

State bound

Written by Deb Egenberger

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Seven Swede boys qualify from B-6 district runner-up team.

SCOTTSBLUFF—It's not often a coach can walk away from a district track meet with no regrets.

Usually there's at least one "shoulda-coulda-woulda" moment to be remembered.

Not this year, not for Gothenburg coach Steve Reeves.

"We did not have one disappointment," Reeves said of his seven boys who qualified for this week's state championships. "Everyone we thought had a good chance got there. It was really a good meet for us all the way around."

The Swede boys finished as B-6 district runner-up at Scottsbluff on Thursday with 87.33 team points behind the host Bearcats with 104.33 and nudging out McCook with 86.

BOYS TEAM SCORING
1. Scottsbluff 104.33; 2. Gothenburg 87.33; 3. McCook 86; 4. Ogallala 86; 5. Gering 87; 6. Sidney 85; 7. Chadron 84; 8. Valentine 18; 9. Alliance 16.33; 10. Mitchell 14.

On top of the outstanding team performance, Reeves said three new all-time marks were

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achieved along with satisfaction of qualifying for the state meet.

Gothenburg's 4x100 relay shoots to No. 2 on the school's all-time list.

Landen Haake, Patrick Reeves, Mark Hilderbrand and Tannor Mroczek combined for a meet winning time of 43.5 seconds. That's more than a second faster than Gothenburg's best 400 relay so far this season and the third fastest qualifying time in Class B.

"It's such an exciting event," Reeves said. "It will be fun to watch at state."

All four members of the relay are multiple-event state qualifiers.

Mroczek tied No. 2 on the school's Top 10 in the 200-meter dash with a second-place time of 22.1 seconds.

Mroczek also qualified to run the 100-meter dash in Omaha for a third straight time by winning that sprint in 10.7 seconds.

Patrick Reeves will be in three events at state as well. He is on two qualifying relays on top of making the cut in the triple jump.



"Patrick went from not qualifying in the triple jump to qualifying with his last attempt," the coach said.

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In addition to the 4x100 relay, Haake's second-place finish in the pole vault gives him another event in Omaha. He cleared 13-1 to qualify.

Hilderbrand will be quite busy in Omaha. He's the only Swede to compete at state in four events.

In addition to the 4x100 relay, Hilderbrand took first in the 300 hurdles, third in the 110 hurdles and will run on the 4x400 relay.

The triumph of the day for Hilderbrand, Reeves said, was the 110-meter high hurdles.

"He's never made it to state in the highs," Reeves said. "He accomplished a big goal with that."

Senior Andrew Collins made a move on the school all-time chart in the 800.

Collins fought off Brett Bayne of Sidney at the wire to win in a time of 1:57.7. That keeps him at No. 3 all-time but improves his personal best by nearly a second.

"Andrew really met the challenge in that race," Reeves said. "And then he came back and showed a lot of grit in the 1600."

Collins was third in the 1600 and will run on the 4x400 relay, which got to state as an additional qualifier.

The 4x400 relay—Eric Stevens, Collins, Patrick Reeves and Hilderbrand—finished fourth in the district in 3:29.0.

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It is the seventh fastest qualifying time in Class B, putting the Swede team in the fast heat with three others from the B-6 district.

Sophomore Brett Dockweiler earned Gothenburg's final entry at state in the 3200-meter run.

Dockweiler improved his season best performance to finish fourth in 10:16.6. He ran the 3200 at state as a freshman.

As good as it is to finish second as a team and qualify seven to go to state, Reeves said the boys have to remember it's not over.

"We have to carry it one more week," Reeves said. "Hopefully we can bring home some hardware."

The state championship meet begins Friday at Burke Stadium in Omaha.

Haake and Patrick Reeves will kick things off in the pole vault and triple jump at 9 a.m. Friday. The first Swede running event is Hilderbrand in the 110-meter hurdles at 10:15 a.m.

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