

Don't blink! Fast Colby Eagles reach 4A top five



KARIN RASMUSSEN

Senior Kaitlyn Flanagin captured a Class 4A top five state finish in the 300-meter hurdles at Wichita State University's Cessna Stadium last weekend. Flanagin scored four of Colby's 11 state points and also helped the Eagles' 1600-meter relay team earn state medals.

By R.B. Headley
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Running their first relay ever at Wichita State's Cessna Stadium only inspired four words from four Colby Eagles Saturday evening.

No fear.
Run fast.
That's exactly how the Colby quartet performed against Kansas' fastest 4A 4 x 400 relay competition.

Saying the Eagles "flew" around this track would be a stretch - but freshman Sydney Stephens, junior Karly Shull, senior Kaitlyn Flanagin and freshman Brielle McKee certainly went zoom-zoom while capturing their first 4A top five state medals.

"Not a single one of them ran the 4 x 400 last year," coach Gordon Rasmussen confirmed. "Well, Brielle and Sydney might have ran it in middle school, but this is different. They all ran really good legs."

The Colby girls took fifth (4:14.42) and weren't far from passing Wamego (4:14.09) into

fourth place. Baldwin set the fastest pace (4:05.08) followed by Paola (4:06.83) and Wellington (4:08.53).

Rasmussen expects this girls' squad will only get stronger, yet Saturday's finale also capped a fine career for Flanagin. She took home two state medals after also finishing fifth in the 4A 300-meter hurdles (49.05).

Just like all season, Flanagin showed the younger girls how to 'get 'er done' when pressure builds. She placed seventh in Friday's state prelims but hurdled past Chanute junior Regan Aylward and Lindsburg-Smoky Valley freshman Ashley Finney on Saturday.

Flanagin helped that 1600-meter relay also move up from eighth in prelims to fifth overall.

"Kaitlyn's been a very good leader for us all season, very supportive of her teammates," Rasmussen observed. "So that was great to see. She's a nice person."

Those teammates delivered two more medal-winning efforts before this ultimate showdown was done. Freshman Andrea Browne conquered high school's longest

race (3200-meter run) as she earned seventh place with a time of 12:01.15.

Browne was within one second passing four more runners.

Meanwhile, "rookie" classmate McKee claimed eighth place in the 400-meter dash (1:00.77). She joined Flanagin as the Great West Activities League champion Eagles' double state medalists.

Rasmussen wasn't surprised how many of these Colby freshmen finished.

"I knew they were going to be good," he said.

Nor does any Colby coach or fan doubt the talent of junior Hannah Strange.

She soared to a region high jump championship last week, and that 5-2 effort would have reached the state medalists at Wichita. She'll just keep working to improve on a 4-10 effort that placed 13th Friday afternoon.

"Our girls' team is fairly young," Rasmussen concluded about the Eagles. "We'll need to work on our strength, and put in a lot of miles."

Other Colby state track results are featured on today's page.

Colby's Brown medals in his state finale

By R.B. Headley
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Eyes from Kansas City to Colby opened a little wider Saturday morning when senior Beau Brown bolted out of his starting spot in the 4A state 100-meter dash.

"Beau had a really good start with a shot to win it," Colby coach Gordon Rasmussen said.

No Eagles fan should have been surprised. After all, Brown earned state medals as both a freshman and junior with only an injury hindering his sophomore season quest.

He showed no such limitations at Wichita State University's Cessna Stadium. He was going stride-for-stride against 4A's other seven state finalists for awhile.

"Beau tightened up just a little bit," Rasmussen said. "And there's not a lot of difference between first and eighth (in the 100-meter dash)."

Brown didn't slip to eighth, though, and his 11.14 time was still fast enough to claim a place among the final top five. The 1,000-yard football running back was only barely one 10th of a second from edging two more runners.

"It was a great race to watch," Rasmussen concluded. "Beau had



KARIN RASMUSSEN

Oh so close was just about how Colby coach Gordon Rasmussen described the 4A 100-meter state championship dash at Wichita State University. Eagles senior Beau Brown, third from left, wasn't far off the gold medal pace while placing fifth overall (11.14). Brown medaled in three of his four Colby seasons, only missing during his sophomore year due to injury.

a very good career for us. He went out strong."

