

TRACK & FIELD CASHTON

Cashton's Schlesner leaps to second place at state in high jump

Junior jumper moves closer to podium's peak in third trip to state

By Zach Rastall
Sports Writer

LA CROSSE — With each successive state appearance, Cashton junior Jack Schlesner just keeps getting better and better with his high jump marks. His latest performance placed him near the top of the medalist podium and will have him eyeing the gold in his senior season.

Schlesner matched a personal best — and a Cashton school record — by clearing the bar at 6 feet, 5 inches to place second in the Division 3 boys' high jump at the 2023 WIAA State Track and Field Championships. This year's state meet was held Friday, June 2 and Saturday, June 3 at its customary location of Veterans Memorial Stadium on the campus of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

This marked Schlesner's third state appearance in the high jump in as many years during his high school track career. He placed 13th as a freshman in 2021 with a mark of 5 feet, 10 inches and

got a medal as a sophomore in 2022 by placing sixth after clearing the bar at 6 feet, 2 inches.

That progression continued this spring with Schlesner putting up first-place showings at the conference, regional and sectional meets. He appeared to be peaking

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Cashton's Jack Schlesner falls into the pit after clearing the bar in the high jump. Schlesner finished second overall. Photo by Nate Beier/GX3 Media.



The Cashton 800 meter relay team is all smiles after placing fifth at the WIAA state track and field championships in La Crosse on Saturday, June 3. The team includes (from left to right) Gabby Hyatt, Braylee Hyatt, Makayla Gooselaw, Adirianna Biever. Photo by Nate Beier/GX3 Media.

Verken rounds out Cashton medalists



Cashton's Riley Verken heaves the shot forward during the state meet. Verken finished sixth overall. Photo by Logan Everson

BIG FINISH

Cashton's Hyatt caps off big state day with first-place finish in 200-meter dash

By Zach Rastall
Sports Writer

LA CROSSE — At the end of a jam-packed day in the sweltering heat, Cashton senior Braylee Hyatt had one final event left in her high school athletics career. One last chance to claim a gold medal on the state track stage with which she became so familiar. With however much Hyatt had left in the tank, she dug deep and made her first-place dream a reality.

Hyatt gave her Cashton career the ultimate curtain call by placing first in the Division 3 girls' 200-meter dash with a winning time of 25.44 seconds — a mere five hundredths of a second ahead of Wisconsin Rapids Assumption freshman Bella Thomas in second.

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Cashton's Braylee Hyatt is interviewed by WXOW following a second place finish in the 100 meter dash at the WIAA state track and field meet. Photo by Nate Beier/GX3 Media.

Eagle thinclads make multiple podium trips at state meet

By Zach Rastall
Sports Writer

LA CROSSE — State titles and medals are the ultimate goal when athletes from all over Wisconsin descend on La Crosse each June for the state track and field meet. But when it comes right down to it, performing the best you can relative to your own individual abilities is all you can really ask for. By that standard, the Cashton track team has plenty to celebrate following their state weekend.

Senior Braylee Hyatt's 200-meter dash title to cap off a stellar all-around showing and junior Jack Schlesner's second-place finish in the high jump were the Eagles' most notable performances, but that just scratches the surface.

Cashton senior Riley Verken capped off his high school career with a spot on the medalist podium in his state debut, placing sixth in the Division 3 boys' shot put with a toss of 50 feet, 4

inches.

The 2023 WIAA State Track and Field Championships were held Friday, June 2 and Saturday, June 3 at the Veterans Memorial Stadium Complex in La Crosse.

"I feel great," Verken said. "From last year not even making it out of sectionals to getting on the podium this year — I honestly don't know what to say. It just feels good."

In that same event, fellow senior Michael Sueppel wound up in 10th with a career-best toss of 46 feet, 10.75 inches. Cashton head coach Beth Lee praised Jeremy Kuderer (the team's throws coach) for his work in helping improve their athletes' technical abilities and the path it paved for strong state performances.

