

Eldridge Captures 800 Meters At Collinsville Invite, Eagles Poised For Upcoming MVC Championships And Postseason

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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BETHALTO - Justice Eldridge, a junior runner for the boys' track team at Civic Memorial High School, has been having a very good season so far and on May 6, won the 800 meters at the Collinsville Invitational at Kahok Stadium, coming in at 1:57.70 to help the Eagles come in 13th place in the team standings.

Eldridge and his teammates had an outstanding Collinsville meet and have also had a very good season as it turns into the final weeks, with the Mississippi Valley Conference meet coming May 11 and the IHSA Class 2A sectional meet the following week at East Alton-Wood River Memorial Stadium. Eldridge was very excited about his and his teammate's results and looked ahead to bigger and hopefully better things.

"I feel amazing," Eldridge said during an interview that took place while the meet was going on. "Everyone's running great, everyone's running (personal records) today and it's just really awesome to see. I'm really excited."

The results couldn't have come at a better time for CM, with the conference and sectional meets fast approaching. Eldridge knows that he and his teammates will be running in their projected events for the state meet series and thinks that the Eagles will do very well.

"We're probably going to be running our state events in that," Eldridge said, referring to the MVC meet. "I'll probably be running the 800, but then again, I'm not 100 percent sure what that means for the other guys. But (4x800 meter relay) for sure. But for Jackson (Collman), it could be anywhere, 1,600 or 3,200."

No matter what event Eldridge races in, he's hoping to accomplish some big things at the end of the season.

"Well, I'll probably make the finals in the 800," Eldridge said, "and then, we want to make the finals in the four-by-eight and bring home medals again, like we did last year in the 4x800. When it comes to the 800, I would love to run 1:56, but we'll see. I tried a new tactic today that I haven't used in a while and it worked out pretty well. So once we get there, who knows what can happen?"

As far as goals for the remainder of the season, Eldridge, a junior, has some goals he hopes to achieve for his final season in 2024.

"I've always had it in the back of my mind what I've wanted to do towards the end of high school," Eldridge said. "When it comes to the 800, under 1:55 probably. And in the 1,600, I want to close in on 4:10 and in the 3,200, I want to drop down close to 9:20 for the senior year."

A lot of work ahead for Eldridge, but he's determined to get things done and make things so.

"Yeah," Eldridge said. "This year, I've been dealing with some injuries, so my volume, my base is probably a little bit off so far, but right now, I'm more crafted for the 800. But my 1,600's not bad. If everything goes according to plan my senior year, should be a good one."