

Whatever the situation or racing conditions, Glenbard West sophomore transfer Lindsay Graham manages to find that something extra for her distance races.

On Saturday, April 26, Graham already had won the 3,200-meter run at Glenbard West's Sue Pariseau Invitational, but she later was entered in the 1,600 – her first distance double of the track season.

"I was worried," Graham said. "I was really tired in the mile, but I found a kick."

And Graham once again found success, claiming another victory and the Hilltoppers' two event titles at their annual 19-team event at Duchon Field. Glenbard West finished sixth with 51 points.

Graham won the 3,200 (10:54.07 fully automatic time) by 8.66 seconds and the 1,600 (5:11.39) by 3.50 seconds on what regressed into a windy and cold day.

Graham often tries to set personal records, but Saturday's focus shifted to simply winning and surviving.

"The distance double hurts. I'm glad that I ran tactical races well," Graham said. "I'm just glad that I still have a kick because towards the end of the (3,200 races), I've been feeling kind of out of gas and stuff. It shows that I still have a kick when I need it."

"The goal today was to win. It's too cold to go after times. She did it. She was awesome," Glenbard West head coach Kelly Hass said.

"It's her first (distance) double of the year. It's one thing to run a 3,200 and a 400 but (to win) a 3,200 and 1,600 in two loaded fields? She's figured out how to run with her head. It's one thing to run with your heart but it is another to run with your head and your heart."

Junior Emma Gambol finished third in triple jump (34 feet-6 3/4 inches), and three other entries earned top-five medals by taking fifth – junior Lisa Luczak (3,200 in 11:09.42), sophomore Grace Rogers (1,600 in 5:20.89) and

the 800 relay of junior Mary Nevins and sophomores Sharon Murray, Jessica Michel and Isabella Salafatinos (1:51.12).

Minus the wind, everything turned out much better for the invite than 2013. Duchon Field was flooded by nearby Lake Ellyn but with great effort the meet was moved to Benedictine University and still pulled off.

For Luczak, the invite was her first major competition since being injured days after the indoor West Suburban Conference Silver Division Meet March 21.

"Honestly, this is a meet that was like, 'OK, if I'm not injured, no matter what I need to be healthy for this meet,' " Luczak said. "It's my favorite one all year, hands down. The announcer's great. It's on our home track. There are so many teams. Our team organizes it. We do everything. When our hard work pays off, setting up and running it just makes it even better."

Competing at the 2013 state track meet for Glenbard East, Graham finished fifth at state in the 3,200 as the highest finishing non-senior behind current Glenbard West senior Madeline Perez, the defending state champion in the 3,200 and 1,600.

Graham's lifetime best in the 3,200 is 10:41.92 from the 2013 York Sectional, Glenbard East's all-time school record. The 2013 DuPage Valley Conference Meet was the last time Graham did the distance double. Her 10:42.90 won the 3,200 by more than four seconds and she was second in the 1,600 in 5:13.77.

Graham found out she was doing the distance double after Downers Grove North's Bruce Ritter Invitational April 17, where she won the 3,200 by nearly 34 seconds in 10:47.43.

"I had to do it at some point. I just wanted to see how it played out," Graham said. "(At the 2013 DVC Meet), I had a really, really good race in the 3,200 and then the mile was OK.

"My times sucked (Saturday), but that's OK. More so, the tactics of the 3,200 were awful. I'm happy (I won both races), I guess," Graham said.

Graham's season best in the 3,200 is 10:44.98 from her final indoor meet to win the Illinois Top Times Meet March 29 in Bloomington.

At the Ritter Invite, Graham hoped to beat that, if not challenge 10:40. Graham went out harder than in Bloomington but reflected that her 1:15 first lap was perhaps too fast.

That wasn't the case Saturday. Nobody wanted to take control early and the pack went in 1:22 for the opening 400 meter – followed by an even more cautious 1:30.

"I was really annoyed because I wanted to get a good time. (But) I didn't want to fight the wind and then last week I went out in that (1:15) and that didn't end up good either," Graham said.

During the third lap around the 950-meter mark, Graham made a surge. The other four runners in the lead pack tried to follow but even by the 1,200 mark, Graham had established a three-second lead in 4:12.

"I didn't want anyone to take wind from me so I just made sure I got ahead," Graham said.