"Riley has improved his speed and explosiveness which has helped him throw the shot put over 15 feet farther than his sophomore season," Lee said. "Michael has worked to be more consistent with his throws and threw a career best at state."

Sophomore Makayla Gooselaw was also a standout performer for the Eagles in

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Cashton's Braylee Hyatt crosses the finish line in the 200 meter dash during Saturday's championship race at UW La Crosse. Hyatt won the 200 with a time 25.44 to end her career as a state champion. Photo by Nate Beier/GX3 Media.



MIDDLE LEFT Cashton's Braylee Hyatt sends a plume of sand into the air after landing in the pit during the long jump competition Saturday. Photo by Logan Everson.

ABOVE Cashton's Makayla Gooselaw overtakes the first hurdle in the 100 meter hurdle prelim Friday morning in La Crosse. Gooselaw qualified for finals and finished eighth in the final race of the season. Photo by Logan Everson.

BOTTOM LEFT Cashton's Adrianna Biever (right) waits for the baton as Gabby Hyatt closes in during the 800 meter relay preliminary race. Photo by Logan Everson

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The 200-meter dash was the final of four events that Hyatt competed in at the 2023 WIAA State Track and Field Championships held Friday, June 2 and Saturday, June 3 at Veterans Memorial Stadium on the campus of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

In a pair of preliminary races on Friday, Hyatt matched her seeding positions coming in by finishing first in the 200-meter dash (25.75) and second in the 100-meter dash (12.66) to advance to Saturday's finals.

On top of that, she was part of a relay team with sophomore Makayla Gooselaw, freshman Gabby Hyatt and sophomore Adrianna Biever that posted a time of 1 minute, 46.95 seconds to finish fifth in the prelims of the 800-meter relay and secure their spot in the finals.

That all set the stage for a busy Saturday where Hyatt would compete in four events.

Everything went fairly well for Hyatt through her first three events as she found her way onto the medalist podium in each one. She placed second in the 100-meter dash with a time of 12.50 seconds, with only Assumption's Bella Thomas (12.39) ahead of her in first.

Hyatt notched a sixth-place showing in the long jump with a top leap of 17 feet, 3.25 inches and her 800-meter relay team placed fifth with a time of 1 minute, 46.59 seconds that broke the school record in the event.

All was going to plan heading into the 200-meter dash, an event where she came into the weekend seeded first and backed that up in Friday's prelims. It certainly was no guarantee Hyatt would post her best effort, especially on a sun-

splashed day where the temperature hit 90 and she'd been in three events already.

But with only one more race to run as a Cashton Eagle, Hyatt gave it all she had and posted a personal best that none of her nine

“...it feels so good to be on the top of that podium. It’s just amazing. All the hard work has paid off.”

— Braylee Hyatt, Cashton senior

competitors could match.

“I don’t even know how to describe it. It’s so many emotions. My last race — it feels so good to be on the top of that podium. It’s just amazing. All the hard work has paid off,” Hyatt said after getting her gold medal Saturday. “I kept telling myself ‘it’s my last one. I have to do this.’ I wanted to leave everything on the

track. No regrets. I fought.”

On a weekend as hot and sunny as it was in La Crosse for this year’s state meet, it’s more imperative than ever to do all the right things to keep you prepared physically and mentally for the task ahead.

Hyatt took that to heart — kicking her legs up whenever she could, staying out of the sun when possible, frequently hydrating, eating right and getting good sleep.

“She really did a nice job getting off her legs when she could. She drank plenty of water, stayed hydrated and did all the things she needed to do,” said Cashton head coach Beth Lee. “I was a little worried coming into this last event wondering how everything else that had happened today would affect her, but she did well.”

