

Evans called 'The Greatest' with 4 golds

Written by Jim Ecker

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DES MOINES - Josh Evans sat in the stands at the state track meet as a scrawny freshman in 2011 and loved seeing the crowd rise to its feet as Shelby Houlihan of Sioux City East set a batch of records in the girls distance races.

He remembers the Public Address announcer kept everyone informed that day as one record after another fell by the wayside.

"I remember thinking, that would be so cool if I could get that some day," Evans said Saturday afternoon. "It's really a dream come true that this happened."

Evans got his share of standing ovations Saturday as he completed one of the most remarkable performances in state meet history with four gold medals, three meet records and an all-time Iowa best in the 1600.

Mike Jay, the Public Address announcer, told the sun-splashed crowd of 8,744 that it was "The best distance performance in Iowa state meet history."

Evans wasn't sure about that, praising some of the other record-setting performances at this year's state meet, but he was the Star of Stars in the distance races with four golds.

Evans capped his weekend by shattering the meet record in the 1600 in 4 minutes, 6.32 seconds, the fastest 1600 ever by a high school runner from Iowa.

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"It's just awesome," he said after catching his breath and getting a drink of water. "I knew this was my last race. I just wanted to give it everything I had left.

"My goal for this race was ... I'd have to be carried off the track."

Earlier Saturday, Evans captured the 800 meter run in 1 minute, 50.98 seconds, missing the meet record by one-hundredth of a second.

He added Saturday's gold medals to the two golds he claimed in the 3200 meter run Thursday and the distance medley Friday, setting meet records in both events.

Evans saluted the crowd for helping him break the state meet record in the 1600 by nearly four seconds. Track fans rose to their feet and cheered him around the Blue Oval at Drake Stadium on his fourth and final lap.

"It was just deafening. They were a great help," he said. "It's awesome that everybody out here is supporting me."



Ed DeLashmutt of Fort Madison is credited with the all-time record in the 1600 meter run, even though he never ran that distance. DeLashmutt ran a 4:05.6 in the mile in 1976, before the 1600 replaced the mile as an official state event. The mile is slightly longer than a 1600, so DeLashmutt remains in the top spot.

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"I can live with that," said Evans.

Evans helped Linn-Mar finish second in the Class 4A team standings with 68 points. The Lions won the 4A title last year, but Waukee claimed top honors this time with 80 points.

Evans finished his high school career with six gold medals at the state track meet, four gold medals at the Drake Relays and one gold medal at the state cross country championship for 11 major championships.

The Kennedy Cougars finished a strong third in the Class 4A standings with 51.5 points. The Cougars did not win any events, but they collected two more silver medals Saturday with a second-place showing in the shuttle hurdle-relay and a runner-up finish in the 4x100 relay.

Kennedy was nudged by Waukee in the shuttle-hurdle relay, but it took a record-setting performance by the winners to do it. The Cougars broke the record in the preliminaries of the shuttle-hurdle relay, but Waukee broke Kennedy's short-lived mark in the finals.

"We came here and competed. That's all we can really ask for," said Kennedy senior Famiek Cook, fighting back tears. "Waukee is a good group. They've been a good group at state for the last two or three years. They come hard every year.

"My guys came hard, they came to battle. And it happened to come up short. "It's not a good feeling," said Cook. "Honestly, this is going to hurt for awhile because this is my last year. But I love my group of guys. I couldn't ask for a better group."

Cook, Derek Jacobus, Marcus Perkins and Shaun Beyer were clocked in 56.20 in the finals of the shuttle hurdle relay, but Waukee got them in a state-record 55.78.

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Perkins, Cook, Jacob Shannon and Jacobus ran a 42.70 in the 4x100 finals, with Waukee also taking that race in 42.37.

Linn-Mar finished third in the 4x100 relay in 42.50 with Austin Flieder, Tristan Freese, Tim Wolfe and Daniel Gorsich.

Jefferson placed fourth in the 4x400 relay in 3:22.67 with Dan Larson, Dylan Chittick, Tavian May and Alphonso Soko. The J-Hawks finished fifth in the 4x100 relay in 43.08 with Soko, Jacob Beaton, Chittick and Nate Karlan.

Quinn Canoy of Marion placed fourth in the Class 3A 110 meter hurdles in 15.01 seconds. Nick Stark of Xavier ran sixth in the Class 3A 100 in 11.47 seconds.

Prairie finished eighth in the Class 4A team standings. Jefferson was 16th.