At the 1,600, Graham (5:30) held a three-second lead on Oak Park-River Forest freshman Mary Blankemeier with Naperville North junior Elly DeTurris and senior Maria McDaniel and Hinsdale Central freshman Alexa Haff at 5:36. DeTurris (11:03.73), McDaniel (11:04.90), Haff (11:06.09) all broke 11:10, as well as Luczak, who came on strong as usual to pass the sixth-place Blankemeier (11:12.58).

The 1,600 was yet another strategic stalemate the first half of the race with a 2:40 opening 800 after a 1:26 second lap. Hinsdale Central sophomore Annie Zaher took the lead but Graham stayed on her shoulder.

At the start of the final lap, Graham made a move, but Zaher responded. Then Graham made an even stronger burst with 350 meters to go and didn't look back. Zaher was second (5:14.89) with another strong Naperville North pair third and fourth, freshman Claire Hamilton (5:16.33) and

sophomore Emory Griffin (5:16.50).

Graham covered the final lap in 1:28.8, more than six seconds faster than her opening 400. She looked more like she was running one of her legs for a 1,600 relay rather than a 1,600.

"There are not a lot of distance runners that have enough in the 3,200 and 1,600 and have that kind of kick at the end. That's just a tribute to who Lindsay is and how hard she works," Paul Hass said.

"She really ran well. When it's windy like this and cold, it's about tactics if you want to be successful, and the times you kind of throw out the window, especially when you're doubling like this. She did an outstanding job of not only listening to what we agreed on but then performing it perfectly. Her times were great in the wind but also just how she kind of took charge of the races when she needed to do what she needed."

Regardless of times, just winning both races with such talented fields is an accomplishment in itself. At the state cross country meet, Haff (2nd) and Blankemeier (5th) and DeTurrís (10th) all finished in the top 10 and McDaniel (14th) and Hamilton (19th) also were top-25, all-staters in the 3.0-mile race.

At the 2013 state track meet, DeTurrís (7th) was all-state in the 3,200, 2.51 seconds behind Graham, and Zaher was 17th in the 1,600 (5:07.89) as the highest finishing freshman and ran a lifetime-best 5:07.86 April 12. Zaher also ran Saturday's 1,600 fresh before later joining the 1,600 relay.

"I wanted today to be a workout day (for Graham) as we gear up for (May). I think we accomplished what we wanted to have two first places attached to it makes it even more fun and better," Paul Hass said.

"(Graham is) an amazing competitor who wants to win but she also understands that you can't run the same tactics every single time. You have to see what the competition is, what the weather is like, how you're feeling. It's not like she was running the 3,200 and the 4-by-400 so we had to take that into account, too."

Graham showed her grittiness to her new teammates during cross country. Even after battling tendonitis in her knees the final month of the season she not only persevered but was an all-state 17th to help the Hilltoppers win their first state title.

"That's a chip on her shoulder, the fact that she didn't get to finish cross country like she wanted to (individually)," Kelly Hass said.

"She was injured, but she still knew she needed to help the team and she did that well, even though she isn't necessarily happy with herself sometimes," Rogers added. "That was awesome, winning both the mile and two mile. She's so hard working and she knows what to get done."

The distance races also turned out well for Luczak and Rogers.

In the 3,200, Luczak just missed her season best of 11:07.64 at the indoor Silver Meet. Luczak returned to action in the Hilltoppers' non-scored, five-team home meet Tuesday, April 22 and ran a 1,600 in 5:29.4 manual time.

For Saturday, Luczak was hoping simply to run 11:30, more than 20 seconds slower than her actual time. Luczak agreed that the strong competition elevated her.

"My other goal was not to get last (in the fast heat) so I was really shocked. I totally didn't expect that (time)," Luczak said. "For me right now, I don't have that much leg speed so it ended up being that I could run the whole thing. It turned out pretty well.

"You feel it. There are top runners in state. The field was stacked with everyone. We only need Madeline Perez and we would have had half of the all-staters. My goal was to stay as close to them but also for me it was really hard because they're at close to the peak of their season and I'm back at zero. I just went in there being like, 'OK. I need to do my best.' "

Perez also hopes to return to action soon. There had been talk of her possibly returning for Wheaton Warrentville South's Tiger Invitational

Friday, May 2, but now the target date appears to be the outdoor Silver Meet Thursday, May 8, at Downers Grove North.

"I'm hoping to get back by conference," Perez said. "I'm slowly getting back, so far so good. Each day is getting better."

Rogers rose to the occasion in the 1,600 with a lifetime best. She beat her previous time of 5:32.12 from 2013 after last month setting the indoor frosh-soph record of 5:23.59 when she won the frosh-soph indoor Silver Meet.