Hyatt is the sort of athlete

that Cashton athletics won’t soon forget, and a storybook ending in La Crosse only adds to that legacy. It also provided a bit of a familial bookend for the Hyatts. Early in her career, Braylee was part of an 800-meter relay team alongside Jaiden Hansbery, Annie Schreier and older sister Adelynn that set the school record in the event — a record now broken by Braylee, Gooselaw, Biever and Braylee’s younger sister Gabby.

In her first two state appearances, Hyatt competed in four total events and earned one medal. With her four events at state as a senior, she quintupled her career medal total and, in her very last opportunity, permanently etched her name into the record books as a state champion.

“It’s such a sweet way to end,” Hyatt said. “My sister (Gabby) was on the 4x200 with me, and we broke our school record, which I had with my other sister (Adelynn) a couple years ago. It’s just amazing.”

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her state debut. Gooselaw made it out of the prelims in the girls’ 100-meter hurdles by finishing seventh with a time of 16.53 seconds, then ran a career-best time of 16.19 seconds to take eighth in the finals of the event.

Cashton junior Emmanuel Harter also was making his first state appearance, where he posted a leap of 20 feet, 1.75 inches to place 11th in the boys’ long jump. Lee thanked volunteer coach Kristt Hilden for the insight he was able to provide to the Eagles’ long jumpers and triple jumpers.

Cashton also had the all-junior team of Brady Hemmersbach, Jake Wall, Schlesner and Brett Hemmersbach in the boys’ 1,600-meter relay. A bobble on a baton exchange doomed their chances of advancing out of the prelims, as they placed 13th with a time of 3 minutes, 35.87 seconds.

All in all, it was close to as good as the Eagles could’ve hoped for out of their trip to state. Their seniors ended on high notes and the younger athletes gained valuable experience for 2024.

“The athletes did a super job dealing with the heat and putting forth great performances,” Lee said. “All of the athletes were consistent and close to personal bests if not beating their personal bests. It is always gratifying to see athletes perform their best or close to their best at the end of the season.”

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at the right time, hitting season-best marks of 6 feet, 4 inches at both regionals and sectionals to leave himself seeded fourth in the high jump going into state.

This time around in La Crosse, only Gresham-Bowler senior Emmitt Kietlinski and his mark of 6 feet, 6 inches denied Schlesner the top spot on the podium.

“I knew how the environment was here and it just made me feel relaxed,” Schlesner said. “I wanted to make top three for sure and I was happy I was able to do it this year.”

Schlesner needed to outperform his seeding in order to achieve his top-three goal, and managed that with his best performance as a junior. Schlesner previously broke the school record during his sophomore season, but hadn’t done better than 6 feet, 4 inches this spring. He saved his best for last here in 2023.

“Jack has worked really hard to be consistent at what he does and fine tune what he does,” said Cashton head coach Beth Lee. “I’m just so proud that he was able to perform as well as he did. Everything kind of came together for him and he tied his PR again.”

This accomplishment is something for Schlesner to savor, though also one that can serve as further fuel heading into his senior year. With a little more improvement, he could very well be a state champion at this time in 2024.

WIAA DIII STATE CHAMPIONSHIP MEET (LA CROSSE) 6-2-23 TO 6-3-23 CASHTON

GIRLS	
Track.....	
100M: 2 Braylee Hyatt 12.50	
200M: 1 Braylee Hyatt 25.44	
100M Hurdles: 8 Makayla Gooselaw 16.19	
Relays.....	
800M Relay: 5 Makayla Gooselaw, Gabby Hyatt, Adrianna Biever, Braylee Hyatt 1:46.59	
Field.....	
Long Jump: 6 Braylee Hyatt 17-3.25	
BOYS	
Relays.....	
1600M Relay: 13 Brady Hemmersbach, Jake Wall, Jack Schlesner, Brett Hemmersbach 3:35.87	
Field.....	
High Jump: 2 Jack Schlesner 6-5	
Long Jump: 11 Emmanuel Harter 20-1.75	
Shot Put: 6 Riley Verken 50-4, 10 Michael Sueppel 46-10.75	