

When everything comes together for Glenbard West senior Madeline Perez, great things happen on the track.

One time that usually occurs during the indoor track season is at Proviso West.

On Saturday, March 8, Perez competed at the 19th annual Panther Classic Invitational in both the 3,200 and 1,600-meter runs for the first time since sweeping the Class 3A state championships for both races at the 2013 state meet last May.

"I usually double at this meet because it's the first time on a 200-meter track and it's a really nice one. It's my favorite," Perez said. "I don't know (exactly why). It's the fact that it's a 200-meter track. I can wear my spikes on it. It's always been a good meet and good times."

For the third year in a row, Perez completely rewrote the record book as she won both races in record times to help the Hilltoppers finish third in the eight-team field.

Perez won the 3,200 in a season-best 10:34.48 fully automatic time and followed it with a 5:03.95 in the 1,600 that was just shy of her 4:58.8 Feb. 22.

"To be honest, I didn't really think about the records, but it was nice to have a decent double. I was really happy with it," Perez said.

The Hilltoppers (87 points) finished behind Naperville Central (128) and East St. Louis (111.33) but well ahead of fourth-place Proviso West (51).

Junior Lisa Luczak was second to Perez in the 3,200 (11:11.33) and third in the 1,600 (5:21.70), and sophomore Grace Rogers was second in the 800 (2:30.57).

Three relays also finished second – the 3,200 relay (Julia Sakach, Megan Ozog, Annika Manning, Rogers in 10:17.58), the 800 relay (Emma Gambol, Emma Winans, Mary Nevins, JaSharra Clark in 1:51.75) and the 400 relay in which only throwers could compete (Anna Gambol, Katie Goleash,

Ashley Schleck, Bekah Dau in 1:03.37).

Perez broke her 2013 invite records of 10:41.1 and 5:06.9 after those times surpassed her 2012 invite records of 10:55.9 and 5:12.15. Perez also went on to set indoor school records of 10:28.18 and 4:53.60 last season.

Perez's 3,200 time Saturday holds the No. 1 spot in the state, according to DyeStat Illinois. Her 4:58.8 in the 1,600 also had been No. 1 until Jacob junior Lauren VanVlibergen's 4:55.5 Tuesday, March 11.

"I was more focused on just going in there really trying to maintain my form throughout the race," Perez said. "Just staying relaxed and strong were kind of like my main goals. I was just going after the times and I guess it's nice for at least another year I know my name will be up there. It's kind of nice."

Sophomore Lindsay Graham (11:06.70), who did not compete Saturday, and Luczak's time (11:11.33) are ranked second and third in the 3,200 by DyeStat Illinois.

Even though her pacing could have been better, Luczak ran season bests in both races, edging her 11:13.8 from Feb. 22 and easily topping her 5:27.5 from the Feb. 15 opener. Luczak was more than 10 seconds behind Naperville Central's Rachel Hoffman (5:11.21) for second in the 1,600.

"Both races I can't say I raced the smartest. In the 3,200, I went out too fast and I died but I still got a (personal record) so I was pretty happy," Luczak said.

"I was just happy I (got third in the 1,600) after the 3,200, when I was completely so tired and exhausted. I pulled through and, of course, in that race I didn't start out fast enough but by the end I was able to put in a good kick because I had so much energy left. It was like I learn from my mistakes."

The 3,200 relay was solid but finished well behind Naperville Central (9:35.65). The Redhawks posted the then-state's fastest time before they

were passed by four teams at Downers Grove South's Mustang Relays Monday, March 10, at North Central College.

Rogers still anchored a team-best 2:29.1 split after Sakach led off in 2:30.4. Rogers was excited that she could run another strong 800 in the open race after winning the event at home Feb. 22 in 2:31.5.

"I'm happy with both (800s)," Rogers said. "(Glenbard West distance coach Paul Hass) didn't show me other girls' times but she said, 'You can definitely do well in this (800),' and I had that in my mind going into it."

