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State meet's second day filled with medals for area athletes

By **CHRIS VOLOSCHUK**

Fairview sophomore Tyson Crandall didn't win the boys Division II 800-meter run on June 4, but it didn't matter.

As soon as Crandall crossed the finish line at Jesse Owens Memorial Stadium in Columbus, he raised both arms high in the air, as if to let everyone in attendance at the Ohio State University venue know he'd arrived.

His time of 1:55.85 set a new personal-best by a second, maintained his status as the second-fastest 800 runner in school history and served as one of the 25 fastest times in the state, regardless of division, this season.

In addition to a spot on the state meet podium, he also bested the 1:56.44 standard required to qualify for the upcoming New Balance Outdoor Nationals meet in Philadelphia June 16-19.

"I know I didn't win, but just coming in here I wanted to walk away with All-Ohio and then I wanted to get the New Balance Outdoor standard," Crandall said. "I ran 1:55 and I got it, so I was just so excited."

Crandall fashioned a breakthrough spring, recording the fastest 800 time in the area in any division at 1:56.61. He won a Great Lakes Conference championship in the event and came out of a loaded regional meet at Youngstown Austintown-Fitch as the 5-seed at state.

In Columbus, he was the second-youngest participant in the race, right after Tontogany Otsego freshman Nathan Strahm.

"It sets me up well for the future," Crandall said. "But at the end of the day, you never know what situation you'll be in going forward. I had to take the opportunity at hand and I over-delivered. I couldn't be more proud."

Crandall is one of many promising distance runners in the Warriors boys program who also competes in the 4x800 relay and runs cross country in the fall. He hopes his state placement will help the team continue to trend upward.

"We've always been a team that might get to the state level, but we haven't done well at the state level," he said. "Hopefully, while I'm here, I'm looking to change that and make our team a team that can annually come here and book hotel rooms in Columbus."

"Retiring" on top

With a final flourish in her signature event, North Ridgeville senior Gemma Kilgore called it a career on June 4.

Her school's record holder in the 400 meters, Kilgore advanced to the finals on June 3 with a personal-best time of 55.63 seconds – the second-best time recorded in the Division I race. In the final, she took third in 56.37 while

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battling a head cold.

"It was a lot of pressure (in the race), but I learned to handle it," Kilgore said. "I had to just push (the last 100 meters), give everything I had. I cannot even move my legs. I really struggled with the heat, too, which makes everything too loose for my liking."

Though she possesses the speed and ability to compete at the collegiate level, Kilgore said that the high school state meet would be her final one. She'll attend Ashland University in the fall to study early childhood education and hopes to one day teach abroad.

She certainly left on a high note.

"It's been a very long, very grueling (career), but I made it. I'm happy it's over. I've been in it for forever," she said. "I think I've set a pretty good example for future 400 runners at school, just with the way I run it, the way I end and the way I train for it. I hope North Ridgeville gets more 400 runners. It's not a fun race and not many people want to run it. But maybe I can be a role model for younger girls."

Sam's sendoff

Rocky River senior Sam Coleman was having trouble wrapping her head around her future following an impressive third-place finish in the girls Division I 1,600 on June 4.

She'd just completed the final race of her decorated distance running career in 4:56.75, nearly three seconds faster than her regional time from the week before. And she even competed against a pair of her future college teammates in Aurora's Morgan Schmidt and Whitehouse Anthony Wayne's Ana Karmol.

Next season, Coleman will be living in Columbus on a more full-time basis as a student-athlete running track and cross country at Ohio State. She'll head there with some momentum, having finished five spots higher in the mile than she did at the same event last year.

"It's really cool," Coleman said. "I was having trouble processing it, but then I saw my OSU coach and was like, I want to go. I forgot this is where I'm going to be running the next few years, but it was really cool."

Like so many cross country and track meets this season, Coleman was matched up against a friendly rival in Westlake sophomore Sarah Peer, who took second in 4:56.33. In the same race at the Great Lakes Conference meet last month, Peer and Coleman placed first and second, respectively.

During the league's cross country championship in October, it was the same result. On occasion, the pair have also ran against Olmsted Falls junior Katie Clute, though she opted to skip the 1,600 in favor of running the 3,200 at state.

"Running with Katie and Sam has been an honor," Peer said. "They're top runners in the whole entire state, and it's been so nice to have that for all the conference meets and dual meets. It's pushed me to get to where I am today. There's been times where I was tired or ready to stop, and I'll look behind me and (Coleman's) there, and it's oops, got to go. It's helped me get better this season."

At state, they both finished behind Morgan Monesmith of Shaker Heights Hathaway Brown (4:53.9).

"I've loved racing with Sarah," Coleman said. "It's been amazing. She's been a great person to target, even though I know most of the time I'll just die by the end. It was really



Photo by Chris Voloschuk

Fairview sophomore Tyson Crandall celebrates after finishing fifth in the boys 800-meter run at the Division II state track and field meet in Columbus on June 4. He is the second-fastest 800 runner in his school's history.

nice to have her in the conference this year."

Shelby leaps to podium

Adonis Shelby took some advice from his friends on the Westlake girls track team and let loose in the Division I boys long jump.

