

Kyle Dunn ends career with 6th state title

Written by Jim Ecker

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DES MOINES -- Kyle Dunn was not excited about track when he entered Linn-Mar High School in 2007. It was just something to do, and the "fragile" freshman kept getting hurt in the long jump.

"I would say I was more excited about baseball and football than I was track my freshman year," he said Saturday.

And the hurdles? Forget about it.

"I wasn't too keen about the idea at first," he said. "I was pretty adamant about sticking with the long jump as a freshman."

He laughs about all that now.

Dunn finished his high school career Saturday as one of the top hurdlers in state history after winning the 110 high hurdles at the Class 4A state meet in Des Moines. That gave him six gold medals during his prep career -- three in the 400 hurdles, two in the 400 meter dash and one in the 110 highs.

"Very impressive," said Linn-Mar Coach Ken Hopkins.

Hopkins and Tim Stamp, Linn-Mar's hurdles coach, turned Dunn into one of the premier track athletes in Iowa and the entire country, and he'll be heading to an elite college program at the University of Arkansas in a few months.

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"Looking at me when I was in the eighth grade and freshman year, it's amazing what my coaches have turned me into," he said. "They kind of molded me into the athlete I am today.

"They put me in there and they kind of forced me to get better and really got me interested."

Dunn ran at the Drake Relays and state meet as a freshman in 2008, which got him hooked on track, and he began winning major titles as a sophomore in 2009. He hasn't stopped since.

Dunn accomplished something special this weekend at the Class 4A meet. According to the IHSA record book, he's the first male athlete from the Metro to win three individual titles at one state meet since Frank Cuhel of Cedar Rapids collected a trifecta in 1924 by winning the 100-yard dash, 120 high hurdles and 220 low hurdles.

Merle Alderman of Marion also won three individual events in 1907 by taking the hammer throw, shot put and discus. That makes Dunn only the third Metro athlete in history to do it and the first in 87 years.

"That's awesome," he remarked. "I know there's been a lot of great athletes before me and a lot of great athletes this year. I just feel honored."

Dunn won the 400 meter dash on Thursday, claimed the 400 hurdles on Friday and took the 110 highs on Saturday, but there were some anxious moments Saturday before his final race. Another athlete accidentally spiked him about 10 minutes before the high hurdles, drawing blood and sending Dunn to the training room for "speed treatment" and a bandage around his right calf.

"Pretty hectic," he said after the race, a red spot seeping through the bandage.

Despite the mishap, he stormed through the high hurdles to finish his prep career with another gold medal. "It's a cherry on top for the weekend," he said.

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Dunn nearly set an Iowa all-time best in the 400 hurdles Friday when he was clocked in 51.04, just .08 of a second behind the prep record of 50.96 set by Dustin Avey of Ames in 1996.

He blazed through the 400 meter dash in 47.56 seconds, won the 110 highs in 14.82 seconds and ran a strong anchor as Linn-Mar placed second in the shuttle hurdle relay Saturday. The Lions finished the state meet in third place with 48 points, with Dunn scoring 38.

"I think overall it was a pretty good weekend for our team," he remarked.

Dunn finished the season in style, but stumbled a few times along the way. He was suspended for three meets this season after being arrested for drunk driving and was disqualified from a race at the district meet for making an inappropriate comment.

He said he hopes people will remember him for his accomplishments, not his mistakes.