



Jacob Dodd photo
Jayren Perkins clears the high-jump bar during competition Thursday at MTSU. Perkins, a school record holder, finished sixth at the event.

Setting a high bar

Perkins leaves WCHS with school record

BY JEFFERY SIMMONS
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(McMinnville, Tennessee)

Jayren Perkins wasn't just happy to be at the TSSAA state track meet. The senior high jumper was there to compete.

Perkins more than held his own against the state's top competition, finishing sixth to get on the state medal stand.

"It was a good experience," said Perkins. "I think I did great."

Perkins was perfect on his first three attempts, clearing 5-foot-10, 6-foot and 6-foot-2. Clearing

on the first try was important, according to WCHS track coach Tom Moore.

"Making those three jumps without a miss was crucial because it put pressure on the jumpers who followed him," said Moore.

Perkins was unable to clear 6-foot-4, the height he cleared at the sectionals for the school record, on three attempts. He finished tied for sixth, but took the spot for himself due to his perfect three jumps while advancing.

Jett Kinder from Brentwood High School went on to win the

event, clearing 6-foot-8 to top the podium.

The top eight earned medals, something Moore believed Perkins could do when they got to MTSU for the competition.

"Jayren faced 15 great athletes. Our goal was to get to the podium," said Moore.

Perkins was proud to leave with a medal around his neck. It pairs well with the school record he broke.

"It's a great accomplishment. The school record had been there for 20 years," said Perkins. "It feels good to have it to yourself."



Jacob Dodd photo

Christian Locke broke a school record in the 800 while competing in the state track meet Thursday. Locke finished sixth in the event.

Saving the best for last

Locke sets school record in state meet

BY JEFFERY SIMMONS
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Christian Locke decided to put all his eggs in one basket. It produced a school record and a spot on the podium at the state track meet held at MTSU Thursday.

Locke, who qualified in both the 800- and 1,600-meter races, put all his efforts in the 800. It helped him run a personal-best time of 1:56.29, good for the sixth spot in a loaded field.

"It was a great finish to my senior year," said Locke. "It was the sixth-fastest time in the state and topped my best time by three seconds and the school record by two seconds."

"It's easily the best I've felt

during a race."

Houston senior Collin Jones won the event with a time of 1:55.09.

WCHS track coach Tom Moore knew Locke was taking a risk, but putting all his efforts into one race came with a great reward.

"The 800 field was loaded. It was a gutsy race by Christian," said Moore. "There were 11 kids in the field with sub 2:00 times and Christian's best time was 1:59. But he was fresh this time and it paid off."

The blistering time turned in by Locke gave him his second school record. He was already the record holder in the 1,600.

It was something Locke couldn't envision when he first started training for track.

"When I started this sport, I was just trying to keep up with my coach in practice. Never did I think I was going to come as far as I did," said Locke. "It's unreal. It's quite humbling to know anything actually is possible."

Already signed to attend Berea College, Locke didn't have to impress any scouts at the event. Instead, he reaffirmed the beliefs of his future coaches in attendance who are eager to get the speedy Pioneer on campus.

"They are super excited about Christian. And they should be," said Moore. "I am proud of Christian. It was a great moment for him with a clutch performance in his last high school race."

"His family and his future coaches were there. I love it for him."

Sullens sets WCHS roster

BY JEFFERY SIMMONS
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(McMinnville, Tennessee)

After a run to the region semifinal, expectations for an encore will be high for the WCHS boys basketball team. Coach Chris Sullens picked his roster last week to try and replicate the success, though he'll be without five of his six top scorers from last season.

"We'll be a very young basketball team, but one that will be fun to coach," said Sullens. "The style will be similar. Many more guys will have a

chance to earn varsity playing time."

Honorable mention all-district selection Sloan Seymour headlines the returning roster, along with varsity contributors Eli Jones, Lacedrick Cox and Raven Lewandowski. Brad Caten, Brady Gross, Austin Hodges, Heath Kuykendall and Eli Buchanan will all be looking for more minutes after playing mostly JV last season.

Rylan Holder, Westin Wilson, Wyatt Wilson, C.J. Taylor, Dante Elam, Aiden Cummings and Kason Holder all will move up from the fresh-

man team.

Ethan Smith and Devin Jordan, standouts in baseball and football, respectively, are two athletes hoping to make an impact on the court. Will Rivers rounds out the roster.

"We know there will be some growing pains. We'll need to be more accountable on the defensive end," said Sullens. "We think this group can compete nightly. Our expectations and goals won't change."

The Pioneers are set to take part in camps throughout the summer.



Lacedrick Cox could step into a bigger role after playing sparingly last season. Cox is one of 19 players selected to the WCHS basketball team.



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