

Glenbard West sophomore Lindsay Graham usually likes coming from behind in her track races.

"I do best when I chase so when I'm second in the (3,200-meter relay), that's my prime," Graham said.

On Friday, March 14, Graham ran so well in the 800 at the York Invitational that nobody could keep up with her. She won the event in a personal record of 2:19.55 fully automatic time as one of two event victories for the Hilltoppers in the six-team field.

Junior Emma Gambol won triple jump (35 feet-6 3/4 inches) in her first time competing the event since the season opener Feb. 15.

Glenbard West (76 points) finished fourth to Palatine (118), the host Dukes (102) and Whitney Young (95) and ahead of Oak Park-River Forest (57) and Mother McAuley (43).

It's the final indoor meet of the regular season for the varsity heading into the indoor West Suburban Conference Silver Division Meet Friday, March 21, at Proviso West.

Lyons Township has won the last two indoor Silver Meet on varsity and the last three on frosh-soph. In 2013, the Hilltoppers were an elated with second on varsity (76 points), 48 points behind LT, and the frosh-soph was fourth (60.5).

"We're going to keep some kids down (on the sophomore level) because we're a little decimated at the varsity level right now," Glenbard West girls track head coach Kelly Hass said. "We're a little beat up right now. It's frustrating but at the same time I like where we're at. I feel real good about how the kids are progressing."

Based on results reported by DyeStat Illinois, Graham now has the sixth fastest 800 this indoor season and her 5:06.7 manual March 1 is No. 4 with senior Madeline Perez (4:58.8 manual Feb. 22) at No. 2.

In Friday's 800 victory, Graham owned a slight lead at the halfway point of her 800 heat over Palatine senior Liz Cox (2:24.83) in roughly 1:07 before quickly turning the race into one-sided.

"I didn't think I had a lead at all. I thought (Cox) was right behind me the whole time," Graham said. "I tried to stay consistent. I knew I should be under 2:20, especially on a big (200-meter) track like this."

Graham did not compete at the Proviso West Invite March 8 as a precaution after feeling pain in her hip. Gambol, meanwhile, returned to triple jump after rolling her ankle during practice.

Gambol won by 1-8 3/4 on her third and last attempt after scratching her first two. Gambol's final jump began about a foot behind the takeoff board yet shares the 14th-best reported distance in the state.

"(Glenbard West head coach and jumps coach Kelly Hass) said, 'Move back this much and don't change anything and go at it,' and I did," Gambol said. "(Hass) said I'm knocking at 37. My first two were good, but I kept scratching."

Gambol already is the most successful triple jumper in program history. With the longest distance in school history (37-0 1/2), she took an all-state eighth at the 2013 state meet. It came on her third and last jump in preliminaries. Gambol's indoor school record of 36-0 set at last season's York Invite was an all-time best when she did it.

Gambol also finished third in long jump Friday (15-7) and was second in the 200 (27.11) and third in the 55 (7.88).

In the 200, Gambol only was beaten in her heat by McAuley junior Briana Driver (26.60) and might have broken 27.00 if not for slipping out of the starting blocks. Gambol's 55 time also was close to her season best of 7.6 manual time Feb. 22.

"I don't even know what was wrong with that (200). It was just a bad start. It happens to everybody," Gambol said. "I think I just kind of

popped up and it was weird. The track is really slippery. People have been slipping all day. I slipped here on my (open) 400 start a couple of years ago. My goal was to break 27.0 so I feel like if it were hand-held (time) I would have run 26.9. I'm pretty happy with it. (Driver) was really good."

During the three meets since the season opener, Gambol had competed in long jump twice and began practicing triple jump. She returned to the event full force Friday, choosing to take off from the board 32 feet from the sand pit rather than just 26.

"Especially for not jumping for a couple of weeks, I'm happy," Gambol said. "I was excited to get back into it after my ankle (injury). I think I was kind of pumped up so I think that's why I scratched."

The Hilltoppers continued their distance success even with Perez not competing.

Junior Lisa Luczak (5:16.45) and sophomore Grace Rogers (5:25.36) were second and fourth in the 1,600 with season-best times to Palatine sophomore Kelly O'Brien (5:13.47). Both Hilltoppers ran the race fresh.

O'Brien and Luczak now have the No. 13 and 22 fastest reported times in the state. Luczak nearly was disqualified after the race for allegedly stepping on the inside part of the track, but the meet official overruled the inquiry.

Freshman Anna Gambol and sophomore Nicole Rogus had big days in their varsity debuts.

Anna Gambol was fourth in shot put by throwing 31-6 1/4, well beyond her previous best of 28-6 1/2 March 8. Senior Dee Dee Burns was fifth with 29-8 3/4.

Unlike most indoor shot put areas, the infield pit at York has a yellow line of tape at 30 feet.

"When I saw that I got over the line, I was really excited," said Anna

Gambol, Emma's sister.

"I was throwing over 30 in practice and I just really wanted that today. It feels a lot better (in a meet) because there's a lot of competition. To know that you're a freshman throwing on varsity in your first varsity meet, it feels really good. It made me nervous because most of the girls or all of them are older than me and a lot of them are probably seniors. You just don't know how far they're going to throw."

