

Swede boys earn four medals at state

Written by Greg Viergutz
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A Gothenburg senior won a state track medal he's been aiming for all season and a pair of underclassmen earned hardware in their first state experience Friday and Saturday at Omaha Burke High School.

The Swedes finished in a tie for 13th place with 17 points at the Class B state track meet. Elkhorn South scored 59 to win the team championship. Scottsbluff finished a close second with 55 points.

Senior Preston Franzen brought home the highest medal for the Swedes with a fourth place performance in the 300-meter intermediate hurdles.

Franzen received the less desirable first lane assignment in the finals after posting the seventh fastest time in the preliminaries.

"He had to run out of lane one which really isn't the lane of choice for a 300 hurdler," Swede coach Steve Reeves said. "We knew that if he ran a clean race that he would have the opportunity to get a pretty high medal.

"He ended up fourth and very easily, if he was clean on that last hurdle, could have got third. I was very proud of him as far as his effort is concerned."

Franzen's time in the finals was 40.92 seconds.

Sophomore Tanner Borchardt gained valuable experience in his first taste of state meet action. He placed fifth in the shot with a performance of 52-6 and also in the discus with a toss of

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152-4.

Of the four athletes in each event that placed ahead of him, only one is an underclassmen.



“He’s got the capability of finishing higher,” Reeves said. “I look for him to do some big things in the next couple of years.”

Skyler Kottwitz, a junior, used some error-free vaulting to earn the fifth place medal in the pole vault.

“I was very happy for Skyler,” the coach said. “The big difference for him finishing fifth rather than a little bit lower was that he was clean in all his vaults up to 13-6. Some other kids had some early misses. That automatically puts him to the top.”

“He handled his first time being down there really well.”

Reeves added that he expects goods things in the event next season from Kottwitz and classmate Blake Ristine.

Ristine and Franzen both competed in the 110-meter high hurdles but couldn’t crack the finals.

“In the highs, I thought Blake and Preston both ran pretty good races,” Reeves said. “It was a pretty good hurdle field.”

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Senior Logan Koehler cleared the high jump bar at 6-0 before failing to advance and did not place.

The coach was pleased with the 13th place finish and the effort of his squad.

“I felt they represented Gothenburg quite well,” he said. “It shows a little bit about the character and competitiveness of our kids.

“We’re going to miss our seniors but we’ve got a great nucleus coming back.”

