Written by STEVE OSTERMANN
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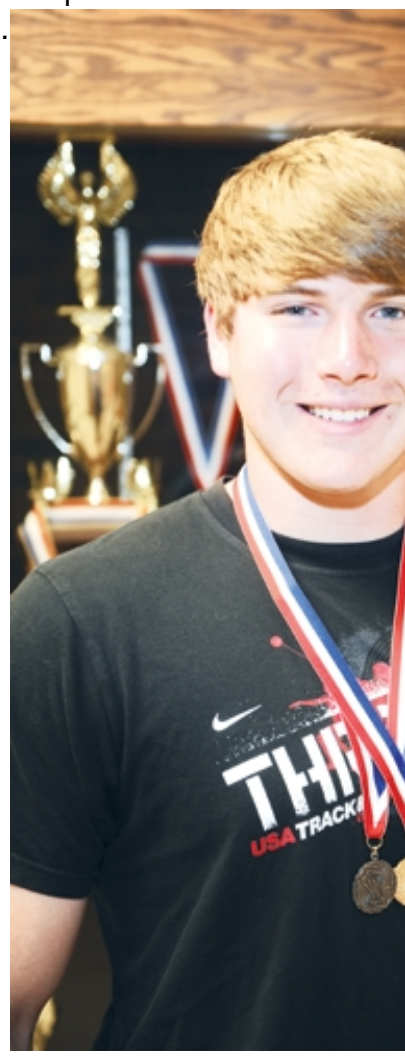
Grafton senior's discus victory gives school its first Division 1 state champion

Making a trip to the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse for last weekend's WIAA state track and field meet was nothing new for Jason Zahn, who qualified for Division 1 competition each of the past two years.

But the Grafton senior made his final state appearance his most memorable by coming home a champion. Zahn outdueled Monona Grove senior Theron Baumann to win the discus Saturday, one day after finishing second to Baumann in the shot put.

In winning his first state title and becoming Grafton High School's first Division 1 individual champion, Zahn unfurled a toss of 173 feet, 5 inches on his sixth and final attempt. Baumann had the second-best mark at 169-2, fouling on each of his final three throws.



Windy conditions and a slick surface in the ring area limited throws throughout the competition, with Zahn and Baumann having both eclipsed 190 feet during the regular season. However, Zahn wasn't about to complain.

"It was great. I was able to have my best throw on my final attempt, which put some pressure on (Baumann)," he said. "It was a nice way to end the season."

Baumann had little trouble winning the shot put with a throw of 60-9-1/4, well ahead of Zahn's 56-4-1/2. But Zahn was pleased with his finish, noting Baumann was a heavy favorite.

"We were both within two feet of our personal bests. I just wanted to get at least 55 feet," he said.

As it turned out, Zahn finished a half-inch ahead of third-place Zach Poker of Oconomowoc in a field of 24 throwers.

Led by Zahn's 18-point output, the Grafton boys shared fifth place with West De Pere in the 63-team standings. The Black Hawks' 27 points were their most ever in a Division 1 state meet and trailed only champion Brookfield East (39), La Crosse Central (35), Brookfield Central (30) and Janesville Craig (28).

"I'm really happy for our team," Grafton coach Kevin Kriegel said. "Jason had a great meet and met all our expectations, and the rest of our guys came through with strong meets, too."

The Hawks' other scoring finishes were a third by the 1,600-meter relay of junior Marcus Hill, senior Kevin Wegner and sophomores Patrick Tobianski and Erick Huertas (3 minutes, 21.39 seconds) and a sixth by junior Zach DeBuhr in the 200 dash (22.4).

Grafton's other state qualifier was Hill, who failed to reach the finals in the 400 dash after placing 11th in the preliminaries (50.39). Hill placed third in the event at last year's state meet but was slowed this season by a hamstring injury.

The Hawks' 1,600 relay was helped by an unusual circumstance in which the race had to be rerun.

In the first race, a Milwaukee Riverside runner was disqualified for impeding a Green Bay Preble runner, who fell on the first lap. Grafton finished seventh in that race.

After a 45-minute discussion, officials decided the race would be rerun. Grafton moved up to third on the second attempt, and Arrowhead slipped to seventh after winning the first race.

"It was just bizarre. I don't think I've ever seen a rerun in this race before," Kriegel said. "Kudos to our guys for having the guts to come back and improve on their finish."

The Hawks used the same four relay members in the second race, with Hill and Huertas changing spots.

Kriegel also singled out DeBuhr for "exceeding our expectations with his finish" and setting a school record in the process. DeBuhr's time of 22.19 in the preliminaries broke his own mark.

Among other local teams in the Division 1 meet, Port Washington was represented by senior Zach Hauser in the discus (13th at 147-9) and junior Jason Marhal in the 3,200 run (22nd in 10:00.52).

"Both of them did well. Their big goal this season was to get to state," Port coach Mark Pasten said.

Brunette leads Grafton girls

In the Division 1 girls' state meet, Grafton had three top-10 finishes, led by junior Cathy Brunette's fifth-place effort in the 100 hurdles (14.8).

Making her third straight state appearance, Brunette also tied for 19th in the high jump (5-0). Teammate Sara Grange, a junior, tied for 11th in the event (5-2).

The Hawks' other scoring finishes were a sixth by the 1,600 relay of Gallun, Anya Dillahunt, Hannah Weber and Grange (3:59.81) and a seventh by the 400 relay of Emily Schreiner, Brunette, Dillahunt and Grange (a season-best 49.97). In the preliminaries, the 1,600 team had a school-
record time of 3:59.65.

"The girls did very well," Kriegel said. "Having Cathy make her third appearance at state was great, and having the 4-by-400 relay break a record was unexpected."

The Grafton girls finished with nine points, good for 31st out of the 73 teams that scored.

Kriegel was also encouraged by the youth of his state qualifiers, noting that the meet "should be a springboard for them to work hard and come back strong next year."

Zahn's state championship is a great example of a reward for four years of hard work, Kriegel added.

The accolades aren't likely to stop here for Zahn, either. This weekend, he will vie for honors in the Midwest Senior Spotlight Meet, a competition in Joliet, Ill., that will feature top high school athletes from Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa and Nebraska.

Image Information: JASON ZAHN won the discus at the WIAA boys' track and field meet last Saturday, giving Grafton its first Division 1 state champion. The senior also placed second in the shot put. Photo by Sam Arendt