

Swede boys qualify five out of tough District B-5

Written by Greg Viergutz
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When Gothenburg learned it would be headed east for a district track meet rather than west this year, it appeared that the Swedes would be trading one challenging district for another.

The most difficult of that competition in the District B-5 meet Thursday at Lexington was likely the 110-meter high hurdles.

“We knew this was probably the best hurdle district in terms of numbers of people and quality of times,” Swede coach Steve Reeves said.

When time comparisons with other districts were completed, Gothenburg’s Blake Ristine and Preston Franzen, fifth and sixth respectively in the 110s, joined fourth place finisher Trevor Schuller of Central City and the automatic top three placers as qualifiers for the state meet.

To get six people out of the district to the state meet kind of proves the quality claim, Reeves said. The top three places qualify in individual events and the next fastest six runners regardless of district.

Cozad won the B-5 team championship with 96 points. The Swedes finished with 50.

Gothenburg will have five competitors at the state meet Friday and Saturday at Omaha Burke.

“It kind of played out the way we thought it would in terms of the way the kids have competed all year,” Reeves said. “The big thing about districts is that there is always some surprises and there can be a few disappointments.”

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“On paper, we probably got what we did to state in what we had the best opportunity for.”



Perhaps providing one of the surprises was Swede senior Logan Koehler who won the high jump with a top effort of 6-1.

Koehler missed most of the middle of the season with a leg injury. His timing returned quickly, though, amid less than ideal weather conditions.

“We’re really happy for him because he’s been a four-year contributor to the program,” the coach said. “He had the unfortunate injury. This is kind of a bonus for him.”

Swede sophomore Tanner Borchardt will compete at state in both weight events. He earned the gold medal in the shot with a toss of 53-4, which was second best among all state qualifiers.

“He’s got the potential to throw further down there,” Reeves said. “He’s sitting in good position and I think he will compete very well in both the shot and discus down at state.”

Borchardt also placed third in the discus.

Franzen will compete in both hurdles events. His winning 300-meter intermediate hurdle time of 40.56 seconds ranks fourth among state qualifiers.

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“Preston has been aggressive with the 300 hurdles all year,” Reeves said. “When he focuses on his own race, and doesn’t worry about anybody else, he has some very good results.

“We think he’s got a chance, if he runs clean, to have a good finish down at state.”

Gothenburg was hoping to get two qualifiers in the pole vault, but Skyler Kottwitz will be the lone Swede competitor at state. He finished third with a best height cleared of 13-1. Teammate Blake Ristine was fifth at 12-7.

