

Black & Gold

Boyd captures second in State shot put

By Daniel L. Chamness
Christopher Boyd, a Tuscola junior, has several goals for the Illinois High School Association Class 1A State Track and Field Finals in 2023.

On Saturday, the Warrior three-sport athlete, left Eastern Illinois University's O'Brian Field in Charleston with several things. The most notable: a silver medal signifying the second best shot putter in the state of Illinois in Class 1A. What you could not see that the junior had was he is the top returnee in the state of Illinois in that event. He recorded a toss of 17.43 meters, which is 58 feet.

"I am very happy with second place," said the junior three-sport athlete, who plays football and basketball at Tuscola as well. At the state meet, my footwork was better than it ever had been this season. "But, it can get better. Also, I

know one of the things I must do is get faster and more explosive through the ring."

He lost only to Cowden Herick Beecher City's Daniel Lucas, who threw 18.25 meters to win the shot put. Not surprisingly, the shot put, which is a strength throwing event was packed with seniors, who grabbed six of the nine medals. Other than Boyd returning in one year, the others that earned all state status, who are juniors, are Catlin Salt Fork's Garrett Taylor, who threw 16.03 meters and took third, and Newton's Jacob Wickham, who took ninth with a throw of 14.80 meters.

"Dan (Lucas) is incredibly talented and a Division I recruit," said Ryan Hornaday, Tuscola's head coach and athletic director. "Chris taking second to him is quite a feat, quite honestly. Most schools will never have a shot putter

throwing over 60-0. We have had three. That is a testament to Coach Stan Wienke and his knowledge/expertise about throwing events. Chris is a super young man. He has so much God-given talent. He is so coachable and humble. A joy to work with. My hope for Chris is to not only win the shot put, but earn a medal in the discus as well."

For next year, he not only wants to be the best shot putter in the history of Tuscola High School, which would be a lofty enough goal given their are two former shot put champions, who competed for the Warriors. The most recent and the best ever is current Oklahoma State University offensive lineman Hunter Woodard. Woodard, who threw 63-0, earned the state title a mere four years ago. Woodard's throw is not only the Warrior school record, but only six

inches from the Class 1A state record. The state record is 63-6.

"With the second place finish, I am really encouraged and motivated," said Boyd. "One thing I can do is hit the weight room much harder than I have in the past. I am going make it a bigger part of my routine. Gaining that added strength will help me quite a bit."

Boyd also made Thursday's prelims in the discus, but failed to make the finals on Saturday. He would finish 16th overall in the discus, recording a toss of 43.34 meters. To make the finals, a throw of 44.52 meters or better was required. That would have put him among the top 12 throwers in 1A.

"I need to get much better at discus," said Boyd. "I was not happy to be in the second flight. But, I learned pretty quickly that I had not done what needed to be done to be

in the first flight. I need to get better. For me it was a disappointing state final in that event."

The Tuscola Warrior 3,200 meter relay team made the finals and finished 12th overall. To earn a medal, a time of 8:13.16 or faster was needed. The Tuscola foursome of Jackson Barrett, Riley Nolan, Logan Wallace and Josiah Hortin finished in 8:30.93.

"I was happy with my opening leg in the finals, but not in the prelims," said Barrett, one of two sophomores on the relay team. "I think with Josiah and I returning on the relay, we have something to build on. We hope to be back next year."

The Warriors advanced from the Thursday prelims, by running a time of 8:25.64. They were the 11th place in the prelims.

Both Hortin and Barrett competed in the prelims of the

1,600-meter run as well. Hortin took 28th, while Barrett took 34th. Hortin finished in 4:43.18, while Barrett finished the prelims in 4:52.28.

The 800-meter relay team of Hunter Branca, Connor Lewis, Krish Patel and Ben Hornaday made the prelims in the 800-meter relay and we less than two seconds from advancing to the finals. The foursome took 216th with a time of 1:33.54. Camp Point Central grabbed the final qualifying spot with a 1:31.93. Both Branca and Hornaday are juniors and slated to return.

Will Foltz advanced to the prelims in the pole vault, but did not register a height for the finals.

"I think advancing to state when you are an underclassman, pays dividends later in your career," said Hornaday. "I am looking forward to the upcoming years."



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