

Novi's Sawyer scaled new heights in 2016

Brad Emons 4:19 p.m. EDT June 14, 2016



(Photo: MARSHA REID)

The Adventures of Scott Sawyer with the Novi boys track and field program this season have almost become legendary.

It's something right out of a Mark Twain novel.

The junior made it a memorable spring as he earned all-state (top eight) honors in two events at the MHSAA Division 1 state finals June 4 at Hudsonville.

Sawyer captured fourth in both the high jump (6 feet, 6 inches) and pole vault (14-0), while also earning All-Area Boys Track and Field Athlete of the Year honors.

"At the state meet, it was a really big testament to his focus and ability to step up as a gamer," Novi coach Marsha Reid said. "They had dual pits, so high jump and pole vault were running concurrently. And the cadence of those are so completely different, so for him to keep his focus and do what he did and be all-state in both of those events were phenomenal."



Novi junior Scott Sawyer broke the school record in the pole vault by clearing 14 feet, 4 inches. (Photo: MARSHA REID)

During the regular season, Sawyer shattered the school high jump record that had stood since 1984 when he cleared 6-7¹/₄. Early in the year, he also eclipsed the school pole vault record, going 13-9 before breaking his own mark again with 14-4.

Sawyer was regional champion in both events, while taking first in the high jump at the Oakland County meet and third in pole vault. At the Kensington Conference meet, he placed second in the high jump and third in the vault.

"He had the most points all season of any athlete on both the male and female side," Reid said. "He was invaluable on the field (event) side in both high jump and pole vault."

After registering no height in both events at the state meet in 2015, Sawyer came back "bigger, better and stronger," according to Reid.

"He's got some lofty goals and his future looks really bright in track and field," she said. "He loves the sport and he loves competing while keeping his focus all that time."

First team

John Hamilton, Sr., Northville: He soared 6-6 to finish third at the Division 1 state finals after tying for second at the regional and placing third at the Kensington Conference meet (both at 6-3).

Hamilton was also a long jumper for the Mustangs, posting a personal best of 19-9.

“John had his best jumps when it mattered most, hitting the state qualifying mark on his last attempt at the regional,” Northville coach Brandon Langston said. “He hit his P.R. at the state meet when it mattered most. His preparation and hard work set the tone for his teammates and will keep him achieving high levels of success in the future.”

Josh Smith, Sr., South Lyon East: He earned Division 2 all-state by placing third in the 400 (49.44) while helping the 1,600 relay team to ninth (3:26.31) and the 3,200 relay to 15th (8:15.62).

At the regional, Smith was runner-up (50.03) in the 400 and helped the Cougars' 1,600 relay team to first. He was the Oakland County 400 champion (49.47) as well.

“Josh has been a great leader on our track team for the past four years,” East coach Joe Merlo said. “He showed up every day to practice and has worked hard to achieve the goals he has set for himself and the team. He has helped lay a good foundation of what we want our athletes to do during practices and meets here at East. He has been a great young man to coach and we are proud of him and all of his accomplishments as an athlete.”

Jackson Grzymkowski, Sr., Lakeland: He went 1:53.43 in the 800 to finish fourth at the Division 1 state finals after capturing the Milford regional in 1:55.57.

Grzymkowski, headed to Belmont (Tenn.) University, also was a state qualifier in the 1,600 after placing second at the regional (4:19.21). Grzymkowski was runner-up in both the 800 and 1,600 at the Lakes Conference meet. He was third in Oakland County in the 800 (1:53.9).

“Jackson was our school's top athlete of the year,” Lakeland coach Sean Williamson said of the International Academy West student. “Jackson's demanding schedule and the outcome he was able to put forth every week was nothing short of amazing. His fourth-place finish in the 800 was a great way to go out and continue running in the future.”

Adam Ghabra, Sr., Northville: He placed fourth in the 400 at the Division 1 state finals in a school record 49.12 after finishing runner-up at the regional (49.71) and fifth at the Kensington Conference meet (49.98).

Ghabra was also a state qualifier in the 200 (20th) after taking second at the regional (22.29) and conference (22.11) meets. He also posted 11.2 in the 100.

“Our team wouldn't have been (Central) division champs if it wasn't for the contributions of Adam,” Langston said. “He competed in four events in every dual meet, getting us points. He was the leader of our team, not just by his times, but by the examples he set in practice.”

Joost Plaetinck, Sr., Novi: He went 9:13.51 to finish fifth in the 3,200 at the Division 1 state finals after placing fifth at the regional (9:27.0).

