

Ulrich makes EAWR history with fourth in shot put at state 2A meet

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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CHARLESTON – East Alton-Wood River freshman Jayden Ulrich made some Oiler history in the IHSA Class 2A Girls Track and Field Championship's state meet at O'Brien Field at Eastern Illinois University Saturday morning.

Ulrich became the first Oiler female track athlete to medal at the state meet when she finished fourth in the shot put with a toss of 41-4.75 – the same mark she had that got her into the final in Friday's qualifying session.

“It was really exciting,” Ulrich said. “Kind of nerve-racking, but I'm so glad that I did it; I'm just ready for the upcoming years here – hopefully I can place better here.”

Ulrich has been throwing the shot since here her sixth-grade year but didn't expect to be in the position she was in to finish fourth. “I really didn't (expect to finish so high); coming in, I had really low PR (personal record) and then, when I threw the 41, I was like 'oh – OK!' It was very surprising.”

“She's the first Oiler girl athlete to get a medal here at the state meet,” said Oiler coach Russ Colona. “That's awesome.

“For a freshman here, she's already put in a full career; she's got the (Madison) county record, she's (Prairie State Conference) champ, a school record and now a state medal – that's awesome.”

Colona is also happy for Ulrich in many ways. “She's a great kid, she works hard, she's fun to work with – she's just a joy. She smiles all the time and is always happy, but she's super-happy today.

“She's just natural – she's a wonderful athlete, She's got a great career ahead of her; she got beat by three pretty big seniors today. She's awesome, I can't wait to see the next three years.”

Those seniors finishing ahead of Ulrich were Evangelynn Harris of East St. Louis (46-1.25), Nikita Maines of Centralia (45-3) and Tayla Schwarz of Dixon (43-1); Ulrich finished ahead of Triad's Kelly Pottorff, also a senior, who had a put of 41-1 that put her in sixth on the day.