Brown's medal led the trio of Colby boys who qualified for state. Junior Andrew Taylor reached 11th place in the javelin throw (154-6) while senior Wiatt

Binder took 12th among 400-meter dashers (52.57).

Like Brown last year, Binder also made a strong comeback from injury.

"He was out with a knee injury, but he worked really hard and had

a really good year," coach concluded about the senior distance runner. "He was our most consistent runner for the boys."

A closer look at how Colby Eagles competed against 4A's best appears below.



ANGELA RITTER

Golden Plains junior Macayla Easton ran in the 1A 400-meter state finals at Wichita on Saturday and placed fifth. She's now earned two No. 5 places during her Bulldog track career. Easton recorded a time of 1:02.06 to reach this achievement last weekend.

Golden Plains girl earns fifth at state

By Judy Rogers
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Macayla Easton, a junior at Golden Plains High School, placed fifth in the 2013 KSHSAA State Track Meet on Saturday in Wichita for the second consecutive year.

Easton ran a 1:02.05 in the preliminaries of the 400-meter dash to qualify to run in the finals on Saturday.

In the finals, she ran a 1:02.06 for the fifth-place medal.

"Congratulations to Mac for placing fifth in the Class 1A 400-meter dash," Coach Travis Smith said. "Back to back placer in the event. Great job!"

Easton also placed fifth in the 400 meters at state last year.

Her best time this season was a 1:01.78 at the Hill City Invitational in early May.

However, her best time overall came at the state meet in 2012 when she ran a 1:01.59. Easton will return to the track next season in an effort to break the school record of 59.9 set by Darcie Spesser in 2003.

The only male participant from GPHS to compete at the state meet was Zach Spesser in triple jump.

Zach jumped a 39-5.5 at state. He's improved his distance in the triple jump throughout his high school career jumping 37-3 as a freshman and 40-0 as a sophomore. With a season best of 42'-8.5 at regionals as a junior for a new school record, he would like to break 43-0 as a senior next season.

Also attending the state meet for the first time was Kylie Jones who qualified in high jump.

Jones jumped her consistent 4-8

at state, but her career best is 4-10, which she claimed several times this season.

"Congrats to Kylie for finishing her track season at state," Smith proclaimed. "Way to keep the GP high jump tradition alive."

GPHS has had multiple athletes at state high jump in recent years. She, too, will be back as a senior next year to try and increase her height.

The girls' 4 x 400-meter relay team qualified for state where they ran a 4:30.98.

The girls on the team included Kynndra Rush, Jordan Christensen, Angela Ritter, and Macayla Easton. Their season best time was 4:27.41 at regionals.

Ritter was the only senior on the team, so the girls will be looking to replace her next year with high hopes of returning to the state meet.

"I am very proud of all the athletes that qualified and represented GPHS at the state meet," coach Travis Betz concluded.

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Andrea Browne

Brewster runner reaches 1A top 10 at state

Senior Benjamin Baird's top 10 finish highlighted the Brewster Bulldogs' strong efforts at last weekend's Class 1A state championship meet in Wichita.

Baird blazed around the track eight times for a 3200-meter time of 10:34.7. He needed five fewer seconds to catch Axtell's Tracy Schmitz (10:29.36) and was two places behind final medalist Trae Lane from Burrton (10:28.37).

Brewster sophomore Layton

Werth (11th/10:35.18) was right behind Baird and gave the Bulldogs a strong duo performance during this event.

Werth also reached the 1A state 1600-meter championship run, where he finished 14th (5:02.55).

Centralia senior Lukas Koch dominated this competition as his 4:16.63 time was nearly 16 seconds faster than the nearest challenger.

Senior Dan Brown made state in his final season with the Bull-

dogs. However, no official high jump state height was recorded for Brown on catchitkansas.com.

The Free Press thanks all coaches, parents and fans who supplied information throughout this 2012-13 school year.

Colby Junior Golf

Sign up at Meadow Lake Golf Course
Thursday, May 30 • 9:00 a.m.

The first practice will follow sign up.
Practice every Thursday starting May 30 - July 25 from 10 - 11:30 a.m.

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