

The list of multiple events for Glenbard West junior Emma Gambol seems to change just about every track meet.

Gambol has competed in most jumping and short-distance events and relays. After already doing three events at Glenbard West's Sue Pariseau Invitational April 26, she was a late substitute in the 1,600-meter relay for senior JaSharra Clark, who left the meet early to prepare for the school prom.

At the Wheaton Warrenville South's Tiger Invitational, Friday, May 2, Gambol was on the infield cheering on Clark and the rest of the 1,600 relay. Gambol had just competed in the 200 for the first time this outdoor season after also competing with the 400 relay and in triple jump as usual.

"Well, basically (Glenbard West head coach Kelly Hass) said last weekend was supposed to be my easy meet. This week was going to be some fun events so I kind of knew I was going to do the 200, and then the 4-by-100," Emma Gambol said. "It was kind of an easy day, I guess, coming back from last week."

About the only thing she hasn't competed in is the throws, but freshman sister Anna Gambol has been taking care of that.

The Gambols both had top-five individual finishes at the Tiger Invitational. Glenbard West (47.5 points) was sixth in the 19-team field in which team points were awarded for top-nine finishers, just like the state meet. Teams also were allowed three entries for individual events rather than the usual two.

Sophomore Lindsay Graham continued her distance dominance as she won the 1,600 in 5:03.30 fully automatic time.

Junior Mary Nevins (1:00.60) and Clark (1:02.55) were second and fifth in the 400.

Glenbard West now prepares for the West Suburban Conference Silver Division Meet Thursday, May 8, at Downers Grove North after finishing fifth

on varsity and fourth on frosh-soph at the indoor Silver Meet March 21. Lyons Township is seeking its third straight varsity outdoor title and fourth straight on frosh-soph.

On Friday, the host Tigers (107.5) won their invite for the fourth consecutive year with Naperville North (89.5) and Oak Park-River Forest (61) second and third. Glenbard West was 1.5 points from fifth-place Rockton Hononegah but also just 1.5 points ahead of eighth-place York.

Emma Gambol (33 feet-10 inches in triple jump) and Anna Gambol (personal-best 105-0 in discus) both finished fourth in their strongest field events.

Emma Gambol also was eighth (26.60) in the 200. The 400 relay with Clark and sophomores Jessica Michel and Isabella Salafatinos was 11th in a season-best 51.81, .17 behind ninth-place Hinsdale Central.

"Although my (200) time wasn't exactly where I wanted it to be, I still scored for the team. I was proud of that, which made me happy," Emma Gambol said. "That (400 relay) was super fun to run. That was another highlight. It was a really competitive race and we have some kinks to work out. Miss Hass think we have room to improve."

Anna Gambol, meanwhile, continues to excel in discus. After breaking 100 feet for the first time at the Pariseau Invite (101-4 1/2 for 6th place), she enjoyed a breakthrough with a 105-0 on her first of four throws as rain fell throughout her flight. Gambol had a another throw of 102-9.

"I think (that 105-0 throw) was pretty much right on. I was kind of surprised by that because in warmups my release was a little off," Anna Gambol said. "It's really good to be consistent, too. To keep getting 100s is good. I just want to stay probably around the 105, 110 range. That's my goal."

In all, Glenbard West individuals combined for 22 lifetime or outdoor season bests in events that they're previously competed this spring.

The 3,200 relay of junior Julia Sakach, Graham and sophomores Caitlyn

Reick and Katie Bassett were sixth in 9:45.76, the Hilltoppers' fastest time in the event this season.

Sophomore Grace Rogers was seventh in the 3,200 (11:27.37). The 1,600 relay (sophomore Emma Winans, junior Morgan McEnroe, Clark, freshman Sophie Cvengros in 4:18.80) was eighth, and senior Grace Lupo tied for eighth in high jump (4-11), one inch from her season best.

In the 1,600, Graham beat her previous season best of 5:04.22 at the Downers Grove South Invite April 12 and remains undefeated outdoors.

