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## Amherst's Fields running after car accident

Manley, McLaughlin among the big winners

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JAMESTOWN — Ashley Fields' biggest concern coming into Sectionals wasn't how fast she would run, but if she could run at all.

East Aurora's Marta McLaughlin (right) celebrates her win in the 800 at the Section VI Track and Field Championships. Photo by Mark Mulville / Buffalo News

Fields, a multiple Section VI sprint champion in her career, is only competing in the 200 meters this weekend after being involved in a car accident last month.

Fields is one of approximately 960 athletes from more than 60 schools competing at the Section VI Track and Field Championships at Jamestown's Strider Field. The winner of each event, as well as athletes hitting a state cutoff, advance to next week's New York State Championships at

Caledonia-Mumford, outside Rochester.

The accident, which took place on Main Street in Williamsville, left Fields with an injured back. She was a passenger in the vehicle and was not hospitalized. She said she's been going to physical therapy at least two or three times a week.

In her 200-meter preliminary run Friday, she won her heat after coasting in 24.52.

"I'm trying to finish off [my career] in the 200, but it's going to be hard, and I know if I win it here, it's going to be even harder at states," said Fields, who has signed with Baylor University. "I'm not really in shape because I haven't run in a while. I couldn't really run, so I'm just trying to see if I can at least do this."

The accident sidelined Fields for the WNY Classic at Lancaster and last weekend's ECIC Championships. She may try to run the 1,600 relay today as well as the 200 finals.

"It was just a freak accident," she said. "At first I didn't think it was that bad, but now I'm trying to think more positive and how maybe this is giving me a rest, and I can be more ready for Baylor because I do run so much."

There were only a limited number of finals on Friday. The finals in most events are today starting at noon.

Orchard Park senior Meghan Manley, who has signed with the University at Buffalo, stuck to her race plan and won the Division I 800 in 2:14.02, her personal record by four seconds. She went out in 66 seconds and stayed on the shoulder Emily Krasinski of Frontier until passing her at the 600-meter mark. Last year, Manley won the 400 and went on to finish sixth at states.

"The girls I ran against, they really pushed me," said Manley. "I waited to kick it in around the 200-meter mark."

Freshman Marta McLaughlin of East Aurora earned her third trip to states with a win in the Division II 800 in 2:15.69. McLaughlin trailed Kasey Jones of Holland before making her move 450 meters into the race. "She was there at ECICs too, so I knew I had to go," said McLaughlin.

Teammate Sarah Mars also qualified for states finishing second. EA had five girls in the 800, and all ran their season-best times.

EA had an impressive eight runners competing in the 3,000. They finished 1-2-3 led by senior Megan Hulton, who ran 10:25.13. Hulton will run for St. Lawrence next season. She was five seconds faster than teammate Sarah Anstett while Paige Anderson was third.

EA's distance core will go for titles today as the No. 1 seed in the 1,600 relay, 3,200 relay and 1,500. Hulton is the top seed in the 1,500.

Junior Mikayla Pearce of Maryvale won the Division II long jump for the third year in a row. She's been slowed by a pulled quad muscle suffered at indoor states. She got her six required meets in this season thanks to ice, rest and bubble tape.

Williamsville East junior Kala Allen is taking on a heavy load as she advanced to the finals in the 100, 200 and 400 meters. Her times of 12.31 in the 100 and 26.17 in the 200 were season bests. "I just have to make sure I warm up and warm down and stay focused before and after each race," said Allen, who will be making her fourth trip to states.

While most athletes will focus on one or two events at states, Allen ran in all three races last year.

Junior Stephanie Izard of Sweet Home and senior Chelsea Beecher of Albion are the leaders in the pentathlon after three events. They'll finish up with the long jump and 800 today.

Lockport throwers went 1-2 in the Division I discus. Sophomore Keeley Raylea won it in 107-5 while junior Terry McAninch was eight inches back to take second. Corri Hannon's effort of 111-9 won the Division II discus for Falconer.

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