. 1 (in both opens). I'll have to drop times. We just ran for lanes (Friday). I think I can get the guys that beat me (Friday)."

Despite the error, Wilhelm said Friday was more successful for the Little Giants than last year's first day.

"I'm more relaxed this year," he said. "I definitely think we were more successful this year than last but we'll have to bring our best runs (today)."

Wilhelm said running four races in Columbus in a short time frame is taxing.

"It was pretty challenging (Friday)," he said. "There wasn't much of a break without the distance races. (Today) should be a little easier. It's always harder on days you run prelims."

Simms was seventh in his 110 hurdle prelim heat and didn't advance for the Little Giants.

"The hurdles weren't so great," Simms said. "But coming off an injury (last year) it's a great experience down here."

Simms has one of the four fastest times in today's 800 and the other three kids must also run in the 1,600.

"That's a great advantage," he said. "They'll be tired."

Simms has been impressed with Salgado throughout the season.

"He's been a great help," Simms said. "Nobody improved more. He impressed a lot of us. Without him I don't think we'd be here (Friday) in the relays."

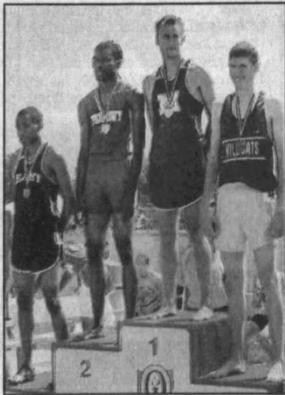
Bellevue's Greg Keys won his 110 hurdle prelim heat (14.40 seconds) and Clyde's Jared Martin was second in his heat as both advanced.

Keys and Steve Love, who won Martin's heat, are the only athletes to defeat Martin in the 110s this season and Keys is 26-1 over the last two seasons with the lone setback coming at state last year.

Martin also won the 300 prelims in 38.22 seconds, and he, Erik Birkholz, Ryan Hackenburg and Jeremy Liska were 11th in the 1,600 relay prelims.

See PENDLETON, B2

ELON SIMMS of Fremont Ross, second from left, stands on the podium after finishing second in the 800-meter run Saturday at Jesse Owens Stadium in Columbus. Simms and his Little Giant teammates finished fourth overall in the team standings.



News-Messenger/Matthew Horn

Simms, Ross make statement

By MATTHEW HORN
Sports Writer

COLUMBUS — Fremont Ross coach Cathy Esposito made the right choice.

Six races prior to the Division I state meet in Columbus, Esposito elected to place Elon Simms in the 800-meter run despite pressure from Ohio State University coaches to have him run the 300 hurdles.

And after Simms — who will attend Ohio State on a track scholarship — set a school record in the 800 at regionals the Buckeye coaches issued Esposito an apology.

Then Simms went out and took second in the event (1 minute, 52.51 seconds) as the Little Giants finished the

More State Track

Page B3 | Clyde's Meghan Gill and Jared Martin and Bellevue's Greg Keys win state track championships.

state meet fourth as a team with 24 points Saturday.

Middletown's Jeff See won the 800 as Simms couldn't quite hold on to a substantial lead and Cleveland Glenville captured its third consecutive boys title with 70 points.

"Elon's 800. He was this close to a state championship," Esposito said of what stood out Saturday while holding two fingers close together. "He ran the race seven times in his life. Most people

wait a lifetime to do what he did."

Cleveland St. Ignatius, which was the first team to defeat Ross this season when it did so at regionals, finished second with 37 points. Middletown was third with 28 points.

Adam Wilhelm was second in the 400 (48.12) and fourth in the 200 (22.07) for Ross. Wilhelm, Simms, Julius Salgado and Austin Young were sixth in the 1,600 relay (3:23.51).

"Adam's 400 was probably the best I've seen him run the 400," Esposito said. "He closed really well. It was the best race of his life."

The top eight finishers in each event make the podium.

See WILHELM, B3

Wilhelm finishes second in Division I 400 for Little Giants

Continued from B1

Wilhelm's 400 matched his personal best time.

"I ran strong the first 200 meters but died in the final 100," Wilhelm said. "(Brandon Saine of Piqua) came shooting by me. He was a little stronger at the end. I'm happy with second but I should have been first."

Wilhelm told Esposito he had never been more focused for a race than he was for the 400.

"I wasn't nervous," he said. "I may have been more nervous for a dual meet during the season. I was in the right state of mind."

Wilhelm said he was extremely disappointed with his 200 after finishing third last year. He was the top senior in the state in the 400 this season and was the top athlete in his class in the 400 each of his four years at Ross.

Simms maintained a significant lead for much of the 800.

"I didn't hear anybody behind me for a little bit," Simms said. "I knew it was coming and when he passed me he came by so fast I couldn't react. I just tried to keep pace. The last 5 meters I locked up. I made it in there though."

Simms said his 800 had yet to completely register.

"That was pretty exciting," he said. "It didn't hit me until after the race. My first year running finishing second in the state — I won't take it for granted."

The Little Giants could have very easily finished the meet even higher as a team had the 800 relay not dropped the baton Friday when Simms and Wilhelm botched a handoff.

