

Girls make easy work of SWC opponents

Written by Deb Egenberger

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Swedes with thirs consecutive conference title.

AINSWORTH—More than two hours on a bus one way and take-your-breath-away wind can make for an unpleasant day spent outside.

Gothenburg track coach Steve Reeves told his girls going into the Southwest Conference meet at Ainsworth on Saturday that it could be a long day for many of them, especially those with full event schedules.

The girls responded with a team championship and five first-place finishes.

“I thought the kids handled the conditions well,” Reeves said. “We got off to a good start in the field events and then they did a tremendous job on the track.”

Gothenburg’s 36-point victory over Cozad in the team race gave the Swede girls their third consecutive SWC championship.

“This is the most important meet for us up to now,” Reeves said.

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The Swedes had several girls earn multiple medals, led by Joslyn Oliver who accomplished two individual golds and a silver.

Oliver won the triple jump with a distance of 32 feet, 6 inches. She also took first in the high jump by clearing 5-3.

In the 100-meter hurdles, Oliver was second to Dusty Nelson of Ainsworth and just ahead of teammate Emily Max.

“Emily hit the sixth or seventh hurdle during the finals and it threw her out of sync,” Reeves said.

That was after running the short hurdles in a time of 15.6 seconds in the prelim race to move up to No. 2 on the Swede all-time chart.

After her disappointment in the 100-meter hurdles, Max came back to run 13.1 seconds in the 100-meter dash for second place and she won the 300-meter hurdles in a time of 49.5 seconds.

“She’s just such a competitor,” Reeves said.

Tabitha Paul earned the other individual gold medal winning the 400-meter dash in 1:03.5.

“Tabitha is really competing hard,” Reeves said. “Her win in the 400 and her and Kira (Peterson) combining for 10 points in the 200 were big for us as a team.”

Paul finished second in the 200 and Peterson came in fifth.

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The 4x100 relay brought home the last Swede gold. Paul, Payton Prall, Abby Ambler and Siera Schwanz combined for a 54.3-second relay time.

Reeves said the key to the girls' team win was scoring points in all but one of the 17 meet events.

"That's a pretty well-rounded team," he said.

The Swede girls will compete next at the Cozad Invite on Friday. The five teams involved will all be familiar as they are all SWC foes: Broken Bow, Cozad, Gothenburg, Minden and Ogallala.

"There are no team scores kept," Reeves said, "so we'll use this as a tune-up for the district meet."

Gothenburg competes in the B-6 district at Scottsbluff beginning at 11 a.m. MT on May 13.

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