

Hamstring injury a Mere nuisance

Written by Jim Ecker

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CEDAR FALLS -- Caleb Mere tweaked his right hamstring muscle in practice last month, so the Cedar Rapids Kennedy senior didn't know what to expect at the Mississippi Valley Conference indoor track meet Monday in the UNI-Dome.

He surprised himself.

Mere sailed 22 feet, 1/2 inch to win the long jump on his only jump of the day and his first attempt of the season.

"Really cool," he said. "The first meet of the year, and I haven't jumped that often (in practice). I'm definitely really happy with it."

Mere placed third at the Class 4A state meet last year in the long jump at 21-8 1/2 and also placed third at the Drake Relays at 21-9 3/4, which until Monday was his personal best.

He credited a rigorous workout schedule during the winter for getting him ready for the track season, with intense weightlifting and power squats, although the hamstring injury set him back a little.

"I pulled it about three to four weeks ago," he said. "It pretty much feels stretched out now."

Mere jumped 22-0 1/2 on his first try Monday. He barely scratched on his second attempt, negating a longer effort, then elected to pass on his third and fourth tries, knowing he'd already won the event and to avoid the possibility of injury.

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In between, Mere placed third in the 60-meter dash in 6.95 seconds. Luke Toyosi of Cedar Falls won that race in 6.75 seconds.

Metro athletes won four events at the MVC indoor meet. Washington claimed the 4x800 relay in 8:25.75, Linn-Mar captured the shuttle hurdle relay in 35.19 seconds and Matt Stocker of Prairie won the 800 in 1:58.76.

Kyle Stocker, Matt's twin brother, finished second in the 800 in 1:59.51, three-fourths of a second behind Matt. The Stockers helped Prairie win the state cross country title last fall.

Robert Hogg, Etienne Nzoyisaba, Saromo Mugisha and Trevor Luebe ran the 4x800 relay for the Warriors and beat Dubuque Hempstead by nearly two seconds.

Brandon Ophoff, Colton Sanchez, Rami Amr and Mike Keiser ran the shuttle relay for the Lions in 35.19 seconds, clipping Washington's quartet by 18-hundredths of a second.

Mere, 5-foot-9, 155 pounds, plans to run the 100, 200, shuttle hurdle relay and possibly the 400 during the outdoor track season, and has high hopes in the long jump.

"I'd like to get 23 (feet)," he said. "That would be a really good mark. It's out there, but it definitely would be a possibility."

He's been competing in the long jump since the seventh grade at Harding Middle School, where he said his primitive technique at the time was "kind of run and jump."

He's refined his technique at Kennedy and greatly enjoys the event.

"I like the combination of athletic ability (that it takes)," he said. "It's speed and jumping and

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agility."

Kenny Gilmore of Davenport Central won the Class 4A long jump at 22-3 3/4 last year, which was 5 1/2 inches better than Mere.

No team scores were kept Monday. Some of the Metro's top track athletes, including Linn-Mar state champion Kyle Dunn, skipped the MVC indoor meet in order to concentrate on a major meet -- the ISU Indoor Classic -- in Ames on Tuesday.

BOYS MVC INDOOR TRACK MEET

At UNI-Dome

Long Jump -- 1. Caleb Mere (CRK) 22-0 1/2; 2. Dequayvious Martin (WW) 21-9; 3. Jason Millett (WW) 20-3.

High Jump -- 1. Tylor White (WE) 6-0; 2. Shane Hodges (WE) 5-10; 3. Nate Sims (DH) 5-10.

Shot Put -- 1. Derek Norland (ICW) 47-8 1/2; 2. Ross Pierschbacher (CF) 46-6 1/2; 3. Jacob Coble Frakes (CRP) 45-4.

3,200 -- 1. Jakob Stoner (CF) 10:03.30; 2. Jaime Zanate (CF) 10:05.53; 3. Jeremy Kurth (ICW) 10:35.55.

4x800 Relay -- 1. Washington (Robert Hogg, Etienne Nzoyisaba, Saromo Mugisha, Trevor Luebe) 8:25.75; 2. Hempstead 8:27.68; 3. Cedar Falls 8:30.89.

Shuttle Hurdle Relay -- 1. Linn-Mar (Brandon Ophoff, Colton Sanchez, Rami Amr, Mike Keiser) 35.19; 2. Washington 35.37; 3. Dubuque Senior 37.30.

60 -- 1. Luke Toyosi (CF) 6.75; 2. Will Griffin (CRW) 6.88; 3. Caleb Mere (CRK) 6.95.

400 -- 1. Sterling Harris (ICH) 52.08; 2. Anthony Crawley (CRK) 52.30; 3. Rob Hogg (CRW) 53.08.

4x200 Relay -- 1. Waterloo East 1:34.31; 2. Waterloo West 1:34.60; 3. Jefferson 1:35.07.

1,600 -- 1. Tanner Reyhons (CF) 4:39.64; 2. Andrew Halloran (CF) 4:43.16; 3. Adam Streicher (CF) 4:46.11.

60 Hurdles -- 1. Aaron Taylor (WE) 8.56; 2. Jake Losch (CRK) 8.57; 3. Mike Keiser (LM) 8.70.

200 -- 1. Marshall Hill (CF) 22.84; 2. Luke Toyosi (CF) 22.96; 3. Shane Hodges (WE) 23.91.

Medley Relay -- 1. Hempstead 3:50.79; 2. Wahlert 3:51.80; 3. Dubuque Senior 3:56.77.

800 -- 1. Matt Stocker (CRP) 1:58.76; 2. Kyle Stocker (CRP) 1:59.51; 3. Robert Hogg (CRW) 2:02.94.

4x100 Relay -- 1. Waterloo East 45.07; 2. Cedar Falls 45.66; 3. Prairie 45.96.

4x400 Relay -- 1. Hempstead 3:37.60; 2. Kennedy 3:37.99; 3. Iowa City High 3:38.10.

NOTE: No team standings were kept.