Friday's 5:03.30 is ranked No. 7 for this outdoor season by DyeStat Illinois. Senior Madeline Perez, the defending state champion in the 1,600 and 3,200, ran 4:59.04 indoors Feb. 22 but hasn't competed this outdoor season. She is entered in the 1,600 at the Silver Meet.

Graham took control of Friday's 1,600 after a 76-second first lap, but she felt she could have run even better.

At the outset of the second lap, Graham decided to push the pace and surged into a considerable lead by the backstretch. Hinsdale Central sophomore Annie Zaher tried to follow and left behind the remainder of the pack, but she never threatened Graham's lead.

Graham won by 3.8 seconds over Zaher (lifetime-best 5:07.10), who was 5.9 seconds ahead of third place. Zaher's time is ranked No. 12 by DyeStat Illinois.

Still, Graham was hoping to break 5:00. Her first and final (76.8) laps were the main hindrances to achieving that goal.

"I wasn't even close. (Three seconds is) not really that close," Graham said. "The last (lap) was pretty slow. It was a little slow, but if I went fast on the first one, it would have made up for that one, but I didn't. I think if I want to get a good time, I have to go out fast."

At the Pariseau Invite, brutal winds and cold resulted in a strategic and slow

1,600. Graham, who won the race with Zaher second (5:11.39 to 5:14.89), also competed in the distance double for the first time and had won the 3,200 with the only sub-11:00 performance (10:54.07).

On Friday, Graham also ran in the 3,200 relay and contributed a lifetime-best 2:18.4 split on the second leg.

Friday's racing conditions for the 1,600 were about the best as they've been so far this spring. The rain had subsided, but there still was a faint wind.

"There was wind on the backstretch," Graham said. "It was rough. I specifically remember in my head, 'Just get through this 100,' because it was windy. It wasn't gusts, but it was there."

In the previous heat, sophomore track newcomer Kathryn Kenwood ran 5:27.43, a personal best by more than 14 seconds that placed 12th overall.

"I liked running in the dark. I did feel (the wind) a little bit but I was excited when I was running so it didn't feel that bad," Kenwood said.

In just her third 1,600 ever, Kenwood has been known for strong starts and finishes. She opened in 1:19.6 and closed in 1:17.6 Friday. The key was keeping her middle two laps under 1:25.

Kenwood previously ran 5:41.54 April 22. Even though she held a considerable lead in her heat Friday, Kenwood kept pushing even after the final turn.

"(Assistant coach Mark Staron) was yelling at me to keep going and push myself," Kenwood said. "(Distance coach Paul Hass) told me to get in the 5:20s and I did. I was kind of glad I was in the second heat because I was in the fastest (800 Pariseau Invite) heat and I didn't run too well. It was less pressure going in the second heat. I knew I could run faster than before because I wasn't as tired as before."

Nevins also felt she could have gone faster in the 400, yet the only runner

to beat her was Bolingbrook sophomore Charlyncia Stennis (59.63) by .97. Nevins pulled out second by .40.

"I was a little disappointed with it because my start was kind of slow. I guess there's always Thursday (at the Silver Meet)," Nevins said. "I thought I could drop more time than that. I was thinking I could get 59 or something. It was close enough. It was a hard night with the weather and everything. It'll have to do."

This was the first time Nevins competed in an open 400 this season, as well as for Clark, the highest finishing senior.

Nevins and Clark were part of last year's state-qualifying 1,600 relay. Nevins is expected to compete in the 400 and 1,600 relay at the Silver Meet.

"This year, I've been running the first leg of the 4-by-400 so (the open 400) was just like doing that," Nevins said. "It's always fun to have a teammate (Clark) in the same heat. It was fun to run together. It was kind of like a workout."

Even without Nevins in the 1,600 relay, the Hilltoppers were .90 behind seventh-place Hinsdale Central. With the same lineup as the Pariseau Invite, the 400 relay improved their time by .14.

