

After contributing to the highest state-meet finish in Glenbard West competitive cheerleading history, senior Nina Fraticola is used to success.

She hasn't needed long to find it again throwing the shot put.

In just her second track meet of the indoor season Feb. 23, Fraticola won varsity shot with a distance of 29 feet-3 1/2 inches in the Hilltoppers' home meet with St. Charles North, Fremd and Mother McAuley.

"It is a huge deal (to finish first), especially to start off my season so hopefully this senior year goes well," Fraticola said. "I did a lot of training, especially in the summer, a lot of lifting, especially when we got back in the season. It's a lot of work and dedication so that's just what I'm trying to do."

Glenbard West's varsity pulled out the team title 91-88 over St. Charles North, followed by Fremd (35 points) and McAuley (29). The sophomores dominated with 107 points, well ahead of St. Charles North (61), Fremd (39) and McAuley (26).

Sophomore Emma Gambol won varsity titles in the 50 (6.7), 200 (26.8) and triple jump (24-4 1/4), and senior Emma Reifel won the 300 (43.6) and 800 (2:20.8). Other varsity event winners were junior Madeline Perez (1,600 in 5:00.2), freshman Grace Rogers (3,200 in 11:46.5) and the 3,200 relay of Perez, freshman Christina Sedall, junior Annika Manning and senior Cynthia Mote (10:22.9).

On Feb. 2 in Bloomington, Glenbard West competed at the IHSA state cheerleading meet for the third year in a row. Fraticola was part of the Hilltoppers' program-best seventh-place finish in their first time in the coed division. Glenbard West was 21st in the all-girls large school division in 2012 after two previous top-10 finishes in the division.

Fraticola began track practice the following Monday. She threw 29-3 in the season debut Feb. 16.

“I’m actually a back spot in cheerleading so I’m behind everything when the girls are in the air so that does help (with strength work),” Fraticola said. “Once I get to track, it’s more lifting in the weight room and benching and squatting so that helps.”

Perez, the 3A individual girls cross country state champion in November, was quite impressive in her first 1,600 of the season. She posted the state’s fastest reported time and an indoor best to win by 34.6 seconds. There was just one disappointment about her 5:00.2 result.

“Yeah, 5:00 is the most bittersweet,” Perez said. “It’s like, ‘Really?’ A tenth of a second away from breaking (5:00), but it’s early. I’m just looking forward now and excited to see what comes.”

Perez did well even on the Hilltoppers’ 160-meter track that doesn’t allow spiked shoes and after perhaps being a bit too enthusiastic. She took her first 400 meters out in 70 seconds, a couple of seconds faster than she would have liked in hindsight.

Perez still came within range of her lifetime-best of 4:59.04 at the 2012 outdoor conference meet that is the outdoor school record. The all-time school best time was 4:57.7 set indoors in 1996 by Nell Shields, who went on to sweep the state championships in the 3,200 (10:33.18) and 1,600 (5:01.99) that May.

“I try not to think about records or anything. My main focus is just going out and doing my best and seeing what that gets me,” Perez said. “If it comes, it comes. If it doesn’t, then I know I did my best and you can’t be upset with that.”

Reifel, Rogers, Sedall and Mote were among other members of the

Hilltoppers' third-place 2012 cross county state lineup.

Reifel did extremely well with the 1,500 meters she covered in her competition. She won the 300 easily in a 1-2-3-4 Glenbard West sweep with Mary Nevins (45.4), Jasharra Clark (47.9) and Tricia Briones (48.4) and dominated the 800, winning by 11.8 seconds, with Sedall taking third (2:34.9).

Reifel still had enough left for a 1:01.7 split on the opening leg of the third-place 1,600 relay with Mote, Rachel Farley and Caitlyn Reick. It was the first time Reifel led off the 1,600 relay this season.

"The (1,600 relay) is such a fun race because you're going out there and doing it for your team, and at that point of the day, you've got to give it all you've got," Reifel said. "I was pleased (most) with my 300 because I actually improved on that one. I was happy with my times for the day, but they weren't (personal records) so I was pleased that I was able to drop some time on that one."

Gambol won the 55 by .1, the 200 by .6 and triple jump by more than two feet. She also was second in high jump (4-11), losing out on a tiebreaker for first based on fewer misses.

Fraticola won shot by 3.5 inches after her second of four throws (29-1 1/2) put her ahead to stay. The 29 3 1/2 came on her final attempt.

"Last year, I ended sectionals with a 31. (This season's goal is) definitely past 31 feet. I am trying too make it to state so we'll see how it goes," Fraticola said.