"You can't make mistakes like that at the state meet," Esposito said. "We weren't discouraged though. You can't let

it carry over. Those boys had never made a comparable mistake. What can you say? Things happen for a reason."

Gephart reaches podium

Oak Harbor junior Kelly Gephart finished eighth in the Division II 1,600 (5:15.89) in her first trip to the state track meet. Gephart just missed qualifying as a sophomore.

"It was incredible," Gephart said of the experience. "The race was so fast."

Gephart was seeded eighth and ran close to her career best 5:15.35 from regionals. In fact, Gephart had never been in the teens prior to regionals.

"I was hoping to do that again. Most of all I am really excited," she said. "I got a taste of state. I came not knowing what to expect. I knew the girls would go out fast."

Gephart intends to return as a senior.

"Come here again and hopefully place a little higher," she said of her goals. "I hope to continue to improve. As a senior, I hope to get into the top four."

Gephart was ecstatic to reach the podium.

"Going into the final 400 meters I tried to count my places," she said. "I passed a few girls and fought at the end. I wasn't sure if I was seventh or eighth. I'm proud of myself."

Jared Martin of Clyde was third in the 110 hurdles (14.59) as Bellevue's Greg Keys won the event. Keys, Christian Butz, Cody Kosek and Derrick Berberick also comprised a 400 relay that wound up third (42.94) to establish a school record.

The Redmen boys were seventh as a team with 19 points as Alliance won with 33.

Bellevue's Emily Mays finished second in the high jump (5-05) to fellow sophomore

Meghan Gill of Clyde. Kelly Beamer was also second in the pole vault (11) for the Lady Red.

Lee Miller was sixth in the pole vault (14-03) for the Redmen.

Ortiz fourth at state

After just missing qualifying for state with a fifth place finish in the Division III 3,200 at regionals last year, Lisa Ortiz of Old Fort was fourth in the event (11:38.77) in Columbus Saturday.

Ortiz is slated to run at Wright State on scholarship.

Gibsonburg's Rebekah Paul was fifth in the 400 (58.08).

Jessie Naderer (10-03) and Cami Wasserman (10) of Lakota were sixth and 10th, respectively, in the pole vault finals.

Jimmy Sisi finished 10th in the high jump (6 feet) finals for the Stockader boys.

Woodmore's Derek Schleas was 11th in the 800 (2:00.76) and Lakota's Kyle Dussel was 14th (2:03.03).

Buckeyes lead Glenville

The Glenville boys won their third consecutive Division I boys title with 70 points. They tied the overall mark with 13 boys championships.

And — as usual — they were led by future Ohio State football players. Last year Ted Ginn Jr. led the team to a second straight title, and Freddie Lenix and Jamario O'Neal headed the group this year.

Lenix was second in the 200 and fourth in the 100. He and O'Neal also ran on winning 400 and 1,600 relays.

Middletown's See, who will run track at OSU with Simms, also won the 1,600 for a third straight year. Ironically, See's teammate Andre Amos forced a disqualification in the 1,600 relay because he interfered with

Simms — forcing him to take the baton facing the wrong way and do a 360 to avoid him.

Ginn is on most people's list for this year's Heisman Trophy. O'Neal comes in as the third rated corner in the nation and Lenix is a top-30 linebacker according to Bucknits.com.

Amos will also attend OSU as the 30th rated wide receiver. Brian Hartline of Canton GlenOak won both Division I hurdle events and will attend OSU as the 31st rated wide receiver.

Brian Robiskie, son of former Browns' coach Terry, was second in the 400 for Chagrin Falls in Division II. Robiskie will also play football for the Buckeyes.

O'Neal is anxious to get on campus for good.

"I can't explain it," O'Neal said of being a Buckeye. "I come down on the 20th (of June) to start working out."

Lenix said becoming a Buckeye has been a life-long dream.

"I'm really excited," he said. "My work for four years paid off and I can live one of my dreams."

O'Neal tried to ignore the extra focus on him due to his football exploits.

"I really don't pay attention," he said. "I don't let it go to my head. I try to stay humble."

Lenix said he will probably be a safety at OSU or maybe play outside linebacker. He also said there was a chance he'd see time at tailback.

Lenix said he likes the positive attention — and the Buckeye's surely do too as the sport programs have been inundated with scandal in the recent past.

"It's something I enjoy," he said. "A lot of people are watching. It's good when people notice the good things. I don't plan on bringing anything negative in."

Track & Field

High School Boys

State Track and Field Results

Division I

Team Standings

1. Cleveland Glenville.....	70
2. Cle. St. Ignatius	37
3. Middletown.....	28
4. Ross.....	24
5. Canton Glen Oak	22.5

400 Dash

1. Brandon Saine, Piqua, 47.85; 2. Adam Wilhelm, Ross, 48.12.

800m

1. Jeff See, Middletown, 1:51.18; 2. Elon Simms, Ross, 1:52.51.

200m

1. Benja'Lan Provitt, Warren G. Harding, 21.52, 4. Adam Wilhelm, Ross, 22.07.

1600 relay

1. Cleveland Glenville 3:16.58, 6. Ross (Austin Young, Adam Wilhelm, Julius Salgado, Elon Simms) 3:23.51.