Earlier in the invite, Rogers was part of the sixth-place 3,200 relay with sophomore Kathryn Kenwood, junior Megan Ozog and senior Annika Manning (10:04.45). Rogers led off with a 2:23.9 split, one second from her lifetime best from 2013. Rogers did better than she did in the same two events at the Ritter Invite (2:27.5 split and 5:24.61).

"I was really happy with both of my races," Rogers said. "I thought (the 3,200 relay) was really good competition, a lot of girls close together. I liked that. (In the 1,600), I'm just happy with myself for sticking with those top girls for at least three laps and then just trying my best on the last lap, finishing strong."

Rogers almost was in no-man's land the latter half of the 1,600. Just when she was about to lose contact with the top four runners, she held her own and ended up only 4.39 seconds from fourth place. Rogers was .53 ahead of sixth place.

"They were pulling away but I thought it would just help me if I just tried to keep with them as long as I could," Rogers said. "I was just happy with the way I raced."

In triple jump, Gambol was just 3 1/4 inches from second place while Whitney Young junior Indya McGuffin won with 36-4. Gambol also anchored the sixth-place 400 relay with senior JaSharra Clark, Michel and Salafatinos (51.95), was seventh in the 300 low hurdles (51.71) and anchored the eighth-place 1,600 relay with Nevins, sophomore Emma

Winans and Murray (4:21.09).

Gambol was a late replacement in the 1,600 relay for Clark, who was among several seniors who left the invite early to get prepared for the school prom that evening.

Freshman Anna Gambol, Emma's sister, enjoyed a breakthrough in discus. She broke 100 feet for the first time in competition and placed sixth at 101-4 1/2.

"I've had the goal to get over 100 for the whole season. It feels really exciting to finally just get over 100 and it's 101 so it's one foot over," Anna Gambol said.

During her tenure at Hadley Junior High, Anna Gambol already was on the cusp of 100 feet. She set the seventh-grade school record of 90-7 and topped that last season at 98-5, shattering the previous mark of 89-4 from 1984.

At the Ritter Invite, Gambol threw a then season-best 98-0. Gambol was hopeful she could finally break 100 Saturday and received a little help with her spin release from throws coach Nick Posegay while warming up for the finals.

"(Posegay) told me to start further to the right of the circle because I was kind of drifting over to the left more so I was scratching," Anna Gambol said. "I moved over to the side a little bit when I started my spin and I kept my disc back so it felt better when I popped it at the end.

"I just look at the end to see where it is, and I knew (on that 101-4 1/2) I did the spin the way I wanted to. I looked at the flight, too, and the wind was actually pretty good when I threw it."

Gambol also enjoyed a breakthrough mentally. The discus success came after a rough start in shot put with Gambol throwing under her usual 30-plus feet (28-6).

"(I learned) just not to get down on myself. I didn't do as well as I wanted to, but for discus I thought I was able to just pull it together," Anna Gambol said.

More breakthroughs came in field events. In her second time in long jump, junior Rachel Aubrey, who also competes in triple jump, improved more than a foot to 15-3 1/2 and junior Shontana Hudson broke 14 feet (14-0 1/2).

Besides sprinting, Michel has been competing in pole vault. On Tuesday she had a monster personal record of 8-9, among the Hilltoppers' best pole vault performances in years.

Michel began at 5-6 and cleared 10 heights with a combined nine misses. She cleared 8-9 and 8-6 both on her third attempts. Michel cleared 7-6 Saturday.

"I kind of, I guess, got the hang of it when I was in the middle of it (Tuesday)," Michel said. "I haven't really been practicing that much because I've been doing the workouts running. I don't know what happened. It was awesome, though."

Sophomore level

For Glenbard West sophomores Christina Sedall and Caitlyn Reick, the frosh-soph 3,200-meter relay at their home Sue Pariseau Invitational Saturday, April 26, felt like old times.

In 2013, both athletes were part of the Hilltoppers' state-qualifying 3,200 relay at the Class 3A state meet. They are just returning from injuries or illness dating back to the fall cross country season.

"It was kind of nice to be on a 4-by-800 with her again, kind of rekindle the memory. It's good to see (Reick) strong and healthy," Sedall said.

"It's fantastic to have people starting to come back (and compete). I know (Reick has) had kind of a rough season but it's fantastic to have her and

especially with her running again, considering last year at track state we were together.”

The 3,200 relay with fellow sophomores Katie Bassett and Abby Shaver created their own magic Saturday. They set a frosh-soph school record in the event with a 10:06.91 fully automatic time to place third.

