

# Kids and families have fun at second Friday Night Lights Track Event

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EDWARDSVILLE – As it was last week, the second Friday Night Lights track and field meet at the Winston Brown Track and Field Complex at Edwardsville High School was fun for both kids and parents alike.

Unlike last week, the weather was much cooler, thanks to storms that had pushed through the area earlier in the day, with even a slight possibility of rain possibly holding attendance slightly down.

Nevertheless, the emphasis was on fun as participants and their families truly enjoyed themselves while being introduced to the sport of track and field.

Despite rain concerns, the meet went off without a hitch. And the cooler temperatures, with a slight breeze blowing, was a big help as well.

“Definitely, the rain earlier today,” Edwardsville boys coach Chad Lakatos said when asked about weather concerns. “But I knew it was going to cool the temperatures off. I

was just hoping it wasn't going to rain, and we'd have to cancel the event. But it held off, and I think it encouraged families to come out. It was a nice evening, and I think everybody had fun.”

Tigers' girl's track and field coach Camilla Eberlin echoed the same thoughts.

“Yes, it was,” Eberlin said. “We had just about the same turnout as we did last week, and it was great. Lots of families involved, lots of kids smiling, running to their parents, and that's what we want.”

The weather concerns also didn't stop the runners and their families from enjoying themselves.

“I was concerned with all the rain today, that people wouldn't come out,” Eberlin said, “but they did, they showed up, and even here in the last few races, we've had a little bit of rain. But rain doesn't shy anyone away from running.”

Of course, there's always the possibility of a future Tiger track star participating in the meet, and the parents truly enjoyed seeing their future runners in the meet.

“Oh, sure have,” Eberlin said, “and there's a lot of parents that are excited to see their kids running too.”

As in last week's meet, participants were divided into age groups – nine-and-under and 10-and-over – with different events from last week. Running events were the 100-meter dash, 400-meter run and 1600-meter run, along with a 4x25 meter family relay, while the shot put, softball throw and long jump comprised the field events. One group ran on the track while the other participated in the field events, then the groups switched events for the second half of the meet.

In the nine-and-under group, heat winners in the 100-meters were two-year-old Betsy Eberlin of Edwardsville, Noah Huffman, four, of Waterloo, four-year-old Brock Young of Collinsville, Jocelyn Ohlau, five, of Edwardsville, Owen Anderson, also five and from Edwardsville, six-year-old Aubree Shaw of Carrollton, seven-year-old Jonathan Brown of Edwardsville, Gia Schmid, also seven and from Edwardsville, Cruz Lakatos, eight, of Edwardsville, and Aydan Anderson, nine, from Edwardsville.

Two heats of the 400 meters were run, and in the first heat, Ohlau finished first, followed by Young and five-year-old Eli Voss of Edwardsville. Ayden Anderson took the second heat, with Cruz Lakatos finishing second and Brown taking third.

In the 1600 meters, nine-year-old Dean Williams of Edwardsville won the race, with Eve Eberlin, seven, of Edwardsville finishing second and Serena Shapiro, also seven and from Edwardsville, coming in third.

There were also two heats of the 4x25 meter family relay held, and in the first heat, it was an all-Edwardsville sweep of the top three places, with the Lakatos family winning the heat, the Ohlau family taking second and the Eberlin family finishing third. The second heat was won by members of the Edwardsville High track teams, with BLT With a Side of W the runners-up and the Schmid family taking third.

In the 10-and-over group, the winners of the 100-meter heats were Ian Trauernicht, 10, of Edwardsville, Clayton Lakatos, 11, also of Edwardsville, and Kai King, 13, of Edwardsville. The first heat of the 400 meters was won by Gavin Rotter, 10, of Edwardsville, with Trauernicht finishing second. The second heat was won by Owen Gruben, 13, of Edwardsville, with Clayton Lakatos second and Ryan Schmid, 12, also of Edwardsville third.

Gruben was the winner of the 1600 meters, with Zack Gibbs, 15, of Edwardsville finishing second and 10-year-old Tony Eberlin, also of Edwardsville, finishing third.

That members of both Tigers' track coaches families were participants in the meet was a great example of the family aspect of the event.

“You know, I love the sport of track and field,” Lakatos said, “and just sharing that with the other families, I think, is important. Kids get involved in different sports at a young age, and I think it's important for them to, like I said before, to have the sport of track and field introduced to them at a young age, and maybe it's something they continue to do later on. And just adding the family event to it just brings a lot of fun to everyone.”

Eberlin emphasized the family aspect as well.

“Oh, it's great,” Eberlin said. “I know my kids, they're involved in a lot of things, and I like that. They love to be here with me on the track, and my mom (Bert Trump) coached track for 34 years (at Greenfield, Ill., High School). And so, they love to be here and they like to do all that stuff.”

And the fact that there were two heats of the family relay was also a big plus for the meet. And to quote the title of the 1987 Wang Chung hit: Everybody Have Fun Tonight.



“Yes, everyone has fun,” Eberlin said. “And I think that was had. I think this was the first year that we've had enough family relays to do two almost full heats, which was great, because that means that everybody's getting involved.”

The increasing number of participants and families also brings the possibility of meet expansion, with more events. Lakatos is looking forward to that opportunity.

“Our numbers are definitely increasing,” Lakatos said, “so we're going to have to take a look at the events we currently have, what can we do to make it better? This year, we're averaging around, I think tonight was 45, last week was 50. Previous years have been right around the 30 to 40. So, with the number increases, I think we're definitely going to have to take a look at making some changes. And those changes will definitely be for the positive.”

Whatever changes are made to next year's meet, the emphasis will remain on family fun.

“It's been a great family event, and I hope we continue to see it coming out in the future,” Eberlin said.

And everyone will continue to have fun and be introduced to track and field.