The Demons senior closed his high school career with a fifth-place finish, his top distance covering 22 feet, 5.75 inches in his second finals attempt. The mark set a new personal record by less than an inch.

"The girls team sent a lot of people out here, and they told me don't take anything for granted," Shelby said. "Teams or people come out of nowhere when the competition gets high. So give it your all at all times and don't settle or expect anything."

It took him some time to settle in while competing against the best long jumpers from around the state. He admitted to being a little shocked when eventual champion D.J. Fillmore of Licking Heights led off the event by leaping 24-4, setting a clear standard right away.

"I'd never seen anybody jump 24 feet in my life, so that's when I knew the competition here was at a different level, and it's a lot," Shelby said.

But after his second jump of the day cleared 21-8.25 and got him into the finals, he was locked in. His first finals jump went 21-11.75, then he secured a spot on the podium on his next attempt. He fouled on his final jump, but it didn't hurt him in the end.

"I got nervous at first," he said. "I was like, wow, this is what I have to go up against, I don't know how I'm going to do. But then it gave me motivation. If they're jumping well on this stage, then why can't I? I have something to prove to myself, so why not go out and see how I can do."

Eagles place on day two

A rough start to the Division I meet on June 3 gave way to a strong finish on day two for members of the Avon track and field team.

Junior Hunter Maxey claimed eighth place in the pole vault by clearing 14 feet on June 4, while the 4x100-meter team of juniors Tommy Ptacek and Drew Lindsay and Tim Conwell and Colin Kaufmann battled to seventh against a loaded field (42.17).

The relay run served as a bit of redemption after characteristic 42.37-second finish in the semifinal that narrowly qualified the foursome for the ninth-and-final in the next day's championship race.

Running in the unfavorable outside Lane 9 as a result, the Eagles managed to gain ground on their competitor Lindsay speeding through the final 100 meters to the finish.

"It's what we were aiming for," Kaufmann said. "Yes, we put up a time that was okay, but we had to get a really good time because these other guys are crazy. All we wanted was to be the top in the state, and we got seventh in that and it's great to be here and enjoy the moment."

It was an especially welcome finish for Kaufmann, who became the first athlete in school history to qualify for in four events. On June 3, he ran semifinals in the 100, 4x100 and 4x200, with only the 4x100 team advancing.

Kaufmann and Conwell attended their graduation on June 4 before competing at the state meet over the weekend. Kaufmann will soon be making the Ohio State campus his home, as he will join the Buckeye football team as a preferred walk-on this season.

Final attempts

Some area athletes finished up standout seasons with a podium trip on June 4.

In Division I girls pole vault, North Ridgeville's Veronica Waugaman, another soon-to-be Buckeye, finished 14th, clearing 11-6. Avon sophomore recorded a top 50 finish of 52-5 in the Division I boys shot put – a top-50 distance in the state – but finished 10th overall, just one spot outside the final round.

Also in the field, Westlake junior Macy Brennan was 14th in the Division I girls discus throw (112-9), and Avon Lake's Matt Henry was 13th in the Division I boys 800 (1:57.4).

The Collective

In the end, Pickerington Central won the Division I team championship with 31 points, edging Powell Elementary (29) and Orange (30) and Loveland (26). St. Ignatius was second with 28 points, performing area team, tying Toledo Whitmer for 15th.

Gahanna-Lincoln scored 47 points to win the Division I girls meet, followed by Westerville Central (31) and Marietta (29). Jackson (24). In the team's finest-ever finish, Westlake's Liberty Township Lakota East for sixth (20).

Dayton Oakwood won the girls Division II meet with 47 points, followed by Akron Buchtel (39) and Cincinnati Woodridge (38). Cleveland Glenville was the top boys team scoring 45 points. Keystone was second with 35.

Crestline Colonel Crawford was the Division I boys champion (44), while Creston Norwayne was tops in the boys meet (40).

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of thousands at the Ohio State University track, she wound up nearly 14 seconds faster than her seed time of 10:42.35.

Under the guidance of Bulldogs coach Rae Alexander, Clute, the Southwestern Conference, Amherst District and Findlay Regional champion this season, has used detailed training to her advantage while leaving her competition in the dust.

And it's not just about going on long runs every day. Clute has learned how to manage her workload to stay sharp, whether it's fitting in a post-run snack or simply getting a good night's sleep.

"I do whatever she tells me to do, and when she tells me to go hard, I go as hard as I can," Clute said of Alexander. "But when she tells me to do something easy, I do my best to do it easy. I love running, so that definitely helps. None of it feels

like a job or anything. And I love working with my teammates to help get better."

Clute was slated to run the mile about an hour before the two-mile, but opted out to focus on the longer race, which she considers her best event.

At its start, she was paired with friend and Bulldogs teammate Lillie Katsaras, a senior who went on to finish fifth in 10:58.6, and took sixth in the same event a year ago. Not long after, Clute and Katsaras were enjoying life on the OHSAA's awards podium.

"I don't think it's really hit yet," Clute said. "I know it's been a goal for a long time, and something I've been working towards this whole year. It's already really cool. The community is very supportive, and I got a lot of 'good luck Katies' and everything, so that was really fun."

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