The Hilltoppers (68 points) finished fifth out of 19 teams at their annual invite at Duchon Field. Last year’s invite was moved and pulled off at Benedictine University after Lake Ellyn flooded the track.

Glenbard West frosh-soph records only can be broken in frosh-soph competition. The former 3,200 relay school record 10:11.2 of manual time dated all the way back to 1996.

“(Distance coach Paul Hass) kind of mentioned it before spring break. He was like, ‘Just so you guys know, the school record hasn’t been broken for like 18 years,’ ” Bassett said. “That was really fun. We didn’t even beat it by like one second. We did it by five. Maybe we’ll be able to beat our own record this year, maybe another second we can take off. That would be really fun.”

Five other entries earned medals for top-five performances. Shaver and Bassett came back later to place second and third in the 800 in 2:35.30 and 2:35.80, respectively.

Sophomore Ellen Daniels also had a big day. Daniels placed second in the 400 (1:04.60) and was part of the second-place 1,600 relay with sophomores Nicole Rogus and Emily Asselmeier and freshman Sophie Cvengros (4:26.87) and the third-place 400 relay with Cvengros, Asselmeier and freshman Stephanie Perez (54.45).

What made the Hilltoppers’ 3,200 relay record most impressive was that a stiff wind and dropping temperatures were not conducive to great times. Bassett ran a team-best 2:29.5 opening split, followed by Shaver (2:31.5), Reick (2:33.8) and Sedall (2:31.8).

"We weren't necessarily going for (the record), especially because it was so windy, but they ran well," distance coach Paul Hass said. "The competition is so great in this meet at both levels that anything can happen. I'm just happy to see both Caitlyn and Christina running again and whatever they can give us is great. And I love the fact that we went 2-3 in the 800 (with Shaver and Bassett)."

Reick was a cross country state alternate in the fall but was limited by an iron deficiency. She competed as the start of indoor track but then was sidelined by a minor foot injury. She returned to action in Tuesday's non-scored, five-team meet at Duchon Field, running 2:39.9 for an open 800.

"It felt really nice to be back, especially on my home course. I was just super excited to run today," Reick said Saturday. "I did not know about (our school record) at all. That's amazing. We definitely worked hard. It makes me feel really good. I'm really excited now. It definitely makes me smile."

Sedall rehabilitated during the entire indoor track season and made her season debut in the outdoor opener April 9 with a 2:42.7 in an open 800. As a freshman, Sedall also competed at the state cross country meet, but she battled what turned out to be a stress fracture in her hip most of this past season.

"(Reick) had a fantastic race, catching up with them. She really put me in a great position," Sedall said. "I was really happy just to be running with her in the first place, but her race was beautiful."

Reick and Sedall competed at state in the 3,200 relay with graduated Kate Majewski and sophomore Grace Rogers, who competed for the varsity Saturday on the sixth-place 3,200 relay and was fifth in the 1,600.

Sedall and Reick were part of some individual frosh-soph record action at the 2013 Pariseau Invite. Sedall's second-place 11:45.65 in the 3,200 set the current frosh-soph record that currently stands after current junior Megan Ozog had run a record-setting 11:53.2 four days earlier. Later at the invite, Ozog set the current frosh-soph record with a fourth-place 5:31.33 that broke the 5:32.5 record set by Reick set days before.

Before that exchange, the existing frosh-soph records had been from 1983 (3,200) and 1993 (1,600).

"It's good to get down records, but I hope someone beats them soon, too," Sedall said. "There are so many old records that need to be taken down and it's good that we're starting to do it. I'm just happy to do it (in the 3,200 relay) with those girls."

Shaver and Bassett had another strong race in them for the 800. While Naperville North freshman Elise Moore (2:35.27) pulled out the victory by .03, the Hilltoppers led the next group as they battled back and forth down the final straightaway.

"At the end, when Abby just took off, I was like, 'Yeah. Go Abby go.' I did my best, but (Shaver) was awesome at that last 100," Bassett said.

"It helped me a ton (having Bassett) and at the last curve I was just like, 'Go Katie, go,' because I thought she was going to out-stride me, but we were together the whole way," Shaver said. "That (finish) was hard because Mr. Hass was screaming at us that they were coming. I didn't know where they were so it was really intense."

Shaver said the finish was more satisfying than the Downers Grove South Invite April 12, where she put on a vicious kick to win the frosh-soph 3,200 after drafting off the lead runner for most of the race.