In the 3,200, Rogers enjoyed success with a little help from her friends. With both levels running together, like most smaller indoor meets, Rogers, freshman Reick and sophomore Megan Ozog (11:56.6) all broke 12:00 for the first time. Rogers and Reick finished 1-2 for the varsity and Ozog won on the sophomore level.

This was the 3,200 debut for Rogers and Reick.

“(Glenbard West distance coach Paul Hass) just told me high 11:00s. If I broke (12:00), it would be like varsity worthy,” Rogers said. “I’m so glad I did cross country. I wouldn’t be where I am now for track. Now I go into track more confident. I’m more educated on how to stay strong throughout the race.”

Reick and Ozog led during the early parts of the race. Rogers was fifth or sixth most of the race before putting on a furious finish over the final three laps.

“I felt pretty bad (at the finish) like it was hard for me,” Rogers said. “I’m not really sure how to run the race yet so I could have run it differently.”

Reick had problems during her race as well but still finished strong enough to beat two St. Charles North runners that were within two seconds of her.

“I started feeling kind of nauseous in the middle, but it was a good race, and I had a lot of fun,” Reick said. “I’ve been running with Megan and Grace in workouts so it was nice to have them there with me.”

Rogers and Reick were track teammates at Hadley Junior High and all three competed for the cross country team in the fall. Ozog, who would have finished a close fifth in the varsity race had the Hilltoppers been allowed to have three entries, won the sophomore-level title by roughly 2:22 over second-place teammate Nicole Berneche (13:18.4).

“It was a great way to start the season. I wasn’t sure how I was going to go into it. Since my (personal record in 2012) was a 12:03 on the outdoor track, I was happy,” Ozog said. “I’m usually used to running alone and then the freshmen came. I like running with them because

it's kind of pushed me.”

The 4-lap relay of Chloe Powell, Briones, Grace Walker and Clark was third (1:34.1).

Junior Hannah Ladesic wasn't an event champion, but she deserved to feel like a winner. She competed for the first time in pole vault after just a few days of practice and actually finished fifth.

Ladesic cleared three heights of 5-0, 5-6 and 6-0. Senior Grace Farley also made her debut in the event and cleared 5-6.

“I'd only practiced like four times so I was surprised I could get over the first height. I was pretty proud that me and Grace Farley did it, too, and that we could even try it and get over a height the first meet,” Ladesic said. “It was just kind of like throwing us in a meet, but it worked out pretty well. For our first time, even though that's not that great, it's still better than nothing.”

A first-year track member, Ladesic was encouraged to consider pole vault since she has some airborne experience as a member of the girls gymnastics team on the junior varsity I level. Ladesic came out for track after she decided not to continue with club gymnastics in the offseason and probably also will continue competing in sprint events.

Glenbard West head coach Kelly Hass said the program hasn't had a decent pole vaulter since 2002 graduate and state qualifier Jackie Benson. Ladesic's twin sister, Mary, a JV II gymnast and track sprinter, is among other Hilltoppers who may attempt pole vault this season.

“I didn't even know I placed until (practice Monday),” Ladesic said. “It's really hard to get up to heights at a certain point, especially when I'm just starting out. I was kind of learning how to do it while I was in the meet. I had no idea how to react with the (height cross)bar. I really don't know what a good height would be (for me this season).”

Other champions on the sophomore level were Isabella Salafatinos in the 55 (7.0) and 200 (28.7), Ellen Daniels (400 in 1:08.8), Rachel Aubrey (28-5 1/2 in triple jump) and Bekah Dau (23-8 1/2 in shot), the 4-lap relay (Jessica Michel, Sharon Murray, Shay Kiker, Isabella Salafatinos in 1:33.9) and the 1,600 relay (Ozog, Murray, Megan Rogus, Claire Filippelli in 4:49.3).

The Hilltoppers finished 1-2-3 in the 50 with Salafatinos, Emma Winans (7.2) and Hannah Paterakis (30.3) and the 200 with Salafatinos, Michel (29.7) and Paterakis (30.5).

Besides the 3,200, the Hilltoppers finished 1-2 in triple jump with Aubrey and Amani Bader (28-2 1/4). Also in second were Maddy Burt (55 hurdles in 9.8), Abby Shaver (1,600 in 5:54.7) and Michel (300 in 47.2). Other third-place finishers were Katie Goleash in triple jump (27-3 3/4) and shot (21-9 1/2), Deena Harboonzong (55 hurdles in 9.9), Daniels (300 in 47.6) and the 3,200 relay (Shaver, Hannah Arduino, Maddie Giffin, Burt in 11:20.3).