

Redbird boys track and field coach expects the best for rest of season

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - Alton head boys track coach Jeff White is convinced the best is yet to come from his boys track and field team.

After a slow time because of bad weather, the Redbirds boys track and field team hosted a freshman-sophomore invitational, then traveled to the Norm Armstrong Invitational at Belleville West, and then the Warrior Relays this past Friday in Granite City.

Coach White's hopes are high after observing the performances of his team in two key meets and the knowledge that a few key athletes have nursed injuries but are coming back.

One of the shining stars for the Redbirds has been hurdler/long jumper Jonathan Bumpers. Bumpers has consistently won the 300-meter hurdle races this season. He ran a 39.35 against some top competition at Belleville West and was also fifth in the 110-meter high hurdles (15.71) in the same meet.

“For Jonathan to do what he did against the competition that was at the Belleville West Meet was a great place to start his outdoor season,” White said. “We think he will be one of the top hurdlers in the state this year. He is a senior and really wanted to focus on track this year. We have worked with Jonathan on his technique and it has really paid off.”

Bumpers was eighth place in the 60-meter hurdles at the state indoor meet and seems ready to hit the ground running this outdoor season, White said.

Long jumpers Ahmad Sanders and Antonio Harrison are also off to great starts in the long jumps. Sanders went 21-6 at Belleville West and Harris 20-8.

Both have “really been working on their jump techniques,” Coach White said. Ju’qui Womack has also been competitive in the triple jump for the Redbirds. Cassius Havis remains a force for Alton in the middle distances - 800 and 1,600 meters.

“We think Cassius will be in the 4:20s in the 1,600 by the end of the season,” White said. “He set the meet record in the 1,600 at the freshman-sophomore meet. He is a very talented kid and he competes and goes out hard.” To date, Havis has recorded a 4:33.7 in the 1,600.

The Redbirds’ Earlie Brown was seventh in the 100 and eighth in the 200 at Belleville with times of 11.24 and 22.59.

Deonte’ McCoy was third at the state indoor meet in the 60 with a time of 7.02, so he is expected to be a strong force in the sprints and sprint relays for Alton. Terry Walker is another key competitor for relays, White said. White said he believes Alton’s 4 x 100 relay will be one of the best in the state. Kelvin Cummings is another Redbird who will be competitive in the middle to distance races.

White said he thinks the Redbirds are going to be a sleeper team with their immense talent in all the events.

“We have talent spread out in the sprints, jumps, relays and throws and we think we can come out and compete pretty well,” he said. “I think we will have some kids make it to state. We will be a fast team with some great overall depth and versatility.”



