

2-9-13

Glenbard West vs. Downers Grove North, Glenbard East

In November, Glenbard West sophomore Lisa Luczak was an impressive all-state sixth at the Class 3A girls cross country state meet despite battling a strained hamstring.

After a couple of months of rehabilitation, Luczak wasted no time showing she could be even more dominant this track season.

Luczak turned in a lifetime-best of 10:46.34 to win the 3,200-meter in run in the Hilltoppers' indoor track season opener against Downers Grove North and Glenbard East Feb. 9 in Glen Ellyn.



"I'm not amazed with it. I know I can always do better," said Luczak (pictured left). "I'm really happy with it because it's only the beginning so I know I can do a lot better, or I hope so."

"I was just so excited to be on the track again and to race. It's just so nice to run again, run on a track and feel fast and go. I just ran my race, and the time came with it."

Luczak was among four first-place varsity efforts for Glenbard West (49 points), which beat Glenbard East (30) and finished behind Downers North (76).

Senior Emma Reifel won the 300 (44.28) and 400 (1:01.65), and sophomore Emma Gambol won triple jump (33 feet-7 inches).

Luczak's gutsy state cross country performance was among the reasons the Hilltoppers earned a trophy for third place by just nine points over fourth-place New Trier, the 2011 state champion.

"I was a little disappointed (personally), but I was just happy I finished the race," Luczak said.

She immediately took time off to recover. By the official start of the indoor track season Jan. 22, Luczak had received full medical clearance for regular workouts.

Luczak came out competing with gusto, posting a 5:16 split at the halfway point.

"I'm just so happy with my time. It shows that all of my hard work and all of my swimming and all of my training have paid off," Luczak said.

Luczak showed some mental toughness as well, running so well even though she finished more than 45 seconds ahead of the competition. Second-place Glenbard East freshman Lindsey Graham, 20th at state in cross country, also had a strong season debut (11:32.52) that's already in range of the state-qualifying standard of 11:22.04 fully-automatic time.

The remote chance of Luczak and junior teammate and 3A state cross country champion Madeline Perez competing in the same race was not possible. Perez, like several Hilltoppers, missed the meet to take the

American College Test.

“She said she wanted to break 11:00, and I said, ‘Well, I don’t know. Let’s just focus on state qualifying (11:22),’ ” Glenbard West distance coach Paul Hass said. “Then we wanted to get out fast because that’s something we’re trying to work on. She was under where we wanted her and she just felt good and looked good. She’s not over trained. She’s just hungry and ready to run.”

Luczak edged her previous career best of 10:48.40 during the 2012 outdoor season at Downers North’s Bruce Ritter Invitational in mid-April. Luczak went on to qualify for the state track meet in both the 3,200 and 1,600.

She was 15th at state in the 1,600 (5:05.24), missing the 12-runner finals by 4.33 seconds. In the 3,200, which is competed once in two heats, she ended up 10th (10:55.62), just 2.30 seconds from ninth and the last all-state medal.

“I just want to go to state, do my best, break my time from last year and, honestly, have the best season of my life,” Luczak said.



Gambol (pictured left) also is off to an impressive start after a strong freshman season. She won the triple jump by nearly two feet after never previously competing in the event for the Hilltoppers.

“(Head coach Kelly Hass) said last year she wanted me to try it, but I hurt my ankle and that kind of stopped me,” Gambol said. “I was talking to her and I was like, ‘I want to try triple jump.’ I thought it was kind of a cool concept, a hop, skip, jump.”

A member of last year's 1,600 relay at state, Gambol should contribute in many events this season. Besides triple jump, she also was second in high jump (4-11) and the 55 hurdles (8.84) and second to Reifel in the 400 (1:03.30) and didn't even compete in high jump, one of her primary events as a freshman.

"She had a great meet," Kelly Hass said. "She's a good sprinter, but she's going to be a hurdler this year (as well). I just tossed her in the triple jump for kicks. We practiced a little bit so what she did was pretty gosh darn amazing."

The Hilltoppers went 2-3 in the 1,600 with Kate Majewski (5:55.56) and Annika Manning (5:56.11) and in high jump with Gambol and Grace Walker (4-11).

Also taking second were Tricia Briones (55 with no time available), Mary Nevins (14-11 in long jump) and the 1,600 relay of Luczak, Reifel, Cynthia Mote and Briones (4:30.18). Jasharra Clark (200 in 29.00), the 4-lap relay (Briones, Walker, Nevins, Clark in 1:32.61) and the 3,200 relay (Majewski, Manning, Amanda Ortiz, Leah Landry in 11:29.6) were third.

On the sophomore level, freshmen Caitlyn Reick and Grace Rogers won the 3,200 relay with freshman Christina Sedall and sophomore Megan Ozog (10:22.1) and then won an individual event apiece.

Reick captured the 1,600 (5:41.31) with Sedall (5:45.84) and Maddy Burt (6:10.06) second and third. Rogers was champion in the 800 (2:35.40) with Ozog second (2:40.18).

The Hilltoppers also finished 1-2 in three other events. Abby Shaver won the

3,200 (13:19.43) with Abigail Dibadj second (14:05.24), Burt (9.92) and Deena Harnboonzong (10.19) swept the top places in the 55 hurdles and Isabella Salafatinos (28.81) and Sharon Murray (31.08) were first and second in the 200.

Morgan McEnroe was second in the 300 (50.40) and 400 (1:00.84). Salafatinos (55 in 7.19) and the 1,600 relay (Rogers, Emma Winans, Nicole Rogus, Emily Asselmeier in 4:42.03) also was second, and Bekah Dau was third in shot put (22-6).