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Scheving, Howard win state championships

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Barker's Tyler Scheving was just one of two Section VI athletes to win a state title at the track and field championships on Friday. Photo by James P. McCoy / Buffalo News

CALEDONIA -- Tyler Scheving couldn't have asked for anything more Friday at Caledonia-Mumford in the New York State Track and Field Championships.

The Barker junior broke a school and Niagara-Orleans League record in the 800-meter run, finishing in 1:54.31 on his way to the state Division II championship.

"That was, in my opinion, the perfect race," Scheving said after finishing. "My goal was to get out fast and not get boxed in, but I coasted most of the first lap. Once I hit 300 to go, I just knew I needed to go if I had

any chance of breaking a school record."

Scheving contributed his success on the year to hard work and shaved a full second off his previous best in the event. The state championship was more than satisfying for Scheving, but he couldn't help but think about what it means for his future after the race.

"It's really exciting because I know that this is just motivation to work even harder next year," Scheving said. "I can get even better times and by the time I get to college I'll be a step ahead of the others."

Section VI had one other state champion on Friday. Chautauqua Lake senior Craig Howard won the Division II pole vault in 15-0, improving his personal best by three inches. Last week, Howard improved six inches from his personal best at sectionals, but pushed his limits once again to claim the state championship.

"It's great, a personal record in my last meet as a senior," Howard said. "I wouldn't have it any other way."

Olean's Matt Allen placed second in the Division II pole vault (14-6).

Cleveland Hill's Daryl Spencer was among the other top finishers from Section VI. The junior finished third in the Division II 400 hurdles (56.24). Despite being slightly off of his personal best of 54.85, Spencer said he was

satisfied with the result and wore a big smile when he talked about the high level of competition at the meet. "It's better because if I know I have better competition then I know I have to finish hard," Spencer said.

In the Division I shot put, Lancaster junior Jordan Kihl finished in fourth place (50-9.75) and credited his coaches' weight program for his late-season success. Kihl said that he hasn't been lifting weights for the past two weeks and that he was happy with his results.

"I met all of my goals, I got on the podium and I got a medal," Kihl said. "I'm not disappointed at all."

Other top performers included Canisius senior Cole Townsend. The Williams-bound runner finished fourth in the 3,200 (9:03.37), but thought he could have done better.

Townsend said he was sick for the indoor state track championship in March and followed that with a stomach infection.

"I'm definitely a lot healthier than I've been, but I'm not in as good of shape as I was in indoor," Townsend said. "I'm definitely not as strong. I think I would have broken nine [minutes] if I was healthier, that was my goal."

In the same race, freshman TJ Hornberger of Lake Shore shaved a gaudy 20 seconds off his personal best in the Division I 3,200 at 9:22.39.

In one of the day's scarier moments, Sweet Home junior Wayne Gordon was unable to finish his preliminary run in the 100. The junior was in front at the 50-meter mark, but clutched his right hamstring and pulled out of the race. The hamstring had been bothering Gordon earlier in the day, said Sweet Home coach Brian Tollar.

"Yeah I pulled it and I knew I needed to stop," said Gordon, who will not compete today. "I don't really know what happened."

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