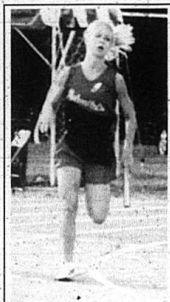


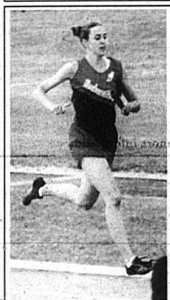
# Girls' Track team finishes runners-up in Class 2A State Championships

By Mark Brumett

The RCHS girls' varsity track and field team recently competed in the 2001 KHSAA Class 2A Outdoor State Track and Field Championships held at the University of Kentucky in Lexington. The girls finished the regular season as the top-ranked team in the state in Class 2A. At the state competition, RCHS hoped to improve upon their 12th place finish from last year and make a run at their first-ever state championship. The girls faced many excellent schools and programs, with their toughest challenge coming from eight-time state champion Paducah Tilghman. Other top contenders included former state championship teams such as Russell High School, Fleming County, Western Hills, Highlands, and twelve-time state champion Fort Campbell. During this past indoor season, the RCHS girls finished as indoor state runner-up to Paducah Tilghman.



Senior Cheyenne Carmack ran the final leg of the state championship 1600-meter relay team and finished as state runner-up in the 800.



Senior Rachelle Hammond ran the third leg of the state championship 1600-meter relay team.



Eighth grader Chere' Emb's prints the final stretch of her leg of the 800-meter relay. RCHS placed an all-time best sixth in the event.



Junior Andrew Hammond runs the third leg for the eighth place 1600-meter relay team. He also placed seventh in the high jump.

The RCHS girls had their greatest state competition ever and finished as Class 2A State Runners-up behind powerhouse Paducah Tilghman. Paducah won the state championship defeating Rockcastle 96.33 to 65. The average grade level of the RCHS girls' team is around 9.4, while Paducah's team is slightly older and more experienced with an average grade level of 10.9. Despite the difference, RCHS made a great run at the state championship with many outstanding individual and relay performances. This also represented the best state championship finish that any RCHS sports team has ever had, matching the two indoor state runner-up finishes that the girls' track team has enjoyed the past two seasons.

Preliminary competition began on Friday. RCHS got off to a great start in the meet with an awesome performance from the 3200-meter relay team. The team consisting of senior Cheyenne Carmack and seventh graders Kayla Hayes, Jessica Asher, and Danielle Arnold ran a spectacular race and finished sixth overall in the state with an awesome time of 10:27.25. Cheyenne ran an awesome second leg of the race, passing more than ten runners throughout her 800. This marked the first time an RCHS team had ever qualified for the 3200-meter relay at the state level. By placing sixth, the girls medalled in the event.

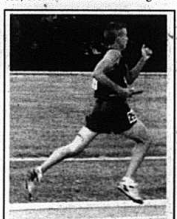
Senior Rachelle Hammond and eighth grader Heather Hammond competed in the long jump competition. For Rachelle, this was her third straight trip to state in the event. Heather qualified in the event for the first time. Both girls jumped extremely well in preliminaries and made it to the finals. Rachelle finished the competition in spectacular fashion. She had her best performance ever at the state competition. Rachelle leaped an incredible 16' 2" and finished fourth overall. Heather also scored with an awesome jump of 13' 5.75". She placed eighth overall and earned a medal for her efforts.

Junior Clarissa Hubbard qualified for the discus state championship. She threw very well in preliminaries and easily made the top nine throwers for the finals. Clarissa threw an amazing 107' 1" and finished third in the event - unprecedented for an RCHS female competitor.

The remainder of the evening, RCHS female competitors spent attempting to qualify for the finals of both individual events and relays. Their challenge was met with great success as every individual and relay team qualified for Saturday's state finals.

Freshman Sheena Swinney qualified for the 100-meter dash finals with an exceptional performance in preliminary competition. She ran an awesome race and finished as the fourth ranked qualifier with an awesome time of 12.97 seconds. Sheena also qualified in the 200-meter dash with a spectacular preliminary race. She finished third overall with an awesome time of 26.71 seconds.

In the 400-meter dash preliminaries, Heather Hammond sought to



Senior Jeremy Neeley runs the final leg of the 1600-meter relay.



Senior Jeremiah Myers runs the second leg of the 1600-meter relay.

qualify for Saturday's finals and did so with a tremendous effort. She easily won her heat with an impressive time of 1:00.62, putting her in great position for the finals.

