

February 28, 2011

Sweet Home's Gordon breaks new ground in the 55

Pearce sets Section VI mark in the triple jump

By **Mary Jo Monnin**
News Sports Reporter



FREDONIA — The demon that had haunted Wayne Gordon for a year vanished at the sound of the starter's gun at Sunday's Section VI Indoor Track and Field Championships.

(Photo left) Brendan Lanighan of Williamsville East guts out a win in the 600 at Sunday's Section VI Championship.
John Hickey / Buffalo News

One year after false starting in the 55 dash, the **Sweet Home** junior came back in a big way on the track at Fredonia State's Steele Hall. Not only did he get a clean start, he won the race in record-breaking time. His 6.52 broke his own Section VI record of 6.53 set earlier this year at Yale.

The Sectionals were also a state qualifier with the top two finishers in each event qualifying for next weekend's New York State Championships at Cornell University. Section VI qualified 42 boys and 45 girls.

"It [the false start] was on my mind, I don't know how I got it out," said Gordon. "The whole time I just stared at the finish line, and tried to get it out of my mind and keep focused and relaxed.

"This is the event I want to get better and better at," he added. "I want to be at a 6.4-something. I'm going to try and get it at states. There's going to be a lot more competition at states so I think I'll do a lot better."

Junior Mikayla Pearce of **Maryvale** broke her own Section VI record in the triple jump with a leap of 38 feet, 10.5 inches, improving her previous 38-5 set last year at sectionals. "I felt so smooth and I was really exaggerated my [hop, skip, jump] phases," she said.

Pearce will be making her sixth trip to states. She also won the long jump in 18-11.5.

What a season it's been for **Iroquois** senior Abbie Benson. She's broken five school records and on Sunday won sectional titles in the 1,500 and rebroke her school record in the 1,000 in 2:58.81. The trip to states will be her third.

Senior Nick Cahill of **Kenmore West** upset the top seed to win the long jump with a personal-record 21-11.25. "It was just spot-on, everything was perfect," said Cahill. "Coach [Rich] Harris told me what to do: run like a sprinter and not a 400 runner, and plant."

Also qualifying from West was Brandon Maines, who used the kick lap in the 600 meters to go from last place to second finishing behind winner Brendan Lanighan of **Williamsville East**.

Lancaster qualified the most athletes of any team in Section VI with 13. That includes its boys and girls 4x200 relays, shot putters Jordan Kihl and McKenzie Kuehlewind, Lauren Sullivan in the 55 dash and Jake Wukovits in the 600.

The Redskins' 4x200 relay of Sullivan, Shannon Ponitz, Corinne McCarthy and Tiffany Cycon ran a 1:50.54 to take over the Western New York lead.

It's been a big year for the 'Skins. The boys and girls won the Team Challenge and its boys won the WNY Relays.

Clarence coach John Hunt called anchor runner Brian Cummysky "the ultimate chaser" as he came from an estimated 50 meters back to help the Red Devils win the 4x400 relay in 3:38.88.

Kaitlin McCadden of Clarence ran a 10:43.65 to win the 3,000 and Megan Kaiser cleared 11 feet to win the pole vault. Clarence has nine athletes going to states.

Allegheny-Limestone/Olean beat a host of Class AA schools on its way to defending its title in the girls 4x400. Mallory Clark, Stephanie Foster, Samantha Huselstein and Summer Sawaya gutted out a 4:15.27, the fastest time in WNY. Ashley Peterson won the high jump and Matt Allen took the pole vault for the Gators. The Gators have Allen and six girls going to states.

Allen was a busy man on Sunday running between the hurdles and the triple jump. He should be able to focus on his specialty, the pole vault, at states. He cleared a WNY-leading 13-6 at the Section VI Team Championships on Feb. 12.

Senior Chad Maloy of **Springville** is poised to compete in his fifth state meet after doubling in the 1,600 and 3,200.

Joining Maloy as a double winner was Kailyn Acury of **Williamsville South**, who won the 55 dash and the 55 hurdles.

West Seneca West, winner of the Section VI team title five of the last 10 years, took two first places, two seconds and a fourth. Representing the Indians at states will be Rebecca Hildebrand (shot put), Kalen Sullivan (1,000), Chelsea Needham (3,000), Natalie Barren (long jump) and Jordan Snajczuk (racewalk).

Junior Kala Allen of **Williamsville East** qualified for states in the 300, 55 dash and 600, but will not compete. Instead she's opting to run in a U.S.A. National 400 meter relay in Jamaica.

Williamsville North will be sending Lisa Kuhn in the racewalk and Charley Kenyon in 55 hurdles. Kenyon ran a 7.85 to outlean Tyvon Rivers of Sweet Home, who went 7.88.

Other individual sectional winners were: Jailyn Twitty of **Amherst** (triple jump), Meghan Manley of **Orchard Park** (600), Calvin Stallworth of **Dunkirk** (high jump), Mike Prevorse of Pioneer (shot put) and Cordell Johnson of **Niagara Falls** (300). Twitty covered 46 feet, 3 inches to win the triple. He's confident he can better last year's fifth-place state finish of 45-9.

The **Frontier** girls and the **Grand Island** boys are sending their 4x800 relays.

Rebecca Love, Shannon Dalton, Emily Krasinski and Renae Sweeney won by a 23-second margin for the Falcons. Dan Geiger, Chris Meyer, Brendon Lutnick and Nick Masiello, who have the fastest time in WNY, went 8:29.14 for GI.

mmonnin@buffnews.com