



# Big Ten talent leads Mustangs once again

Brad Emons 8:30 a.m. EDT April 13, 2016



(Photo: BRAD EMONS)

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At least for one more season, Northville all-state runners Lexa Barrott and Chloe Abbott will be teammates before going their separate ways.

Barrott and Abbott, however, won't be far apart next season, but will be arch-rivals in the Big Ten at Indiana and Purdue universities, respectively.

The seniors are two of the big reasons why the Mustangs have posted a third-place finish (2015) and a runner-up finish (2014) in the MHSAA Division 1 state finals.

Barrott enjoyed a stellar junior season, finishing third in both the 1,600 (4:55.23) and the 3,200 (10:37.52) at the Division 1 state finals, while also being a member of the sixth-place 3,200 relay team (9:19.45).

Barrott was regional and Kensington Conference champion in all three events.

Abbott, meanwhile, placed third in the 400 (56.53) and was seventh in the 200 (25.35), while also anchoring the Mustangs to a third in the 1,600 relay (4:00.98) at the Division 1 state meet.

At the regional, Abbott figured in four first-place finishes and added three wins in the conference meet as Northville captured both team titles.

"It's something we talk about often as a coaching staff, that we have to enjoy the team we have right now," Northville coach Tim Dalton said. "What makes them unique? Their work ethic. If you were here before practice, you'd see they're the first ones here and then at the end of practice they're the last ones doing hurdle drills, stretching, doing the little things to make themselves as good as they are.

"It's funny to compare them to where they were two years ago, three years ago ... to where they are now. And we talk to our younger kids that if want to get to that level, they're kind of the measuring stick for our kids. They want to be a Chloe Abbott, they want to be a Lexa Barrott. And if you follow their example and put the work in, you'll get there."

Also returning for the Mustangs is junior distance runner Cayla Eckenroth, who placed sixth in the state finals in the 3,200 (10:42.72) and was a member of the all-state 3,200 relay.

Senior Lindsay Walters, another returnee, was a member of that 1,600 relay and was a state qualifier in the 400 (57.75), placing 11th. Second team All-Area pick Emma Herrman, a senior, was also a state qualifier in the 3,200 (11:17.19) and member of the all-state 3,200 relay.

And although all-state hurdler Lauren Rodriguez, runner-up in the 100 hurdles (school record 14.38) and sixth in the 300 hurdles (45.2), was lost to graduation, the Mustangs will be focused again on winning the division, conference and regional crowns.

"Our team goals remain standard and is really a four-step process," Dalton said. "We go from our division match-ups to our conference and regional meets, followed by making sure our kids are prepared and ready to compete and succeed at the state finals (June 4 in Hudsonville)."

### Novi improved

Novi 16th-year coach Marsha Reid is already beginning to see signs that the Wildcats could become more of a factor this season in the KLAA's Kensington Conference and Central Division.

"I think we're going to have a lot of strong individual events," said Reid, whose team took fifth in the conference and sixth in the regional. "It's going to be interesting watching this team come together as a team and see who steps into some areas where there have been some voids."

Junior captain Kate Prisby, a state qualifier in the long jump (16-9), was 14th overall in Division 1 and earned second team All-Area honors last season.

Sophomore Hannah Hood-Blaxill, who has cleared 5 feet, 2 inches already in the high jump at the Michigan State Invitational indoor meet, is yet another returnee who will compete in the 400 and hurdles events.

Texas transfer Hannah McBride, a junior, has already thrown 33 feet indoors in the shot put and will be joined by seniors Marissa Dunn and Emma Hammelef.

Sophomore hurdler-sprinter Karena Roest also hopes to build off last year's

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### Warriors take aim

Novi Franklin Road Christian second-year coach Andrew Schmid is optimistic the Warriors can improve upon last year's eight-place showing in the Michigan Independent Athletic Conference meet and 11th-place finish in the Division 4 regional.

The Warriors will be led by juniors Grace Alex (middle distance-hurdles), Audrey Hicks (middle-distance hurdles) and Gabrielle Lochrie (sprints-hurdles), along with freshman Shelby Buis (distance).

"The team last year was all first-timers," Schmid said. "This year, we have a strong core of leaders with our captains Lochrie and Alex, who should perform well enough to win more medals. We expect the returning 4 by 800 relay team to improve after finishing seventh at the regional last year."

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