

ATHLETES OF THE WEEK

ERIC SURPRENANT, LYNBROOK

Sport: Track and field

Event: Hurdles

Class: Senior

Accomplishment: Surprenant continued his dominance, winning the 400 intermediate hurdles at the Stanford Invitational on Saturday in a school record time of 54.37 seconds. Surprenant has the second-best time in the Central Coast Section this year in the 110 high hurdles (14.78) and is undefeated in the 300 intermediate hurdles, where his time of 38.95 is No. 1 in the CCS and fourth in California. "Eric is having a breakout season and obviously enjoying himself," Lynbrook Coach Hank Lawson said. "He would like to break the school record (38.58) in the 300 IH, but his main goal is to make it to the finals of the state meet. With each race he seems to be getting closer, and if he makes it to the state finals the record will come."



HIGH SCHOOL TRACK AND FIELD

Surprenant hurdles field at Top 8 Classic

By Dennis Knight*Mercury News*

In French, his name means surprising and Eric Surprenant has been just that as a Lynbrook High hurdler this season.

The senior, who didn't qualify for the Central Coast Section finals as a junior, has the section's top times in the 300-meter hurdles and the 100-meter high hurdles.

Friday night he won both events at the 29th annual Top 8 Track and Field Classic at Los Gatos High. Surprenant got out of the blocks quickly in the 100 hurdles and won going away with a personal best of 14.53 seconds. In the 300, he ran 38.16 to win his race easily.

"I'm surprised by my times this year," said Surprenant, whose winning time of 38.09 last week at the Arcadia Invitational is the second best time in the state this year. "I've worked

hard with my hurdles coach, Julia Widstrand, and that has really helped me improve. Winning at Arcadia gave me a lot of confidence because I was seeded sixth."

Today he will compete at James Logan High in the Bay Area Top 8 meet in both hurdles events so he can prepare for the two-day schedule at the State meet.

There were other standout performances Friday. Los Gatos' Colin Quirke underwent surgery on his right (throwing) shoulder in December after hurting it while playing football. But the reigning CCS champ easily won the shot put competition with a throw of 59-4.5.

"I haven't practiced at all — I don't want to put too much stress on the shoulder," Quirke said. "I'm just trying to ease into it. I'm hoping for some bigger throws at the end of the season."

Another athlete on the road to recovery is Archbishop Mitty sprinter Thomas Reynolds, who is back after suffering a broken left femur while playing football in November.

Reynolds ran the second leg of the Monarchs 400-meter relay team a week after competing in a dual meet at Bellarmine. His 100-meter time of 11.5 is a half second off his best mark from a year ago. The Monarchs finished third (43.54) as Serra won the race with a time of 42.94.

"I did pretty well considering that I haven't run more than 60 meters in practice yet," said Reynolds, who has a football scholarship at Cal-Poly San Luis Obispo. "I'm definitely happy to be out here on the track again. The last six months have been really tough."

In the girls events — Leland sophomore Katie Nelms had an impressive meet, winning the

300 hurdles (44.45) in front of second place Nicole Sliva of Mitty (45.44). She also won the 100, edging Pinewood's Angela Gradiska (12.29) with a time of 12.24. Nelms was second in the 100 hurdles with a time of 14.99 behind Evergreen Valley's Golde Ibia (14.64). Gradiska won the 200 in 25.23.

"I got off to a great start in the 100 meters — I wasn't supposed to beat Angela, but I thought I got out of the blocks quicker than her," Nelms said. "But I wasn't too happy with my 300 hurdles race, I have a lot I can improve upon there. I'm pretty tired, but I thought this would be a good test because I want to qualify for state in as many events as I can."

The highly anticipated boys pole vault lived up to its billing as hometown favorite Nico Weiler of Los Gatos beat his own meet record by clearing 17-0.75. St. Lawrence senior Josh

Cusick was second at 15-6.

By the time Weiler started jumping, the weather had cooled considerably and he was facing a headwind. It didn't seem to matter as the powerful German native wooed the crowd with an awesome display.

