

AAU runner race the showers

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ROCKFORD —

Adejah Charles rushed home to take a shower in preparation for her 200 -meter race at Saturday's Amateur Athletic Union District/State Championships.

Charles, 8, placed second in the girls sub-bantam 100-meter race, but she wouldn't get a chance to take the track again because of rain.

The one-day meet at Auburn High School, was suspended at the start of the girls intermediate 800-meter race with three more heats to go.

"I wanted to run my race," said Charles, who runs for the Rockford FIRE. "We just came back after I took a shower."

Her mother, Doyin Morgan said her daughter will have to wait until next time.

All athletes who didn't compete in their races after the meet was suspended automatically advanced to next month's AAU Regional Championships in Bloomington.

"It's a bummer the weather stopped us from getting our first place, but it's OK we will pick it up at regionals," Morgan said.

Rain wasn't a problem early in the day as the event started around 9 a.m., and the sun even came out for most of the day.

Once AAU officials saw lightning and heard that more thunderstorms were forecast, they decided to end the event at 4:30 p.m. Four events: The 400 and 200-meters, 1,500-meter run (sub-bantam and young) and 1,600-meter relay (bantam and young) were not completed.

"We got a lot accomplished today, and I was happy with that," said Marchan Adkins, AAU district director.

The rain didn't affect the field events, and that's where 14-year-old Ashley Purintun shined. Purintun, in her first year in summer track with the Rockford FIRE, placed first in the discus (sub-youth) and second in the shot put.

Her sister, Emily, who competed in the 800-meter race (sub-midget), encouraged Ashley to come out for track. Emily, 10, is in her second year in summer track.

"I was sitting at home and it was something to do," Ashley said.

Their mother, Tonia Purintun, said her daughters participating in track has been great. “This is something for them to do instead of being at home,” Tonia Purintun said. “Ashley would still be out here watching her sister, but it’s good that they are both out doing it together.”

More than 1,000 athletes competed at the AAU state meet. The event was hosted for the first time by the Rockford FIRE, a summer track program, open to area youth ages 7 to 18 and provides three levels of participation from recreational to advanced.

The FIRE stands for Fostering Identity, Recreation and Education for youth.

In its inaugural season, more than 60 members of the FIRE qualified for regionals including top performers, **Nic Haab (1st-400 and 110 hurdles)**, **Courtney McKibben (2nd-400 and 100 hurdles)**, Keyeon Hopson (2nd-100), Jesena Ford (1st-Shot Put), Natterria Harris-Davis (1st-100), Milia Harris (1st-100), Bella Swan (1st-long jump, 3rd-100) and Siena Peterson (1st-3,000).

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