Katie Hoffman, a member of the Redhawks' 3,200 relay, dominated the 800 in 2:24.03. Rogers preserved to outlast Naperville Central's Haley Becker (2:32.13) and Brooks College Prep's Sariaya Phillips (2:32.95).

"I had (Phillips) with me and I passed her on the third lap (of four)," Rogers said.

"I got boxed in the first lap, which is hard and then I got out of that. I wanted to get out of it as soon as I could but that meant I had to pass some girls on a turn, which isn't really good. It slows you down. It was not the best way to start off the race, but I was happy with how I finished."

The 800 relay was second to Naperville Central's 1:48.80. The throwers' 400 relay was second to East St. Louis (1:00.88).

Dee Dee Burns (29-0) and Schleck (26-0) were third and fifth in shot put.

Emma Gambol (16-2 1/4 in long jump) and the 1,600 relay (Clark, Emma Gambol, Sakach, Winans in 4:19.66 65) were fourth. Grace Lupo (4-10 in high jump), who equaled her season high, and Winans (300 in 44.56) were fifth, and sophomore Ellen Daniels was sixth in with the team's fastest open 400 this season (1:05.44).

Emma Gambol, an all-state eighth in triple jump last season, is trying to add long jump this season and posted a personal best. Sitting out the March 1 meet after rolling her ankle at practice, Gambol beat her

previous best of 15-7 from Feb. 22.

"I didn't do long jump last year and like once freshman year. I want to do long jump actually. I asked (coach Kelly Hass) to get a mark down," Gambol said.

"I had to wrap my ankle today. It felt better in the (1,600 relay) because I took the wrap off. In the next couple of weeks, I might (triple) jump. I'm not sure."

Rachel Aubrey was seventh in triple jump (28-8 1/2), seven inches from sixth, and Annika Manning was seventh in the 800 (2:36.26), .39 from sixth. Morgan McEnroe was eighth in the 400 (1:06.77), and Deena Harnboonzong was ninth in the 55 hurdles (10.48), missing the eight-hurdler finals by .13.

Perez, headed for Georgetown, gets one more chance to compete indoors at Proviso West for the indoor West Suburban Conference Silver Division Meet Friday, March 21. The Hilltoppers first compete Friday, March 14, at the York Invitational, which also was the site of the 2013 indoor Silver Meet.

"Something about this track, I've just always loved it and I can't wait to come back and finish the indoor season on it," Perez said.

Frosh-soph level

The usual track events for Glenbard West sophomore Maddy Burt don't appear to complement each other.

"Not really," Burt said. "I don't think they do."

Yet while Burt is the Hilltoppers' top hurdler on the frosh-soph level, she also has had success as a middle-distance and distance runner who often competes at 800 and 1,600 meters.

Burt pulled off the combination again Saturday, March 8, at the 19th annual Panther Classic Invite at Proviso West. She was fifth in the 55 hurdles (10.81 seconds fully automatic time) after earlier helping the 3,200 relay with sophomores Caitlyn Reick and Abby Shaver and freshman Jenna Kelly take second (10:40.72).

"I do like it. I think it's fun to work on speed work and then do the 800. I've run the 1,600 a couple of times and I like running that," Burt said.

"I think I was just expecting to get into the (hurdles) finals and I did. I'm really happy with how I did. We've really been working on keeping my arms in and landing on my toes. I did really well with that today."

The Hilltoppers (75 points) finished third in the eight-team field behind Naperville Central (154) and East St. Louis (90), just three points ahead of fourth-place Fremd.

Sophomore Kate Dorsey had the team's lone event victory, winning the 3,200 (11:57.33) with sophomore Kathryn Kenwood in second (11:58.84).

Dorsey nearly anchored the 1,600 relay to victory, but she and Nicole Rogus, Sharon Murray and Emily Asselmeier ended up a close second to Fremd by .47 (4:27.45 to 4:27.92).

The 800 relay of Sophie Cvengros, Rogus, Murray and Asselmeier also was second (1:54.95) to Brooks College Prep's 1:52.51. In an added 400 relay

in which only throwers could compete, frosh-soph throwers Anna Gambol, Katie Goleash and Bekah Dau joined varsity thrower Katie Goleash to take second (1:03.37).

