

Ottoville Boys Win PCL Track Title

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Up in the press box, Bob Kaple was flipping quarters and losing. Fifth place ribbons had been handed out by the luck of the coin but Kaple's luck was somewhere else Wednesday night. In the quiet, almost subdued aftermath of the Putnam County League Track Meet, however, it hardly seemed to matter.

Kaple witnessed several minor records and one major one Wednesday when his Ottoville track team won the boy's county championship for the fourth straight year, a feat matched by only two other teams. Three Big Green athletes led the assault as Dan Hermiller tied a meet record with four first pace efforts, Jim Klima set a meet record in the pole vault and Joe Wehri set an Ottoville school record in the discus.

"How many points did we end up with?" the dean of county track coaches yelled up to the press box at the close of the meet. Seventy four and five sixths he was told. "Damn", came back through the window. "missed it by three points." "I predicted us to score 78 points," Kaple was to say later, "but I guess I wasn't that far off. I thought we had more opportunities to score than most of the other teams and that always helps. You have to figure that one or two member of your team won't have their best days so the more opportunities you have to score in the third or fourth place positions is to your benefit. The twos and threes can really add up."

Ottoville took home seven first place trophies in its winning performance but the opportunities Kaple stressed added another bundle of points with four seconds, two thirds, four fourths and three fifths. The 74 5/6 team total of the Big Green was almost 20 points ahead of the field as Continental was second with 55 1/3, followed by Pandora-Gilboa 50.5, Columbus Grove 36 and Leipsic 20 1/3.

Sharing the spotlight with Ottoville's fourth straight title was Kip Mansfield, Continental's outstanding athlete who had been named the PCL's top performer in his freshman, sophomore and junior years. Winning four events for the Pirates Wednesday, Mansfield shared the honor with Ottoville's Dan Hermiller this year.

Mansfield's firsts in the long jump, 220, 440 and high hurdles capped off an excellent career. In his four county meets, the 6'4" senior has never been beaten in the long jump, 220 and 440 and he has scored a total of 92 points in those four meets. Mansfield has won 14 of the 16 events he competed in during that span and placed second in the other two.

Joe Wehri added two first place efforts to the Ottoville victory, including a school record toss of 143'4" in the discus. Wehri's other first was a 47'4" heave in the shot. Jim Klima added another first place mark for the Big Green with a new meet record in the pole vault, 12'9".

There is an unwritten rule in track that distance runners make poor sprinters and vice versa. Dan Hermiller broke that rule, however, winning his distance specialties (the mile, two mile and 880) and edging John Dunn of Grove for the 100 yard dash title. Dunn and Hermiller were both clocked in 10.7 but Hermiller was given the edge at the wire.

Hermiller's best effort came in the 880 yard run when he came from behind to win it. Continental's Steve Ford raced to an early lead, stretched it to 20 yards after the first lap, and seemed headed for his second straight win in county meet competition. Hermiller made up the difference on the final turn, however, using a blistering kick to defeat Ford by 1.5 seconds. The senior standout also won the mile run in 4:55.1 and finished just ahead of his brother Greg Hermiller in the two mile with a time of 10:51.2.

Mansfield won the long jump with a leap of 18'9 1/4", the 220 in 23.8, the 440 in 54.2 and the high hurdles in 15.2. The mark in the high hurdles broke the Continental school record of 15.6 also held by Mansfield.

"We had a bet going before the meet," Continental's Bob Baxter stated, "that Kip couldn't beat my best high hurdle mark in high school. I ran a 15.3 but he beat it, he went 5.2 to win the bet."

Mansfield has been to the state meet every year of his high school career and Baxter sees another trip to Columbus coming up. "I was just checking the track magazine and according to the figures in there, Kip should have another good shot at going to state," Baxter stated. "His high hurdle time is the third best in the state so far; he's second in the low hurdles and third in both the 220 and 440."

"The county meet went just about as expected," Baxter continued. "I think Columbus Grove did an excellent job of hosting it considering they had only one week's notice to get it ready. I was a little upset that two officials weren't used but that's not Grove's fault. Basketball seems to be THE sport in the county but I think track, and other sports as well, can enjoy that type of publicity. What it takes is better communication so there's more cooperation between the schools."

All five schools entered in the boys' competition had at least one first place finish. Dave Mangas, a freshman for Leipsic, won the high jump (5'6"), Terry Siefer, Gerry Siefer, Jeff Emans and Jeff Diller raced to a 48.6 clocking in the 440 relay for Pandora-Gilboa's first place effort and Columbus Grove with Mike Heffner opening a big lead on the third leg and John Dunn capping it off, won the mile relay in 3:48.0. Ron Bryan and Joe Dunn were also on that winning relay team. Scott Woodburn, with a 43.2 clocking in the low hurdles, was Continental's other first place finisher besides Mansfield.

John Dunn was second in the 100 yard dash and third in the 220 to spark the Grove squad, while teammate Mike Heffner, in addition to his mile relay leg, was second in the discus and fourth in the 220.

Continental's Jeff Polhamus, a freshman, was second in the mile. Steve Ford was second in the 880 and Bob Alesch third in the high jump for the Pirates.

Pandora-Gilboa's Terry Siefer, beaten for the first time this season in the long jump, placed third in that event, third in the 100 yard dash and fifth in the 220.

SUMMARY

Ottoville 74 5/6, Continental 55 1/3, Pandora-Gilboa 50.5, Columbus Grove 36 and Leipsic 20 1/3.

SHOT PUT - Joe Wehri (Ottoville) 47'4"

*NR DISCUS - Joe Wehri (Otto) 143'4"

HIGH JUMP - Dave Mangas (Leipsic) 5'6"

LONG JUMP - Kip Mansfield (Continental) 18'9 1/4"

*NR POLE VAULT - Jim Klima (Ottoville) 12'9"

110 METER HIGH HURDLES - Kip Mansfield (Continental) 15.2

300 METER LOW HURDLES - Scott Woodburn (Continental) 43.2

RETIRE 100 YARD DASH - Dan Hermiller (Ottoville) 10.7

220 YARD DASH - Kip Mansfield (Continental) 23.8

440 YARD DASH - Kip Mansfield (Continental) 54.2

880 YARD RUN - Dan Hermiller (Ottoville) 2:08.8

MILE RUN - Dan Hermiller (Ottoville) 4:55.1

TWO MILE RUN - Dan Hermiller (Ottoville) 10:51.2

*NR 440 YARD RELAY - Terry Siefer, Gerry Siefer, Jeff Emans and Jeff Diller (PG) 48.6

MILE RELAY - Mike Hefner, John Dunn, Ron Bryan and Joe Dunn (CG) 3:48.0