The 400-meter relay team consisting of seniors Tara Abney and Mindy Bullock, as well as eighth graders Chere' Emb's and Johnna Abney, ran an awesome qualifying race. The girls sprinted their way to a sixth place finish with a great time of 54.4 seconds, easily making Saturday's finals.

The 800-meter relay team also ran a superb race and finished with the fifth best qualifying time. The team of Rachelle Hammond, Chere' Emb's, Johnna Abney, and Sheena Swinney blazed their way to the finals with an awesome time of 1:51.23.

The 1600-meter relay team had really high expectations due to their number one ranking in the event in the final regular season standings. The team of Cheyenne, Sheena, Rachelle, and Heather easily won their heat and qualified for the finals with a new RCHS record time of 4:09.87, shattering their previous record by almost three seconds.

After the first day of competition, the RCHS girls trailed defending state champion Paducah Tilghman by only three points - 18 to 15. The RCHS varsity boys' team also qualified for the state championships in the 1600-meter relay, while junior Andrew Hammond made it to state in high jump. The relay team consisted of juniors Josh Hale and Andrew Hammond, as well as seniors Jeremy Neeley and Jeremiah Myers. The boys ran a spectacular preliminary race and qualified for the finals on Saturday in spectacular fashion with a gutsy race and a time of 3:41.19.

Andrew performed equally well in the high jump competition. When all was said and done, he had cleared an amazing 5' 10", two inches more than his regional effort. His performance earned him a seventh place state finish overall in the event, as well as a medal for his efforts. This was the first time in six years that an RCHS male competitor had scored in the high jump competition.

Saturday's finals would prove to be extremely exciting as the RCHS girls sought to continue to challenge a strong Paducah team for the state title. The RCHS boys also were seeking their first-ever state championship in the 1600-meter relay, as well as the school record in the event.

The first event on the girls' agenda was the 100-meter dash finals. Sheena Swinney ran an awesome race and sprinted her way to a sixth place finish in the event with an awesome time of 13.11 seconds. This represented the best ever 100-meter dash finish in RCHS track and field history.

In the 200-meter dash, Sheena performed even better. Lined up directly beside last season's 200-meter champion, Sheena was up to the challenge and ran a spectacular race. She finished fifth overall with an awesome time of 26.72 seconds, the best finish ever for an RCHS competitor in the event.

Eighth grader Heather Hammond faced a daunting challenge in the 400-meter dash with the defending indoor state champion and former Class A champion from Paducah

standing between her and the state title. Heather accepted the challenge and led the race from start to finish. She blazed her way to the 400-meter dash state championship title with an awesome time of 59.9 seconds, defeating Paducah's best by seven-tenths of a second. Heather became the first RCHS competitor to ever win an outdoor state title in any event. She earned a gold medal and ten points for her spectacular effort, not to mention the attention of the Lexington Herald-Leader who interviewed her shortly thereafter.

Senior Cheyenne Carmack sought to defend her indoor 800-meter state title and had an excellent opportunity to win her first outdoor state championship in the event. Cheyenne made a miraculous transition from sprinter to mid-distance runner this season and has quickly challenged the state's best with her consistency and continuous improvement. Having already run the fastest 800-meter time in Class 2A this season, Cheyenne entered the event as the clear favorite, despite her inexperience in the event. Cheyenne put together an awesome effort with a spectacular race, but got boxed in twice during the 800-meter course. She fought her way through the pack of competitors and sprinted toward the finish, narrowly missing the first place win. She finished as state runner-up in the event with an awesome time of 2:23.51.

Seventh graders Jessica Asher and Danielle Arnold competed in the grueling 1600-meter run. The girls finished first and second in the region and gained the opportunity for their first individual event experience at the state level. Both Jessica and Danielle came through with great performances. Jessica placed 10th overall with an awesome time of 5:43.83. Danielle also ran a great race and finished 15th overall with a great time of 5:59.15.

In the 3200-meter run, Jessica Asher had an inspiring performance against several older, much more experienced competitors. She shattered her own RCHS record by fourteen seconds with a spectacular time of 12:27.79. More importantly, she placed seventh overall in the state in the event, earning a medal, as well as two points for her team.

