

2002 State...

Wilhelm dashes his way to state

By **TIMOTHY R. WOLFRUM**
Sports editor

AMHERST — Adam Wilhelm took up the 400-meter dash a month ago.

This weekend, that event will take him to Dayton for the state track-and-field meet.

The Fremont Ross freshman turned in his best time of the season Saturday and snapped up the fourth and final state-qualifying slot in the 400 dash at the Division I regional meet.

"I knew he had it with about 60 meters to go," Ross head coach Cathy Esposito said. "The top four were together, and the fifth guy was coming but I knew he couldn't catch Adam. He was excited."

Wilhelm finished in 49.58 seconds, three-tenths of a second behind third-place Chris Gregg of Perrysburg. Tony Gonzalez of Cleveland St. Ignatius won the event in 49.01 seconds.

Wilhelm switched from running the 100 dash to the 400 dash at the Fremont Invitational on May 11. He won a Great Lakes League championship and finished



WILHELM

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Wilhelm one of 5 frosh at boys Div. I state meet

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second at the Fostoria District. Wilhelm will be one of five freshman boys at the Division I state meet.

"It's almost unheard of to have a freshman make state in the 400," Ross head coach Cathy Esposito said. "That's a race that takes two years to learn how to run. He's smart, so he's learned how to run it quickly."

Wilhelm, Ross's only state qualifier, will compete in the 400 dash semifinals at 10:50 a.m. Friday at Dayton's Welcome Stadium.

If he makes the finals, Wilhelm will run at 10:25 a.m. Saturday.

"I think his goal now is to get to the finals," Esposito said. "I want him to experience what it's like to compete on state championship day. It's unbelievable."

Also Saturday, Ross high jumper Bo Hudson finished sixth with a season-best of 6 feet, 2 inches.

The Ross girls 400 relay team of Keia Irons, Tia Simms, Adrienne Robertson and Delanea Johnson finished seventh in its event with a time of 50.98 seconds.

Robertson finished eighth in the 100 dash in 13.13 seconds.

Stacy Hall competed in two events. She came in 11th in the 1,600 run in 5:31 and 12th in the 3,200 run in 12:05.

Wilhelm to open throttle

Ross freshman aims for finals in first state meet

By TIMOTHY R. WOLFRUM
Sports editor

The 400-meter dash may be a thinking-man's race, but Fremont Ross freshman Adam Wilhelm wants to eliminate strategy when he makes his first appearance at the state meet Friday.

Wilhelm plans to go hard from the gun to the finish line.

It's an approach the sprinter had to learn in the almost four weeks since he took up the event late in the season.

State Track

"Basically, I just had to learn to run the backstretch as hard as I can," Wilhelm said. "You can't really get too far behind at the beginning. You've got to stay with the pack."

Wilhelm finished fourth Saturday at the Amherst Regional in a personal-best 49.58 seconds, nabbing the final state-qualifying spot and becoming the only freshman 400 runner to advance to Dayton. His regional time

places him 13th out of the 16 Division I state qualifiers.

The Division I 400 dash semifinals are scheduled for 10:50 a.m. Friday at Welcome Stadium. The top eight semifinal runners will advance to the finals at 10:25 a.m. Saturday. Wilhelm will run in the second heat along with Roger Bacon's Cedric Powell, whose regional time of 47.9 is the best in the field.

Wilhelm admits he used to coast through the first 200 meters and turn on the jets for the final 200. But on Fri-

day, he'll be running against the state's elite quarter-milers.

"He can't do that. He knows that," Ross head coach Cathy Esposito said. "It was real easy to do that against weaker competition. But if we wants to make it into the finals, he'll have to run hard the whole race."

See WILHELM, B3



News-Messenger/Ben French

ADAM WILHELM
of Fremont Ross
works out
Wednesday at the
Ross track in
preparation for
Friday's Division I
state track meet
in Dayton. Wilhelm
will compete
in the 400-meter
dash at 10:50
a.m. Friday. He is
one of five fresh-
men boys in the
Division I meet.

Wilhelm tackles state's best in 400 dash

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Wilhelm's state goal is to advance to the finals. Although he has run at big meets before, Wilhelm expects the atmosphere in Dayton to enhance his performance.

"You've kind of got to run scared. It helps me to run faster when I'm a little bit nervous, anyway," Wilhelm said. "The crowd will definitely push me along a little bit. I hear it's a fast track, so hopefully I can PR."

Although neither Wilhelm nor his coach want to look beyond this

year's state meet, Friday's race will be good experience for the future.

"Once you experience that exhilaration of being at the state meet, it gets a little bit easier every time," Esposito said. "But I really do believe he's got a good shot at making it into the finals."

Wilhelm runs 13th; W'more advances

DAYTON — Fremont Ross freshman Adam Wilhelm saw his season come to an end Friday when he finished 13th in the 400-meter dash.

Wilhelm came in 7th in the second of two heats with a time of 50.51 seconds. He was one of five freshmen to compete in the Division I boys meet.

In Division II, the Woodmore girls 1,600 relay team continued its success by finishing fourth in its heat with a time of 4:04.98. The team of Kori Slates, Catie Lavigne, Danielle Noe and Amanda Weidner will run in the state finals today.

"I'm pretty pleased with where we are," Slates said. "We we're just trying to make the finals. Now we know we can do it."

Slates said she didn't expect to make it even this far.

"We're going to have to make new goals tonight (Friday) for tomorrow (Saturday)," Slates said.

The four runners all remarked on their nerves heading into the race.

"The states are the most nerve-racking," Lavigne said. "I got so nervous because I want to do good."

Oak Harbor's Jeanne Osborne competed in the 100 hurdles. She tripped on a hurdle and did not complete the race.

— *News-Messenger reports*