Burt pulled off a little bit of sprinting herself. After a personal-best 10.73 in the prelims to make the eight-hurdler finals, Burt quickly had to prepare for the 3,200 relay, the first track event held in finals.

To accommodate the FAT timing, runners checked in downstairs to receive identifying sticker numbers. They weren't allowed to wear the spiked shoes that they could for races.

"I literally finished from the hurdles, went down and changed into my flats and came back upstairs and put my spikes on for the (3,200 relay)," said Burt, who had a 2:40.9 split. "Prelims for the hurdles were almost like my strides for the 800 this week. It's not hard (doing both), but it's a lot to handle sometimes."

Dorsey and Kenwood, both first-year track runners, entered the 3,200 as the No. 2 and 3 seeds to Naperville Central's Alana Austin with times above 12:20.

After Austin took the early lead, Dorsey remained calm and waited to make her move. Kenwood also eventually passed Austin, who was third in 12:04.68.

"(Austin) was slowing and I felt like I had more left so I went and made my move on her," Dorsey said.

"I knew it was going to be a big race between me, Kathryn and (Austin). I'm like, 'All right. I'm going to see if I can keep up.' I stayed with (Austin) for as long as I could and then ended up being able to pass her at the end. I ran it the way I wanted to run it. I'm glad it worked out well and I'm so happy Kathryn was able to get back and pass her at the end, too."

Dorsey didn't compete again until the final race of the meet, the 1,600 relay. She nearly replicated her earlier tactics but was never able to pass

Fremd over the final 400 meters with a 1:09.3 split. Rogus led off with a team-best 1:04.4, followed by Murray's 1:05.1.

"Maybe if that race had been a little longer, I could have almost gotten her, but it was close. I did the best I could," Dorsey said.

Murray (28.3) and Rogus (28.4) also had the fastest splits for the 800 relay. It was part of another strong overall day for Cvengros, a freshman who also was fifth in the 300 (47.90) and sixth in the 200 (29.66).

"I thought our relay did really well. (Glenbard West coach Kelly Hass) said she's never had a relay team come under 2:00 before in the (frosh-soph 800 relay). That was a really nice feeling," Cvengros said.

"It's kind of just like we're getting used to our styles of running. We kind of just feel like more of a team. We're getting closer as we're doing all of these races and winning them."

Cvengros has been enjoying her first season of high-school track along with her sophomore sister Ellie and appears determined to stay for outdoors. Sophie Cvengros has been leading off relays because she admits still being nervous about having to turn around and receive the baton.

"I like it a lot. It's just been really fun," Cvengros said. "I played soccer for the eight years of my life since kindergarten and I was kind of ready for something new. I've run track at Hadley (Junior High) and I really liked it and I really like just the feeling of crossing that finish line so I decided to go out for track instead of soccer."

Reick (2:33.1) and Shaver (2:38.3) had the top splits for the 3,200 relay. They both finished third in their open races with Shaver's 800 (2:37.33), just 3.18 seconds from first and Reick's 1,600 (5:47.80) only .59 from second. Nicole Berneche also broke 6:00 in the 1,600 for sixth (5:59.67).

In shot put, Gambol (28 feet-6 1/2 inches) and Dau (27-5) finished third and fifth, both with personal bests. Abby Moody was third in high jump (4-4), and Claire Filippelli (1:15.15) and Stephanie Perez (1:15.33) were

sixth and seventh in the 400.

While freshman Gambol beat her previous best throw by one-half inch, sophomore Dau improved nearly one foot from her 26-6 Feb. 20.

"(The 27-5) was exhilarating, I guess you could say, but it didn't feel that different," Dau said. "I think just putting all of the different techniques together (contributed), like staying low, looking up. Once you put it all together, it just works and then you throw farther.

"It just gives you a big boost in your confidence to do well. Last year, it was freshman year so you were just doing it but now I'm taking it seriously and just doing as best as I can."

-- by Bill Stone