

Prep Sports | updated: 3/17/2017 11:32 PM

Batavia wins UEC indoor tite



Jay Hunt of Batavia reacts after clearing 6 feet, 9 inches in the high jump during the 2017 Upstate Eight Conference Boys Indoor Track & Field Championships at Batavia High School Friday.

Patrick Kunzer | Staff Photographer

By Kevin McGavin
Daily Herald Correspondent

The penultimate event Friday night in Batavia was guaranteed to produce a second individual Upstate Eight Conference indoor track and field champion when Jay Hunt and Michael Pryor came down the stretch of the 200-meter dash.

Hunt, the Batavia senior who had already broken his own school record with his 6 feet, 9-inch clearance in the high jump, and Pryor were shoulder-to-shoulder in the waning meters.

But Hunt denied the West Aurora senior a dash double with a winning time of 22.9 seconds.

Pryor, who bested the 55-meter field in 6.53 seconds, was nine one-hundredths of a second behind Hunt.

In becoming one of only two individual twin-event champions, the Hunt performance was emblematic of the Batavia onslaught.

The Bulldogs captured seven of the 15 events -- sweeping the high jump and shot put in the process -- in their 163-110 victory over St. Charles East.

Defending champion of the single-division meet, West Aurora, was third with 79 points.

St. Charles North (63 points), Geneva (49), West Chicago (29), East Aurora (24), Larkin (20), Bartlett (15), Elgin (12), Glenbard East (11), South Elgin (10) and Streamwood (10) rounded out the field.

"What a wonderful night for Jay," Batavia boys coach Dennis Piron said. "We have a very good high school track team, as good as you can have. We have a lot of depth."

"I have a lot of hops," Hunt said of his improving his program best in the high jump by an inch. "I just had to be patient with my jumps. (In the 200) I persevered through the tightness (that is, nerves). I fought through it."

Batavia freshman Adam Kennedy prevailed by the narrowest of margins in an even more closely contested race at 800 meters.

Kennedy and St. Charles East senior JB Sandlund literally dove at the finish line.

The automatic timing system declared Kennedy triumphant by one one-hundredth.

"The last time I ran at state in middle school, I got beat by one one-hundredth (for the title)," said Kennedy, who was timed in 2:00.55. "I didn't want to let that happen again. I really don't remember what happened in the race, except the end."

Junior Reggie Phillips was on both Batavia sprint-relay championships at 800 and 1,600 meters.

In his only event, Batavia junior Sam Conger captured the 55 hurdles in 7.87 seconds.

Hunt and Peter Rudelich (6-4) swept the high jump for Batavia; Ross Berggren (54-7) and Elijah Green (51-4.5) did likewise in the shot put for the Bulldogs.

The return of elite West Aurora jumpers DaVion Cross and Camron Donatlan could not have engendered more radical differences.

Cross, the two-time defending Class 3A triple jumper, joined Hunt as a double champion in sweeping the two vertical jumps.

The Blackhawks' senior and indoor conference record holder in the triple jump soared 45-9.75 to win his specialty event after claiming the long jump in 22-4.

"I am very pleased," Cross said. "I came in here with a good mindset. Coming off of basketball, it gives me a lot of confidence in my first meet back."

Donatlan, who stunned the state track scene by winning the high jump at 6-10 after starting his first season on the frosh-soph team last spring, bowed out at 6-2 in settling for third.

"Rusty," Donatlan said. "I had only one practice. The last time I jumped over the bar was at state last year."

Geneva secured running victories from Tyler Dau and Josh Rodgers in the 800 and 3,200 runs.

"I knew I had to pass (St. Charles East junior Campbell Koch) before the (first) turn (of the final lap)," said Dau, who committed to run cross country and track at Florida State University the day before. "He challenged me again."

Rodgers' championship effort in 9:51.45 denied yet another St. Charles East athlete in Cole Adesso.

But the Saints were not completely shut out after junior Charlie Wade captured the open 400 in 51.14.

St. Charles North pole-vaulter Colton Weber won the North Stars' lone title at 14-7.

East Aurora was the surprise winner of the meet-opening 3,200 relay.

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