

Northville

The Mustangs, under fifth-year coach Tim Dalton, were hard hit by graduation losing Division 1 state placers John Hamilton in the high jump (third, 6-6) and Adam Ghabra in the 400 (fourth, 49.12).

Other state qualifiers lost included Thomas Smither (10th, 800, 1:55.61), regional champion Kenny Goolsby (15th, 1,600, 4:27.02); and Conor Naughton (16th, 3,200, 9:27.56).



Northville senior Ben Cracraft is a returning distance standout. (Photo: SUBMITTED PHOTO)

Top thrower Max DeDona also graduated, while long jump state qualifier A.J. Abbott transferred to West Bloomfield.

Last year Northville placed third in the Kensington Conference meet and fourth at the Milford regional.

"We are still trying to find our identity as a team," Dalton said. "Coming out of our first meet of the year at EMU, it was clear we have work to do. Our boys must make the choice of how good they want to be. I'm excited at the potential this team has, but again, we have some big holes that need to be filled. It will be interesting."

The top returnee off last year's KLAA Central Division championship team (5-0 record) is senior Ben Cracraft, who took 17th overall in the 3,200 at last year's Division 1 finals (9:27.67).

Other distance returnees include seniors Peter Bejin, Jacob Blackmore, Evan Ferrante, along with sophomore Nick Couyoumjian. Junior Robbie Kuphal adds depth in the middle distance and sprint races.

Other sprint returnees include senior Zach Stroud; juniors Guiliano Daniel, Andrew Hezemy, Trevor Kelterborn and Antonio Washington; and sophomores Nolan Knight and Zach Phillips.

Sophomores Daniel McLaughlin and Ben Shuart will add depth in the hurdles, while seniors Alec Hopkins and Caleb Sheehan hope to fill the void left by Hamilton in the high jump.

Senior Jacob Genaw joins junior holdovers Chase Cosey and Ja'Quan Crawford in the throwing events.

Among the promising newcomers include seniors Alex Kim (sprints-long jump) and Gustaf Tjernberg (jumps); junior Colin Neal (sprints); and sophomore Demetri Zervos (sprints-jumps).

Freshman distance hopefuls include Grant Gattoni, Josh Hardy, Adrien Jund, Andrew Lane and Brandon Liu.

Other freshman in the mix include Alex Beloiu, Brennan Van Riper and Enzo Rodriguez, sprints; Jacob Pichler, sprints-hurdles; Ben Steinig, sprints-middle distance; and Adrian Rendon, high jump.

"The opportunity for kids to step up and take varsity sports is wide open," Dalton said. "Hopefully this competition will light a fire under some of our boys. We have a solid leadership group that is in place that will work to make sure we continue to have a program that does things the right way and offers a great environment for our student-athletes both on and off the track."

Northville opens its dual meet season 3:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 11 at home against Novi.

"The KLAA Central will be very tough this year," Dalton said. "We must be ready to race and compete."