"I think this one was more fulfilling because it was a faster-paced race, it was more tense and I was with Katie the whole time. Having two people go was a lot better," Shaver said.

Bassett continues to improve by leaps and bounds in her first track season after realizing her potential late in the indoor season. Before track, Bassett and Shaver didn't even know each other in the halls of Glenbard West.

"It's just been so fun meeting so many girls from West I didn't really know before," Bassett said. "Now I absolutely love track. I like the

competitiveness of not just with your competitors but beating your own times. It makes you feel really good when you run a race well."

As usual, several of the Hilltoppers' underclassmen competed on the varsity level. Daniels had been a late addition to the varsity lineup for Downers Grove North's Ritter Invitational April 17.

On Saturday, Daniels was second in the 200 only to Whitney Young sophomore Candace Tukes (1:03.62) by nearly one second and pulled out third by .78.

The 1,600 relay was 5.17 seconds behind first-place Wheaton North (4:21.70) and 3.26 seconds ahead of third-place Young. The 400 relay was only .14 behind second-place Hinsdale Central (54.31) and ran a season best by more than one second despite being seeded in the slower of the two heats.

The fifth-place 800 relay of Cvengros, Asselmeier, Rogus and sophomore Kelsey Lentz (1:54.73) also posted a season best.

"We won our (400 relay) heat so it was awesome," Asselmeier said. "I think we weren't really knowing what to expect just because all of us have done only one or two of that relay."

In 2013, Asselmeier competed for the Hilltoppers during indoor track but then chose soccer as her spring sport. This season, she has stayed with track.

"I really enjoyed soccer last year, but I think this year track just seemed like it would be a better option just for physical fitness and making new friends and stuff. It ended up being a better decision," Asselmeier said.

"I'm improving a lot so that's nice. I'm trying to PR in a couple of things. Last year, since I only did indoor, I wasn't really able to accomplish what I was hoping to. But this year has been nice because I can go to all of the meets and do all of the team things that we do together."

Sophomore Katie Goleash was fourth in discus (82-4) after throwing a season-best 83-2 Tuesday and seventh in high jump (career-best 4-6).

Freshman Jenna Kelly was fourth in the 400 (1:07.19). Sophomore Abby Moody (season-best 5:41.17 in 1,600), Lentz (100 high hurdles in 18.83) and Cvenngros (13-10 in long jump) also finished sixth, and freshman Melina Thurmond was eighth in shot put (29-10).

Kelly complemented Daniels' strong race in the 400 with an uplifting fourth-place finish. Kelly ran cross country in the fall and generally has been running 800s and up. When she had a 1:09.9 split for the 1,600 relay at Tuesday's home meet, she found herself put in the open event for Saturday.

"I think I kind of figured it out Thursday or Friday and I was kind of surprised. I didn't actually think I would be a 400 runner, but it worked out pretty well," Kelly said. "I heard my name (for finishing fourth) and it was funny. I think it's cool because I never knew I could do a 400 like that, but it's fun."

Kelly dominated the second-seeded of the four 400 heats so she might have run even faster.

"Considering I only had done one 400 before this season, I didn't really know what I was capable of. It was just nice to see what I could do and it was also surprising," Kelly said. "In the 400, you have lots of leg speed but once you're on the second half, you're like, 'This is my last lap so I should just go as fast as I can.' It's different from the 800 because you still have another lap after that."

Lentz made her first finals in the 100 hurdles at the Downers South Invite and finished second in 18.97.

Now it's becoming commonplace. Lentz's season-best 18.83 in Saturday's finals was .20 shy of fifth place.

"I was hoping for top five, but I was fine with my race because it was a good one," Lentz said.

"I definitely ran better than the JV meet on Tuesday (22.2 manual) because in that one I hit a couple of hurdles and it was a really off day. I think I only got distracted once (by the wind) and hit the hurdle a little bit, but that was about it."

Thurmond said she was disappointed when she started out Saturday throwing 69-0 in discus, 15 feet shy of her season best. She fortunately had another chance with shot.

"I definitely took it hard for discus. I think that (throws coach Nick Posegay) was expecting so much of me and I gave so little so it was hard to kind of readjust and get in the groove and fight," Thurmond said.

Thurmond reached the shot finals by the "hairs of my chinny, chin chin," and earned a team point. She just missed her personal best of 30-1 1/2 and had two other throws in the 28s.

"I'm pretty proud of that (29-10)," Thurmond said. "I just had a pretty bad day overall. It's not what I was looking for today."

-- by Bill Stone