Weiler made a huge clearance in warmups and duplicated it with his winning vault, he then raised the bar to 17-6.5, which would have beat his CCS record set last year by a quarter inch. On his second attempt, Weiler cleared the bar, but knocked it down with his chest on the way down.

"I was happy with all my jumps," Weiler said. "I'm not quite consistent at those heights, but I'll get there soon."

Palo Alto's Mia Lattanzi, the top 800-meter runner in the CCS, ran the 1600 instead and won with a time of 5:00.71. Milpitas senior Luisa Musika won

the shot put (39-4.75) and finished second in the discus (122-0) behind Santa Teresa sophomore Meagan McKee.

Los Gatos senior Kevin Rutledge won the long jump with a leap of 22-10.5.

"I was looking for a 24-footer today, but my legs weren't cooperating," said Rutledge, who also finished third in the high jump (6-4) behind Homestead's Steve Humer (6-6).

Janelle Coulter of Aptos cleared 5-8 to win the high jump. Kiersten Dolbec of Saratoga also reached 5-8. Aptos' Rylan Hunt pulled off the most impressive double of the night taking the 1600 meters (4:18.47) and the 3200 meters (9:28.03). He said he will only race in the 1600 at the CCS finals. Marquis Caldwell of Lincoln showed off his blazing speed, pulling off a sprint double by winning the 200 meters (22.55) and the 400 meters (49.38).

BOYS CCS TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Surprenant undeterred by wrist cast

By Dennis Knight

Mercury News

When Lynbrook hurdler Eric Surprenant broke his wrist at practice earlier this month, his dream season flashed before his eyes.

But the upstart senior kept right on running, and Friday night he punctuated his Central Coast Section title in the 300 hurdles by pumping his casted fist into the air on the Gilroy High Track.

Surprenant didn't even qualify for this event last year.

Now he is on his way to the State Track and Field Meet at Cerritos College next weekend after running a personal best time of 37.65, the fastest mark in the CCS and tied for second in the state this

year.

"I've had that race in my head all year," said Surprenant, who also finished second in the 110 hurdles to Monterey's Mykel Block with a time of 14.59. "Next week my goal is to run another PR and to win a medal."

One of the most impressive performances of the night came from Oak Grove's Sebastian Sam in the 800 meters. Sam defended his title by running away from the field early, winning in 1:53.29.

"That's been my motto to get out front and stay out front," said the Cal-bound Sam. "I think I can go even faster next week with the competition level so high."

Los Gatos senior Colin Quirke re-

peated as shot put champion with a throw of 61-4. Mitty's Drew Gordon was second (58-0) and Oak Grove's Aaron Huck took third (53-9½).

Quirke also won his first discus title (174-02), edging Gordon (168-0).

"I've been popping some big throws in practice, so I was hoping to go a bit farther," said Quirke. "My technique wasn't really clicking, but next week I'll have something to get pumped up about."

Los Gatos (54 points) finished second in the race for the team title to Monterey (65).

Wildcat senior Nico Weiler easily won the pole vault competition by clearing 17 feet; the question was whether he could beat his own CCS

record by getting over the 17-7 height. Weiler nearly did it on his first two attempts, knocking the bar over on his way down.

"I'm looking forward to next week — we have the best field in state history," Weiler said.

Willow Glen's Mohamed Abdalla went for a brutal double — trying to qualify in the 1,600 and 3,200. He fell short in the 1,600, fading at the end to finish fourth in 4:18.35 as Carlmont's Brad Surh repeated as champ (4:11.24).

But the UCLA-bound Abdalla was impressive in the 3,200, running stride for stride with winner Diego Estrada of Alisal (9:06.51) before falling back to second with a time of 9:09.13.



ERIC SURPRENANT, LYNBROOK

Hurdler of the year

Surprenant won the 300 hurdles at the prestigious Arcadia Invitational and doubled in the 110 and 300 hurdles at the Top 8 Meet. His season was in jeopardy after he suffered a broken right wrist in May, but he competed with a cast and won the CCS title in the 300 hurdles (37.65) and finished second in the 110 hurdles (14.59). He set a personal

best in the state 300 preliminaries (37.63) to reach the final and finished ninth.