"At the (Downers Grove North Invite April 17), I ran the 4-by-400 there, too, and I was more nervous for that one because it was my first varsity meet. Then this meet, Emma (Winans) helped me. I was a little less nervous and a little more prepared," Cvengros said.

"I'm having so much fun (in track). It's been a blast. I think I've been running really well."

Two recovering Hilltoppers, Sakach and Reick, enjoyed success with the 3,200 relay. While Graham ran a blistering personal-best 2:18.4, Sakach (2:24.3) and Bassett (2:28.9) also broke 2:30 with Reick at 2:33.9.

Sakach competed at her first outdoor invite this season and only her

second outdoor meet. Sakach and Reick made their outdoor debuts in the 800 April 22. Reick and Bassett were part of the frosh-soph 3,200 relay at the Pariseau Invite that ran a frosh-soph outdoor school record 10:06.91 for third place.

"It felt really good, just excitement (to compete)," Sakach said. "It felt really nice, especially with such a great field. I was really lucky to be able to come back and challenge myself in that way. I didn't think I ran particularly well last Tuesday (2:37.04 April 22) so my goal just was to improve my third 200 for sure and just make sure that I went out smart."

Almost immediately after she got the baton, Graham surged into the front of the pack and put the Hilltoppers ahead.

"I was happy with that," Graham said. "I liked having people to chase. I like going out hard. You can get good times when you go out hard in the 800."

"I was so lucky to have (Graham) give that lead. She ran awesome," Reick said.

Sakach was part of the second-place, all-state 3,200 relay in 2012. Reick ran at state on the 3,200 relay last year with sophomores Grace Rogers and Christina Sedall, also coming back from injury.

This spring, Sakach and Reick have been seeing a lot of each other as they cross-train to work their way back. They sometimes swim together as a cardiovascular alternative for pounding on their legs.

"She's my workout buddy so we do a lot of stuff together," Reick said. "I'm still coming back, but it's going pretty good."

"Just to stay healthy. That's my main goal – pain free," Sakach said.

Emma Gambol has been working her way back from illness, which began to show at the end of the Pariseau Invite. A 2013 state qualifier in the 300 low hurdles, she ended up seventh (51.71). Two events later, her anchor leg as a sub for the 1,600 relay was a struggle down the final stretch.

"I had a tough week, just with workouts and everything," Emma Gambol said. "After my 300 hurdles, it was just not good. (For the 1,600 relay, Kelly Hass was) like, 'We need you,' so I was like, 'All right. I'm going to do it.' "

Emma Gambol is hoping she can improve her triple jump after being an all-state eighth at the 2013 state meet with 36 feet, the longest jump in school history.

On Friday, Emma Gambol was just 1 1/2 inches from third but well behind Hinsdale South senior Maya Thompson and WWS junior Heidi Nassos (lifetime-best 35-0). Gambol took off from the closer 28-foot board Friday.

"(Friday) was not really good jumping weather at all, considering the rain and the cold and all of the wind and everything factoring in," Gambol said. "It was OK. (Fourth place is) not too bad, better than I thought."

For Anna Gambol, poor weather conditions may have helped her concentrate harder. The Hilltoppers kept their discs on the ground and covered in towels to remain as dry as possible. Officials did a good job of cleaning the throwing circle after each throw.

She also was riding the emotion of her first 100-plus day at the Pariseau Invite.

"As I kept going through it (Friday), the rain kind of got worse so I just wanted to stay focused. I just knew I needed to keep the disc dry," Anna Gambol said.

"(Breaking 100 feet has) given me a lot of confidence. Before, I wasn't as confident in my throws. In practice, I was only throwing 95s. I knew what I was doing wrong, but I couldn't really fix it in meets, but now I've been working on it in practice and I think I've really improved and I can fix my mistakes now."

In the 3,200, Rogers beat her season best by more than five seconds but was slightly disappointed to be 4.81 seconds from fifth place. The race results were fairly similar but felt different than the Pariseau Invite, where

Rogers ran a lifetime-best 5:20.89 for fifth in the 1,600 and was 4.39 seconds from fourth.

