

Eldridge Finishes Second In 1,600 Meters, Eagles Perform Well In Other Events In Norm Armstrong Track Meet

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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BELLEVILLE - Justice Eldridge finished second in the 1,600 meters, while other Civic Memorial athletes had good showings at the Norm Armstrong Invitational track meet, held Saturday at Bob Goalby Field on the campus of Belleville West High School.



The Eagles wound up in 17th place with 16 points, one ahead of Alton, who had 15 points, while Edwardsville won the team title with 75 points. It was a day of good performances by CM, and head coach Jake Peal was very pleased with the results.

"We've had a pretty good day so far," Peal said in an interview conducted during the meet. "We're running some of our (personal records) in our relays, and some really good litmus tests for early outdoor. It's really great competition."

The meet is usually seen as an early measuring stick to see how teams are faring this early in the season, what's working best, and what needs to be worked on. Peal felt that things were going along very well.

"I think it's been pretty good," Peal said. "Our (4x800 meter relay team) ran 8:13, finished third. That's definitely our strongest relay, the boys looked really solid. We twisted the order a little bit today, and things paid off for them."

That team consists of Lucas Naugle, Eldridge, Tulio Zampieri, and D.J. Dutton, and all came through well on the day in both the relay and in other races as well. The team qualified for the IHSA Class 2A state meet in 2023, and they're back, along with other veterans who are looking to take the Eagles up to the next step.

"I hope to send just as many qualifiers back to Charleston as we did last year," Peal said. "We did well in our sectional, but it's a long season. We just want to get better every week, as the weather starts getting better, and we run against great competition, and just getting things together."





Peal also agreed it was great to get outside and compete in a meet, after a lousy March, weatherwise, put every team behind in their prep work for the season.

"Yeah, it sure has," Peal said. "We had two meets cancelled already this outdoor season. And February was too nice," he said with a smile and laugh. "It's the Midwest, you never know what to expect."

Of course, Peal is looking ahead to the season and how everything goes as CM gets ready for the ultimate goal of competing in the IHSA state meet in May.

"Yeah, absolutely," Peal said. "We've got a strong core returning, we're getting better. So is the competition, but we're doers, not dreamers."

Peal has a lot of confidence in his team, with younger runners joining the veterans to form a strong team this season.

"Yeah, absolutely," Peal said. "Our sophomores are taking big steps forward, and our juniors and seniors know what it's all about. They know what they need to do, They know their job."

In the 100 meters, Adrian Gares came in with a time of 12.10 seconds, with teammate Kevahn Flanigan right behind at 12.22 seconds. Gares then came up with a time of 24.59 seconds in the 200 meters, with Josh Teems coming in at 24.94 seconds. Zach Wooten had a time in the 400 meters of 54.25 seconds, while Hunter Siotta was in at 1:02.56.

Eldridge finished second in the 1,600 meters at 4:28.75, with Naugle coming in at 4:59.94. Max Weber finished 10th in the 3,200 meters at 9:51.07. while Jacob Cranford came in at 10:27.02. In the hurdles races, Ty Books had a time of 19.66 seconds in the 110 meters, and also had a time in the 300 meters of 48.03 seconds, and Drew Abernathy came in at 48.15 seconds.

In the relays, the 4x100 meter team had a time of 46.20 seconds, while the 4x200 meter team came in at 1:40.12. In the 4x400 meters, the team finished with a time of 3:44.88, and the 4x800 meter team finished third at 8:13.07.

In the field events, Ephraim Parris had a throw of 11.57 meters in the shot put, while Josh Hodge got off a toss of 10.94 meters. In the discus throw, Hodge had a toss of 40.07 meters, while in the pole vault, Teems cleared 2.81 meters. In the long jump, Abernathy went 5.14 meters, with Siotta jumped 4.72 meters. Finally, in the triple jump, Myles Silva got off a leap of 11.25 meters, while Gares took off on a jump of 10.39 meters.



[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)