

Sophomore Katie Goleash was a thrower and sprinter for the Glenbard West girls track team last year, but she recently unlocked her abilities in another event.

Goleash was returning keys for the storage closest to assistant coach Mark Staron as he was supervising practice for the high jumpers.

"I was watching them run and I was like, 'Hey, Mr. Staron, can I run on it?' and he's like, 'Yeah, sure,' so I ran and jumped over (the bar)," Goleash said. "He said, 'Why don't you come practice with us one day?' so I practiced with them one day last week."

On Thursday, Feb. 20, in just the Hilltoppers' second meet of the season, Goleash made her competitive debut in high jump in a non-scored junior varsity triangular at Glenbard East along with Glenbard South.

Goleash ended up actually having the team's top performance in high jump with a height of 4 feet. Goleash competed in the maximum four events by adding shot put, the 200-meter dash and the 55 -- also for the first time.

"This was my first meet doing high jump so I was excited about that. I cleared three heights so I guess that's good," Goleash said.

"The 55 and high jump were just kind of a surprise, but they're fun. It's really fun to do all of the events. You're always doing something during the meet. You're never just hanging out. I love to just keep doing new things and learning."

While most Hilltoppers competed for the varsity or frosh-soph in Feb. 15 season and home opener, this triangular gave many of them more opportunities to compete and try events.

Other top team performances came from freshman Anna Gambol in shot (28-5) and 55 (8.3), senior Annika Manning (1,600 in 5:57.1), juniors Hannah Arduino (800 in 2:53.1), Jessica Wulffen (55 hurdles in 13.3) and Dao Hyunh-Lee (12-6 3/4 in long jump), sophomore Ellie Cvangros (200 in 32.7) and freshmen Annie Pasterz (3,200 in 13:18.2) and Kate Dillman (25-5 in triple jump). Arduino won the 800 with

freshman Alexa Fausey (2:54.8) and junior Julia Kochert (2:54.9) close in time.

Top relay times were from Manning, Fausey, freshman Jenna Kelly and sophomore Colleen Graham (3,200 relay in 11:12.3), junior Eva Alonso, Wulffen, Hyunh-Lee and Hudson (800 relay) and Alonso, freshman Grace Zemenak, Kochert and Arduino (1,600 relay in 5:06.9). Respective top splits came from Manning (2:40.4) in the 3,200 relay and Alonso in the 800 relay (73.4) and 1,600 relay (74.6).

Last season, Goleash mostly focused on shot and discus outdoors. She ran the 200 occasionally but often could not because the prelims conflicted with her field events. On Thursday, Goleash threw 22-3 1/2 in shot and had the Hilltoppers' second-best time for the 200 (34.1).

Glenbard West head coach Kelly Hass surprised Goleash by putting her among 13 Hilltoppers to run the 55. Already done with shot and high jump, Goleash (8.8) was among six Hilltoppers to break nine seconds.

"It was interesting. It was, 'OK (I'm in the 55),' "Goleash said.

"It's a lot shorter than a 200," she added with a laugh. "I'd love to try it again. I think it was lots of fun. It's just fun to run because we're such a family and everybody just cheers for you. It's fun to just try new things."

Pasterz never had competed before in the 3,200 at a track meet, but she ended up taking first in 13:18.2. During the fall, she received some longer-distance experience on the frosh-level of the cross country team, whose races usually are around three miles.

"I think I could have gone faster (in the 3,200) if I had somebody pacing me, but it was my first one so it went well," Pasterz said.

"(Cross country has) definitely helped me with competition because I've never had people push me this hard before. It's inspiring to see girls who have done it their whole high-school career and be able to follow in their footsteps."

At St. Petronille Catholic School, Pasterz had two-mile races for cross

country but for track she only ran the 800 and the 1,600, the longest individual race. She got a late start to her freshman cross country competition because of an injury.

Her initial track goal is to break 13:00 for the 3,200.

"Cross country was definitely challenging and it helped me pace myself for distance and learn how to run races so it helped a lot," Pasterz said. "I think I could have pushed a little bit harder in lot of (those races). I was figuring out my pace."

Cvengros, this is her first season of high-school track as a sophomore. Cvengros competed in track at Hadley Junior High School but concentrated on soccer last year.

For this season, her freshman sister, Sophie, persuaded her to at least give indoor track a try. Sophie's events currently are the 200 and 55, like Ellie, and high jump, a new event for her.

"(Sophie) has always been more into running so she kind of got me into it," Ellie Cvengros said. "Last year, I was kind of bored during winter between this and soccer. I just wanted to try it, something different. I've been playing soccer for like 10 years so just to shake it up a little bit.

"All of the girls here are absolutely awesome and I'm so excited because I'm actually having way more fun than I thought I would. I was not very good in middle school. I've gotten a lot better, I feel like."

Ellie Cvengros displayed her tenacity and versatility as well. In the 200, she came from behind to win her heat and post the team's only sub-33 effort.

"I didn't want to lose. I just wanted to make sure I just left it all out there because I hate the feeling of afterward being like, 'Oh shoot. I had more,' " Cvengros said.

Cvengros also competed for the second time in shot, an event for which she has no previous experience. She threw 18-0 1/2 Thursday.

"My dad's actually convinced me to try it. He kind of got me into the

shot put thing,” Cvengros said.

”The shot put has been hard to get used to. I give them a ton of credit because it is a lot harder than it looks. There is so much more technique than I thought it was. I’m definitely still working on getting used to it, but I’m getting better and I actually really like it. It’s really fun.”

-- by Bill Stone