Gambol finished 6 3/4 inches from third place. On her last throw of finals, Gambol also surpassed 31 feet (31-3 1/2).

"I was really feeling the last one, like it was going to go farther, but it spun out of my hand in a weird way so I was a little disappointed but still happy that I got 31," Anna Gambol said. "It really brings (my confidence) up."

Rogus was part of the Hilltoppers' sixth-place 800 relay (1:55.74) and then ran the opening leg for the Hilltoppers' third-place finish in a crazy 1,600 relay (4:25.59).

Entering her second lap of the 1,600 relay, Rogus was in a congested pack among the leaders. Just after the first turn, Rogus became entangled with a runner from McAuley, who tripped just in front of her, and Rogus couldn't avoid her.

"It was a little tough," said Rogus, who took a bad scrape to her left shoulder.

"All I know is going into the curve, I had a girl to my right and to my left and then she jumped ahead of me. Then when I was landing to do another stride, she was just finishing hers. Our feet collided. She fell in front of me. I had to jump over here and then I tumbled."

While the McAuley girl was injured and did not continue, Rogus held onto the baton the whole time, quickly got up and completed her leg. The Hilltoppers finished well behind Whitney Young (4:17.46) and York

(4:17.83).

"(Rogus) had the inside. She should have stayed firmly where she was," Hass said. "The McAuley girl was on the outside and hit her with the baton and then the girl went down in front of her, so then Nicole went down. She got cut off and that was a shame because Nicole was on pace to run a dynamite (400 split). She looked so good. She's having a great season."

Earlier this season, Rogus won the 300 but passed out moments after the race. She wasn't going to let Friday's 1,600 relay dampen her spirit.

"(Running varsity) was awesome. The girls were definitely faster so that helped me push more. It was hard, and I expected that, but it was good," Rogus said. "I'm really excited because last year at conference I didn't even run the (1,600 relay) or any other event and this year I'm already guaranteed the 300 and the (800 relay)."

Senior Tricia Markby (1:12.24) and junior Meg Maloney (1:12.72) were fourth and sixth in the 400. The 3,200 relay was fourth (juniors Colleen Luczak, Julia Kochert, Madeleine Winter and Hannah Arduino in 11:17.40) and senior JaSharra Clark was sixth in the 300 (45.24).

Colleen Luczak, Lisa's twin sister, led off the 3,200 relay with a 2:43.1 split – a career best by six seconds – even after battling illness Tuesday and Wednesday. This was her first time leading off the 3,200 relay for the first time.

"I was more tired than I ever was after the race. I started out fast and I think that's what helped me out. I just kept the constant pace all the way through," Colleen Luczak said.

"I started with really fast runners and I really just did not want to get last. I was really focused and I had my eyes on one girl that I wanted to stick with. That's what really helped me, the competition.

Senior Grace Lupo was fifth in high jump and achieved a personal triumph

by clearing a career-best 5-0 on her second attempt. Lupu jumped 4-11 last season and 4-10 March 1 and 8.

"Getting to the 5s is something I've been waiting a while for. That was just really fun to get over the bar and realize that I didn't hit it and then get off the mat and see that it was still up there," Lupu said.

"It's my senior year. It was just nice to get out of (the 4s) and go on to what I hope is going to be like a new era of jumping for me, just to keep building from there."

Lupu became a bit concerned when she first missed 4-10, but she quickly regained her composure and cleared it on her second try. Now Lupu already is eyeing 5-2, which she nearly cleared Friday.

"In practice, I've been focusing on arching my back and then finishing the jump. I've been working on tucking my chin and kicking my feet up, which is a struggle for me," Lupu said. "I think the practices, constantly working on that, really helped. It was nice to finally see that hard work paying off."

Glenbard West senior Amanda Ortiz did not place but her 3,200 time of 13:49.07 was an indoor lifetime best and a season best by more than 42 seconds. The only time she's run faster for the Hilltoppers is a 10th-place 13:32.94 at the 2011 frosh-soph conference meet.

"That was my only time being in conference so I think it was just all the pressure. That was a long time ago, but I'm hoping to get there soon," Ortiz said.

"My times haven't been what I've wanted them to be this season so today I was just like, 'I just want to push it my hardest and give it my all so I could know that I did my best.' Lately I've kind of been running by myself in races and I had those girls (in my heat) to hang onto and I just said to myself, 'Just stay with them the whole time and try to pass them.'"

Ortiz also was the Hilltoppers' only varsity entry in the 3,200. Junior

Megan Ozog scratched because of illness and Lisa Luczak opted to focus on the 1,600.

"I just said, 'I want to do my best for my team because I was the only one representing on the varsity.' I just tried my hardest," Ortiz said. "(My time) made me feel really proud so I hope that I can just keep getting better. I've been feeling pretty disappointed so far this season so I was really happy that I got the extra confidence that I think I needed to do better."

