

Blue helps J-Hawks enjoy golden meet

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 05 April 2014 18:23 - Last Updated Saturday, 05 April 2014 18:38



Cedar Rapids Jefferson sophomore Jasmine Blue needed a Brink's truck to haul all her gold medals back to school Saturday afternoon.

Blue collected four gold medals and helped Jefferson smash three meet records at the 28th Annual J-Hawk Relays on a mild, sunny day at Kingston Stadium in Cedar Rapids

Blue captured the 100 meter dash and ran on the 4x200 relay, sprint medley relay and 4x100 relay that set new standards for excellence.

"It feels so great," said Blue, a sophomore. "We've worked so hard as a team. Our team has put in so much work and so much effort. And I have, too."

The J-Hawks snapped their own meet record in the 4x200 relay. That's significant, because the Jefferson girls broke the all-time state record in that event last year when they won the 4x200 relay at the Class 4A state meet.

"It just shows that we've worked even harder than last year," said Blue.

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Blue had plenty of assistance on the three relays that set records Saturday. Abbie Ranschau and Lucy Schneekloth also ran on the 4x200, sprint medley and 4x100 relays, while Morgan Meese performed on the 4x200 and 4x100. Madison Ranschau was a member of the sprint medley and also claimed the 100 high hurdles.

"It's amazing how hard these kids are working. It's just really something," said Jefferson Coach Bill Calloway. "They work through the summer and through the winter.

"They've got a mindset that you don't always see from sprinters, I'll tell you that. They're really good kids."

Blue topped the charts with four gold medals, but Calloway has a stable of outstanding young sprinters on his squad. "She's obviously a great competitor, but the other girls are just as fast," he said.



The best weather of the spring helped produce six meet records in 19 events as the athletes were finally able to loosen up and get moving.

The 800 meter run turned into a crowd-pleaser as Linn-Mar All-American Stephanie Jenks sped to victory in 2 minutes, 14.59 seconds in a spirited race with teammate Amber Decker and Abby Caldwell of Waverly-Shell Rock. All three runners eclipsed the meet record of 2:18.86 that had stood since 1999, with Jenks shaving more than four seconds off the old mark.

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Jenks leads the state in the 800 (2:14.59), the 1500 (4:36.23) and the 3000 (9:48.44). The 800 is not her speciality — she prefers longer races — but she was a little too strong for Decker and Caldwell.

"It's good experience," she said about running the half-mile instead of a longer distance. "There are a lot of races that come down to the last lap or two laps or whatever, and you have to be able to kick sometime."

Decker is one of the top 400 and 800 runners in the state. She and Jenks are sophomores, but they rarely race against each other and do not train together. They enjoyed going head-to-head Saturday.

"I like competition," said Jenks. "I'm not a big fan of losing."

Decker was clocked in 2:16.35, just a second off her personal best.

"I love racing against Stephanie," she said. "It's always fun to race against her and see what I can do."

"I knew Steph would bring me through a really good split for 400 and that was the goal for today. I'm really happy. I'm way ahead of where I was last year."

Dubuque Wahlert and Iowa City West tied for the team championship with 110 points. Linn-Mar finished third in the 12-team meet with 77 points, Jefferson placed fourth, Kennedy was seventh, Prairie finished eighth, Xavier was 10th and Cedar Rapids Washington 11th.

Caldwell of Waverly-Shell Rock set a meet record in the 3000, and Dubuque Wahlert set a record in the distance medley.

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Kennedy picked up two victories with Kay Beer winning the long jump (16-4 1/4) and Amarri Waller taking the 200 (27.01).

Rachel Perry of Linn-Mar captured the 400 meter run (1:00.32). Kenzie Soeken of Prairie took the high jump at 5 feet, 2 inches.

TEAM STANDINGS

1. (tie) Dubuque Wahlert 110, Iowa City West 110, 3. Linn-Mar 77, 4. Jefferson 68, 5. (tie) Cedar Falls 52, Solon 52, 7. Kennedy 45, 8. Prairie 37, 9. Waverly-Shell Rock 20, 10. Xavier 8, 11. Washington 6, 12. Marshalltown 4.

WINNERS

Shot put — Shelby Gunnells, Solon, 41-4

Discus — Maddie Nilles, Wahlert, 134-4

Long jump — Kay Beer, Kennedy, 16-4.25

High jump — Kenzie Soeken, Prairie, 5-2

3000 — Abby Caldwell, Waverly-Shell Rock, 10:12.70 (meet record)

4x800 relay — Dubuque Wahlert 10:02.16

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Shuttle hurdle relay — Iowa City West 1:09.21

100 — Jasmine Blue, Jefferson, 13.10

Distance medley — Wahlert 4:21.80 (meet record)

400 — Rachel Perry, Linn-Mar, 1:00.32

4x200 relay — Jefferson (Abbie Ranschau, Jasmine Blue, Morgan Meese, Lucy Schneekloth)
1:44.56 (meet record)

100 hurdles — Madison Ranschau, Jefferson, 15.56

800 — Stephanie Jenks, Linn-Mar, 2:14.59 (meet record)

200 — Amarri Waller, Kennedy, 27.01

400 hurdles — Maddie Heiar, Wahlert, 1:09.47

Sprint medley — Jefferson (Madison Ranschau, Abbie Ranschau, Lucy Schneekloth, Jasmine Blue) 1:50.44 (meet record)

1500 — Ashlynn Yokom, Iowa City West, 4:57.44

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4x100 relay — Jefferson (Lucy Schneekloth, Abbie Ranschau, Morgan Meese, Jasmine Blue)
49.53 (meet record)

4x400 relay — Wahlert 4:05.58