The 400-meter relay team of Tara Abney, Mindy Bullock, Chere' Emb's, and Johnna Abney ran an exciting race. Already touted as the greatest 400-meter relay team in RCHS history with the record to prove it, the girls combined great baton passes with awesome speed and sprinted their way to a seventh place finish in the event with a time of 54.62 seconds. This represented the team's best-ever finish in the event in state competition and the first time that the team had placed in the top eight.

The 800-meter relay team performed even better and finished sixth overall in the state finals. Rachelle Hammond, Chere' Emb's, Johnna Abney, and Sheena Swinney put together a very fast race with great baton exchanges. They finished with an exceptional time of 1:51.6. This represented the best RCHS finish ever in the event and also earned the team three very valuable points.

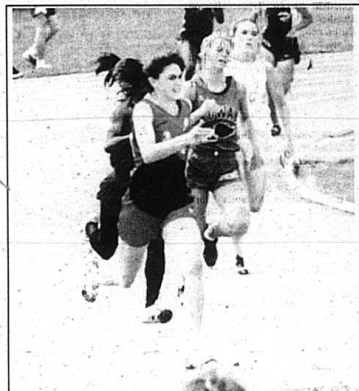
Heather Hammond came into the high jump competition as the favor-

ite having won the regional championship a week earlier. She was also ranked number one in the state for the entire season. Heather's best attempt came at the height of 5' 0". She narrowly missed 5' 2" while attempting to jump into a strong wind. She finished as state runner-up in the event. Overall, Heather led Rockcastle with an amazing 21.5 points in state competition. Teammate Mindy Bullock also qualified and put together a string of impressive jumps. She finished 12th overall with an awesome leap of 4' 8". This was the third straight year that Mindy had qualified for the state finals in the event.

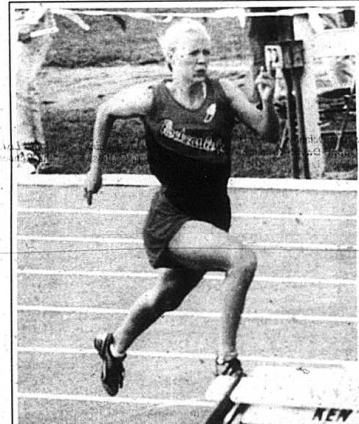
In the triple jump competition, Rachelle Hammond looked to have her best performance ever at the state level. Rachelle also qualified for the triple jump competition last season. She performed exceptionally well and leaped an incredible 32' 10.5" and finished in ninth place overall, just out of medal contention. She has won both triple jump and long jump at the regional level the past two seasons.

The shot put competition proved to be very exciting as junior Clarissa Hubbard looked to add an outdoor title to the indoor state title she won

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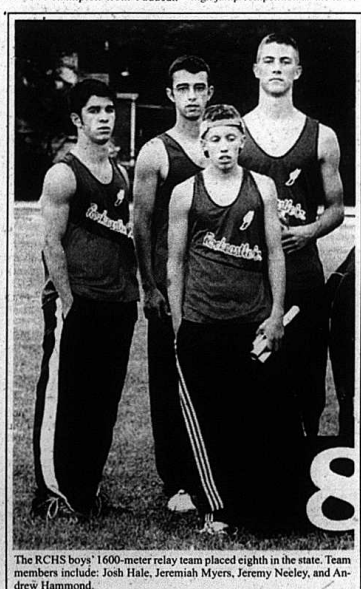
Eighth grader Heather Hammond won the 400-meter dash state championship title and finished as state runner-up in the high jump. She also anchored the state champion 1600-meter relay team.



Freshman Sheena Swinney finished sixth in the state in the 100-meter dash, fifth in the 200, and ran on the state champion 1600-meter relay team.



Mark Brumett, head track and field coach at Rockcastle County High School, was recognized as the 2001 Heart of the Bluegrass Girls' Track Coach of the Year on April 28th at the Heart of the Bluegrass meet in Harrodsburg. Brumett has coached track for eight years, four years as an assistant, and assuming the head coaching position in 1998. Under his guidance, the RCHS varsity girls' team has enjoyed two Regional Runner-up titles, two Regional Championships, two Indoor State Runner-up titles, and most recently, Girls' Class 2A State Runners-up. He has also coached several individual regional and state champions or runners-up, both on the track and in the field.



The RCHS boys' 1600-meter relay team placed eighth in the state. Team members include: Josh Hale, Jeremiah Myers, Jeremy Neeley, and Andrew Hammond.