

Moore, Simpson advance to state track meet; Phillips wins triple jump at honor roll meet



ARCOLA FRESHMAN Ema Simpson (left) had a PR time of 1:01.48 and finished fourth in the 400 meter race in the IHSA Sectional track meet at Okaw Valley in Bethany. The time was good enough for Simpson to qualify for the state meet. Photo by Sally McCarthy.



ARCOLA JUNIOR Kelsey Moore (second from right) had a PR time of 48:28 in the 300 hurdles and finished in third place in the IHSA Sectional track meet at Okaw Valley in Bethany. Moore qualified for the state track meet in the event. Photo by Sally McCarthy.

By Mike Monahan

URBANA – Arcola’s Kelsey Moore, a junior and freshman Ema Simpson qualified for the Illinois High School Association Class 1A state track meet May 10th at Okaw Valley by placing under the qualifying times in the 400 and 300 hurdles respectively.

Moore ran the hurdles in school record and personal best 48.28, which was an impressive 1.85 seconds less than her previous season best and .58 better than her previous personal record. She was third overall, but well under the state qualifying time of 49.47.

Simpson’s time was just .1 better than her previous best. Simpson was fourth overall, but beat the qualifying time of 1:01.87.

“I was judging off all of the girls in front of me and I was like ‘oh, shoot, hopefully this is a good time.’ It ended up being a personal record. So, I was a little shocked. Definitely since there was no wind and it was not too hot that made a lot of difference.”

Moore’s finish was a little more dramatic as she hit her trail leg on the last hurdle, tried to keep her balance, but couldn’t and fell across the finish line.

“On my last hurdle I hit my foot and ended up full on diving, but I went through the finish line,” said Moore. “So, I knew I was okay because I went past the finish line. My stomach was scraped up, and my elbow had a little scrape on it. I was sitting on the ground and I hear and look over and my mom (Kendall Moore) yells, you got it and I look for coach Reel and I give coach Reel a hug. It was probably about five or so seconds before I knew I got in.”

Simpson made the finals in the long jump, but missed out on going to state as she was fourth with a leap of 16-0 and the state qualifying distance is 16-5.

Simpson and Moore were also part of the fourth place

4x400 along with Crystal Ramirez and Eva Hopkins. They finished fourth with a time of 4:25.79 and did not qualify for state.

Moore broke the school record of 48.90 by Ryan Fishel in 2016.

“It means a lot,” said Moore of having a school record. “I didn’t think I would be getting a school record or even a 48.27. I had not got a 49 this season. So, I was worried. Clearly I skipped over my 49. I can’t wait to talk to Ryan Fishel about it. My freshman year she talked to me about it and said, ‘you are going to get it’ It is super surreal right now.”

Moore credited her work on her blocks as some of the reasons for her improvement.

“I have been working on coming out of my blocks on my first hurdle and going strong,” said Moore. “I know that I excelled at that because Lia Patterson (Tuscola senior, who won the race) was jumping her first hurdle too. So, I knew I had the stagger at that point. I knew once I got to the curve I had to kick it in. So, that is what I focused on.”

Moore, who was in lane three, thought she had a chance to beat Maisie Kull of Shelbyville as she had run in the 49s and so that was kind of my goal to get her and worry about Patterson later. I looked forward and kept going. I wasn’t super worried about my time aspect, I was just worried about the person in front of me. I would rather be seeded third and get lane three because I can see the other lanes and work on keeping the lead on the stagger. I like being further back so I can see everyone in the stagger.”

Moore is seeded 13th and is . The four heat winners and the next five prelim times advance to the finals in both the 300 hurdles and 400. The 300 hurdles is to start at 1:30 p.m. Thursday, while the 400 is at 1:10 p.m. Simpson is 22nd in the 400.

Simpson said the fact she was that close in the long

jump motivated her for the 400.

“It was a big shock, especially being a freshman and competing against upperclassmen,” said Simpson of going to state. “There are not too many freshmen who are making it to state in the 400. I go up against the older girls a lot. It is a little intimidating, but it gives me a confidence booster and makes me feel better about myself.”

There are 34 runners in the 400 and seven freshmen, while the 300 hurdles has 33 competitors.

“I was nervous out of the blocks and so I kind of started out a little slower than what I wanted, but it turned out good in the end,” said Simpson. “I started off slow so I don’t wear myself out. I was really focused on placing and just getting under the qualifying time. I just told myself I have to have a good steady pace.”

As for goals Thursday Moore said, “My goal is to get a P.R. by getting into the high 47’s and from what I have looked at, if I meet that goal I will make the finals and run on Saturday, which is the all-time goal for the year.”

Simpson said, “Since there are preliminaries my goal is to just place well in the prelims and make it to finals. If I don’t make it to finals I don’t get to place at all. My main goal is to go in with a positive attitude and go all out in the prelims so I can make it to finals. It is going to be a different atmosphere considering it is high school. It is freshmen through seniors. It will definitely be an experience to say the least.”

News-Gazette Honor Roll meet

Arcola sophomore Braden Phillips won the triple jump at the 40th Champaign-Urbana News-Gazette Honor Roll track meet, which includes student-athletes from Class 1A, 2A and 3A. Phillips went 40-10 1/2 and beat out six

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