

Down to the wire for indoor honors

Written by STEVE OSTERMANN
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Grafton, Port boys get two wins apiece but can't escape bottom half of conference meet standings

A thin margin of error took its toll on the Grafton and Port Washington boys' track and field teams at the North Shore Conference indoor meet April 10.

Despite having several first-place finishes and scoring in a variety of events, both squads found themselves in the bottom half of the final standings.



The depth of opponents — most notably champion Homestead and runner-up Whitefish Bay — was too much to overcome.

“It was disappointing for us,” said Grafton coach Kevin Kriegel, whose team placed sixth in the eight-team meet at Bay with 58.5 points.

“We were within eight points of third place, so we could have done a lot better. There were a number of events we could have scored more in.”

Grafton, which finished just ahead of Port (55 points), was again led by its sprinters.

Junior Erick Huertas continued his strong season by contributing two first-place finishes for the Hawks.

He won the 400-meter dash (52.98 seconds) and anchored a first-place 1,600 relay that also included Sam Miller, Zach Greenwood and Patrick Tobianski (3:39.59).

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“Erick has responded well to the pressure and stepped up in big meets for us,” Kriegel said. “Hopefully the rest of the team will start to do the same.”

Port got first-place finishers from two of its most reliable performers — seniors Jason Marhal in the 1,600 run (10:19.71) and Derek Haley in the pole vault (12 feet, 6 inches).

“Jason ran an excellent race,” Port coach Mark Pasten said. “He had a faster time early in the season, but this was impressive because he hadn’t run in a meet in 2-1/2 weeks.

“I really wasn’t expecting him to win.”

Haley successfully defended the conference indoor title in his specialty, edging Germantown’s Tyler Baran, who cleared the same height but had more misses.

“Derek equaled his personal best. I was really happy to see him do so well, especially since he hasn’t had much time to work on the vault,” Pasten said.

Homestead dominated the meet and scored 116 points, well ahead of Bay’s 85. The champion Highlanders were led by triple winner Jay Schneider (long jump, 55 dash and 200 dash).

Rounding out the top five teams were Milwaukee Lutheran (66.5), Cedarburg (61.5) and Germantown (60.5). Placing eighth was Nicolet (19).

“Things could have been a little better for us,” Pasten said. “We didn’t score as well in some events as I thought we would.

“Eleven more points, and we would have been in fourth.”

Grafton’s other individual scoring finishes were a third by Sam Miller in the 400 dash (55.43); fourth by Zach DeBuhr in the 55 dash (6.9); fifths by Jack Howman in the high jump (5-8), Jamie Haessly in the 1,600 run (4:48.84) and Parker White in the 3,200 run (10:30.35); sixths by Huertas in the long jump (19-3-1/2), Alec Weinhold in the 800 run (2:13.82) and DeBuhr in the 200 dash (24.5); seventh by Sam Hoffman in the pole vault (11-0); and eighth by Nic Fullington in the long jump (19-3/4).

In relay races, the Black Hawks got a fifth from the 640 team of Jack Howman, Greenwood, Alex Gall and Zach DeBuhr (1:19.79) and sixth from the 3,200 team of Michael Stockhausen, Jacob Woolf, Alec Weinhold and Tobianski (8:58.96).

Rounding out Port’s scoring were a third by Anthony Davis in the shot put (46-6-3/4; fourths by Perry Schaefer in the pole vault (a personal-best 11-6), Taylor Godersky in the 1,600 run (4:43.75) and Eagan Norman in the 3,200 run (10:30.35); fifth by the 3,200 relay of Bill Ernest, Mason Purtell, Dominic Andermann and Joe Bortolotti (8:55.71); sixths by Marty Franzkowiak in the 55 dash (7.0) and Jack Skelton-Miller in the 1,600 run (4:48.94); seventh by Darius Will in the high jump (5-8); and eighths by Brandon Moeller in the 400 dash (57.29) and Ernest in the 3,200 run (10:42.22).

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Weather permitting, Grafton and Port will begin their outdoor seasons this week.

The Hawks were scheduled to participate in the Owl Invitational in Slinger at 4 p.m. Wednesday.

Port's first outdoor meet will be the Viking Invitational at Wisconsin Lutheran at 10 a.m. Saturday.

Image Information: A NECK-AND-NECK battle ensued between Grafton's Zach DeBuhr (left) and Port Washington's Marty Franzkowiak during the 55-meter dash at the North Shore Conference indoor meet. DeBuhr finished fourth, and Franzkowiak was sixth.

Photo by Sam Arendt