

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

Bringing home a pair of state track medals, the Longhorn boys' track team capped off a banner year for Chase County.

The two state medal-winners were juniors Kevin German and Justus Wallin, who joined a group of seven other teammates at Omaha Burke Stadium Friday and Saturday.

After winning his heat in the 300 meter hurdles late in Friday's morning session with a time of 41.52 seconds, German finished third Saturday in the field of eight finalists.

But many Longhorn fans thought he had second place in the photo finish hurdle race.

When the official times were posted, though, GI Central Catholic's Riley Shoemaker was ranked at 41.013 seconds, and German was officially third at 41.015, just two-thousands of a second difference.

The winning Class C time in the 300 meter hurdles was 40.03 seconds.

"I am really happy for Kevin," said Coach Carl Zuege.

"He really competed well. He took an attitude down there that he would win it," Zuege said. His first-place finish in the heat "got all of us going" as they concluded the first day of competition, Zuege added.



Wallin scored a seventh in the shot put with a toss of 50'1" on Friday. Zuege said his qualification for the finals was another big boost for Chase County on the first day of competition.

His mark was just 3.75 inches shy of his second-place district throw, his P.B., but only the second time this season Wallin's thrown over the 50-foot mark.

German's six points in the hurdles and Wallin's two in the shot gave the team its eight point team total, placing them 28th out of the 55 Class C teams that scored, right in the middle of the pack.

Most of the other performances at state by Chase County athletes neared their personal bests, but Zuege noted it's necessary to "step it up" for the state meet.

German and teammate Kelton Fisher qualified in the 100 meter high hurdles, but neither made it to the finals.

Running in separate heats, German's time was 16.97 seconds, while Fisher ran 17.57, both finishing seventh in their heats.

Shay Eidson was 16th out of 22 in the triple jump, where he leaped 39'10.25", just an inch shorter than his personal best at districts.

Holden Dreiling was a couple of seconds off his personal best in the 1600 on Saturday, where he finished 17th out of 24 with a time of 4:52.73.

Dan Sullivan ran 2:08.83 in the 800 meter, also on Saturday, placing 23rd out of 24. That was a couple seconds off his best time.

Running the last event of the day Saturday, Chase County's 1600 meter relay team placed 12th in the field of 16 with a time of 3:36.02. Team members included German, Sullivan, David Almanza and Kale Gockley. They entered the competition with the ninth fastest time out of districts, so were placed in the slow heat.

Zuege said they would have had to better their personal best to be in the mix to score this year, and the Chase County team was off that by a couple of seconds.

He said the coaches are going to continue to work at figuring out a plan to get all of their relay runners to do well at state, something they've missed doing the last couple of years.

Wallin also qualified for state in the discus, but scratched all three of his throws so recorded a "no mark."

Here are the official state marks from Omaha.

- 300 meter intermediate hurdles—3rd, Kevin German, CC, 41.015. Winning time—Lucas Wiechman, Wisner-Pilger, 40.03.
- Shot put—7th, Justus Wallin, CC, 50'1". Winning mark—Nathan Bazata, Howells-Dodge, 60'8".
- Triple jump—16th, Shay Eidson, CC, 39'10.25". Winning mark—Derek Zimmerman, Freeman, 47'7".
- 110 meter hurdles (prelims)—7th Heat #2, Kevin German, CC, 16.97; 7th Heat #3, Kelton Fisher, CC, 17.57. Winning time—Heat #1, Cole Schuster, Freeman, 14.97; Heat #2, Antonio Florea, Malcolm, 14.99; Heat #3, Sterling Reeves, Louisville, 15.66.
- 1600 meter run—17th, Holden Dreiling, CC, 4:52.73. Winning time—Cody Franklin, Bridgeport, 4:30.95.
- 800 meter run—23, Daniel Sullivan, CC, 2:08.83. Winning time—Hans Epp, Nebraska Christian, 1:57.80.
- 1600 meter relay—12th, Chase County, Kevin German, David Almanza, Kale Gockley, Dan Sullivan), 3:36.02. Winning time—Thayer Central, 3:30.71.

Good feelings for 2014

With a team that included just five seniors, and underclassmen coming up, Coach Zuege has good feelings about next year.

This past year, the Longhorns reclaimed the SPVA Conference championship and also won the C-11 district meet. Added to that were four out of five other meet championships.

He said all four classes, freshmen to seniors, contributed, and much of the team's strength returns next year.

He said the next step is to set their sights higher and qualify more than nine guys (includes one alternate) next year for state.

"With continued improvement, we can hopefully start to make a dent in the state meet," he said. Four of the five seniors this year—Kale Gockley, Michael May, Justin German and Brian Bell—were four-year track team members.

Zuege said it was a small class, but the team's seniors contributed leadership, scored points and brought the team through some lean years.

"I was happy for them to be part of the success we had this season," he said.