Sophomore level

Last season, Glenbard West sophomore Sharon Murray ran so well at the indoor conference meet at York that she earned a chance to compete with the varsity at the annual Top Times Indoor Classic in Bloomington.

In her return to York Friday, Murray ran her way into the Glenbard West record books as the Hilltoppers won the six-team invite with 112.5 points.

Murray not only won two individual events in the six-team invitational, but her 45.66 fully automatic time for the 300 broke the frosh-soph indoor school record of 45.71 set by current sophomore Emma Winans at the 2013 indoor West Suburban Conference Silver Division Meet, also at York. Murray later captured the 400 in 1:06.89.

"(The 300 record) means a lot because it's something that's kind of mine. It's something I can have then and carry and I can use it to push myself to succeed in my other races," Murray said.

"It feels great. The first time I did (the 400 this season), I wasn't trying to do it. The second time, I was trying to do it, and I did not so today I was like, 'I really want to.' It worked out. The third time's a charm."

Glenbard West won five events and finished just 6.5 points ahead of second-place Palatine (106), followed by Oak Park-River Forest (96), Palatine (90.5), Whitney Young (53) and Mother McAuley (25).

Sophomore Kathryn Kenwood also had two victories by winning the 800 (2:35.17) after leading off the victorious 3,200 relay with sophomores Abby Shaver, Katie Bassett and Kate Dorsey (10:26.72). Sophomore Abby Moody won high jump by clearing 4-6.

"They're equally satisfying (victories) but the (3,200 relay) is more exciting because after you pass it on, the race is still going," said Kenwood, who led off the relay. "It's longer so it's more exciting."

The invite victory should give the Hilltoppers and Murray momentum

heading into the indoor West Suburban Conference Silver Division Meet Friday, March 21, at Proviso West.

At last year's sophomore indoor Silver Meet, Murray was fourth in the 400 (1:05.25). She then joined the varsity 1,600 relay and ran a 1:03.8 split at the Top Times Classic, an invitation-only meet at Illinois Wesleyan University based on achieving qualifying standards during the indoor season. The Hilltoppers were fourth in 4:03.94, only .04 from the indoor school record.

"That was a really good day," Murray said.

Sophomore Emily Asselmeier added to the 300 success by taking second (47.31). Murray's 300 victory was a significant improvement from her 1:09.2 manual time at the March 1 home meet on the Hilltoppers' 160-meter track.

"I got out faster, I think. I started the race better than I did the last time," Murray said. "It gives my confidence a really big boost. I wasn't really feeling too hot the other races in the other meets, but this really helps me going into conference so I can really rock it next week."

A first-year runner, Kenwood was excited about having two strong 800s in the first time she did those two events in the same meet since the season opener.

"Then I started running the 1,600 and the 3,200 and I was like, 'Ah, (only) the 800.' I was definitely more prepared," Kenwood said.

Kenwood usually leads off the 3,200 relay, but she was slated for the second leg Friday until sophomore Caitlyn Reick had to scratch. Kenwood's 2:31.0 split beat her previous best split by several seconds but she became concerned that she couldn't give the Hilltoppers a lead.

That soon changed thanks to splits by Shaver (2:35.4), Bassett (2:42.1) and Dorsey (2:37.9).

Bassett, a first-year runner, was added to the relay after running a personal-best 2:43 3,200 relay split two days earlier for the junior varsity at the Wheaton Warrenville South Invite. Dorsey later took fourth in the 1,600 (5:39.59).

"It was fun to see the lead get bigger," Kenwood said. "I didn't think my time was that fast because I was with people the whole time and then I saw Abby get more ahead and then Katie do awesome and then Kate Dorsey, of course, finishing off strong. I just kept seeing that gap get bigger."

In similar fashion for the open 800, Kenwood turned a relatively close race at the halfway point into a 6.23-second victory over York sophomore Elizabeth Hagstrom (2:41.70). Freshman Jenna Kelly was sixth (2:45.48).

"I felt so good I was just like, 'Let's go.' " Kenwood said. "I like that it's only four laps instead of five (at Glenbard West) because then you're like, 'Halfway done, let's go.' "

Besides Moody, the Hilltoppers dominated high jump with sophomores Katie Goleash (4-2) second and Kelsey Lentz (4-0) fourth.

Freshman Sophie Cvengros was second in the 200 (29.44) with Asselmeier (30.20) sixth. Cvengros also was fourth in long jump (13-3 3/4) and tied for sixth in the 55 (8.29).

In the 3,200, sophomore Nicole Berneche was edged at the finish line by just .06 by York sophomore Jessica Zellinger (12:26.35 to 12:26.41). Freshman Annie Pasterz was fifth (13:03.15).

Sophomore Maddy Burt was third in the 55 hurdles (10.93), and freshman Melina Thurmond (27-11) and sophomore Bekah Dau (27-3) were fourth and fifth in shot and just shy of season bests 28-2 and 27-5. The 800 relay (sophomore Ellie Cvengros, freshman Katie Wagner, Asselmeier, freshman Shay Kiker in 1:55.74) was sixth.

-- by Bill Stone