"I'm pretty happy with how I did," Rogers said. "I lost contact with the leading group of girls, which I'm kind of mad about. I might have spaced out for a little bit, but I think I had too much left at the end of the race. I didn't start my sprint fast enough.

"I kind of like how my race went last week. Even though it was just (1,600 meters), I was staying with the lead girls and then them kind of going at the end. I was kind of slower at the end, but I still thought that worked well for me and I kind of wished I had done that more today."

Rogers' race provided a boost for junior Megan Ozog to run a lifetime-best 11:43.80 in the race and finish among the top 20. It was Ozog's fastest time by about four seconds and her first 3,200 this season under 12:00.

"I saw Grace at the beginning and tried to stick with her a bit. She wasn't too far ahead of me at the end time wise so I'm happy about that," Ozog said. "There was a lot of good competition so it was easy to run a good race and compete."

On Nov. 9, Ozog made her second appearance at the girls cross country state meet, where the Hilltoppers won their first team state title. After battling illness for a month and a half, Ozog hopes her final track races can be a stepping stone toward strong summer training heading into cross country.

"Having a couple of rough times during the middle of the season was discouraging, but ending with that just gets me excited training for cross country this summer and seeing what next season holds," Ozog said. "Just improving is always good, and I love summer running so I'm excited about that."

Among other top-15 finishes, Clark was 12th in the 100 (13.16), the 800 relay of Michel, Salafatinos, Winans and Cvengros was 13th (1:51.80) and senior Dee Dee Burns was 14th in discus (91-9).



In shot put, freshman Melina Thurmond was a team-best 17th with 31-3 1/2, which beat her previous best of 30-1 1/2 April 22.

Friday not only was Thurmond's varsity debut but she also had been disappointed by her eighth-place 29-10 at the Pariseau Invite.

"I'm super proud," Thurmond said. "Coming into this, I knew it was varsity so I was nervous. I'm like, 'These girls are so much better than me,' but I went out there and (thought), 'I don't care what they throw. I want to do my best. I want to get my PR,' and that's what I did."

"Dee Dee kept telling me, 'You're going to do your best. Just PR.' That really helped me. I knew that from last week, all I wanted to do was improve. I knew I was going to be in the meet so I focused a lot on shot (at practice) and I just tried to get more and more distance and I guess I did it."

Senior Erin Spiech broke 52 seconds in the 300 low hurdles and took 19th in 51.99, a huge drop from her 53.27 April 17.

Spiech competed in section 3 of 6 and was seeded seventh in Lane 8, yet she finished second to Hinsdale South junior Nakiyah Darden (51.41), who was in Lane 9.

"That's not supposed to happen. We pushed each other," Spiech said.

"It was great race. It was kind of a surprise, but at the same time it was my goal to hit the 51 mark. It was a pleasant surprise. I felt really strong during the race. There was only one hurdle that I kind of goofed up but I guess I ran well enough to make up for it."

Junior Jessica Johanson improved her career best in triple jump by one foot to 27-8 3/4 after a 26-8 3/4 April 22. In long jump, junior Shontana Hudson, a transfer from Wheaton Warrenville South, had three consecutive season bests at her former school, concluding with a 14-8 1/2.

Another huge time drop came in the 800, where sophomore Abby Moody

ran a lifetime-best 2:32.43. Her previous best in the open 800 was 2:39.74 indoors March 18.

"It was a good race and I felt like I gave it my all and my time definitely showed it," Moody said. "It's hard to PR and especially doing it by that much, it's really exciting. I was just trying to beat 2:40 because the last time I ran the 800 was like 2:42."

Moody was seeded 12th in the second of four sections but ended up second among 13 finishers, .95 from first. She had become a little scared at first when she found herself in front after the first 100 meters.

"I felt like I shouldn't be there. But then six girls all of a sudden came and passed me and then I felt like I could go faster," Moody said. "I pushed myself mentally and passed them. That was definitely hard to get myself to do but I'm definitely glad I did."

-- by Bill Stone