Plaetinck was also the Oakland County meet champion in the 3,200 (9:15.01) and represented Michigan on Saturday in the Midwest Meet of Champions at Ohio Wesleyan, where he placed seventh in the 1,600 (4:23.8)

“He did a really nice job this year and qualified for the state meet in a really hard distance regional,” Reid said. “He was team captain and it was a really nice way cap his senior year progressing and getting a P.R. in the 3,200. He also gets a lot of credit for our 4 by 800 relay going 7:59 at the regional.”

Zach Confer, Sr., Lakeland: The thrower earned all-state Division 1 honors in two events by placing sixth in the shot put (50-3.25) and seventh in the discus (152-6).

At the regional, Confer was runner-up in the shot put (50-5) and fourth in the discus (149-7.5). In the Lakes Conference meet, he was third in the shot put and fourth in the discus. At Oakland County, he was third in the discus and fourth in the shot.

“Zach was tremendous for us in the field events this year,” Williamson said. “He was a kid on a mission and achieved his goals. Every one was exciting. My favorite moment was when he ran the 200 in the co-ed relays and he was swift like the wind.”

Second team

Isaac Phillips, Jr., Milford: He placed 14th overall, seventh among underclassmen, at the Division 1 state finals in the 300 hurdles (40.38). He also finished fourth at the regional with a season-best 40.05 and was runner-up at the Lakes Conference meet (41.63).

Thomas Smither, Sr., Northville: He wound up 10th in Division 1 in the 800 (1:55.6) after taking fourth at the regional (1:57.54) and winning the Kensington Conference title (1:57.15).

Kenny Goolsby, Sr., Northville: Headed to Central Michigan University, he was Division 1 regional champion in the 1,600 (4:17.9) and took 15th at the state finals (4:27.02). He was also runner-up in the Kensington Conference (4:27.31) in the 1,600. Goolsby also competed at the Midwest Meet of Champions and finished ninth in the 1,600 (4:37.28).

Conor Naughton, Sr., Northville: Bound for CMU, he was 16th overall in Division 1 in the 3,200 (9:27.56) after taking runner-up honors at the Milford regional (9:20.9). Naughton was also Kensington champ (9:45.12) and represented Michigan at the Midwest Meet of Champions, where he finished fourth (9:33.56). His personal best this season was 9:17.8 at the Golden Triangle meet.

Ben Cracraft, Jr., Northville: He placed 17th overall in the 3,200 at the Division 1 state finals (9:27.6) after taking seventh at the regional (9:32.3) and fourth in the Kensington Conference (9:48.53). Cracraft also went a season-best 4:27 in the 1,600.

Adam Caruso, Sr., South Lyon East: He placed ninth at the Division 2 finals in the 3,200 (9:36.87) after finishing second at the regional. He also placed fifth in the 1,600 at the regional (4:34) and helped the Cougars to first in the 3,200 relay (8:15). He was also eighth in Oakland County in the 3,200 (9:46.11).

Anthony D'Annibale, Jr., Novi: He took 17th overall in the 400 at the Division 1 state finals (50.6) after winning the regional (49.47) and taking third in the Kensington Conference (49.48). D'Annibale was also regional runner-up in the 100 (11.32) and third in Oakland County in the 400 (49.98).

2016 ALL-AREA

BOYS TRACK

ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

Scott Sawyer, Jr., Novi

FIRST TEAM

John Hamilton, Sr., Northville

Josh Smith, Sr., South Lyon East

Jackson Grzymkowski, Sr., Lakeland

Adam Ghabra, Sr., Northville

Joost Plaetinck, Sr., Novi

Zach Confer, Sr., Lakeland

SECOND TEAM

Isaac Phillips, Jr., Milford

Thomas Smither, Sr., Northville

Kenny Goolsby, Sr., Northville

Conor Naughton, Sr., Northville

Ben Cracraft, Jr., Northville

Adam Caruso, Sr., South Lyon East

Anthony D'Annibale, Jr., Novi

HONORABLE MENTION

Novi: Hunter Joy, Jr.; Nathan Hankerson, Jr.; John Landy, Jr.; Josh Holcomb, Sr.; Nathaniel Wood, Soph.; Scott MacPherson, Jr.; Blake Maday, Fr.; Adam Ditri, Sr.; Northville: A.J. Abbott, Soph.; Milford: Dakota Giles, Jr.; Lakeland: Drew Wenger, Soph.; Hunter Lukes, Jr.; Cody McComas, Soph.; South Lyon East: Andrew Wolschleger, Sr.; Ryan Leckner, Jr.; Jacob Waranauckas, Soph.; Zack Satawa, Sr.; J.D. Simon, Sr.

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