

Girls track competitors eager to start journey to state at sectionals



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Byron High School's Paige Knodle (center) clears the last hurdle in the final of the 100-meter hurdles Thursday, May 6, 2010, during the Big Northern Conference Meet at Genoa-Kingston High School in Genoa.

By Doug Goodman

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Paige Knodle is thrilled track's postseason has arrived.

After dominating in nearly all her regular-season meets, the Byron junior is ready for stiffer competition as she defends her state Class 1A 300-meter hurdles crown.

Her title quest begins Friday at the Byron Sectional.

"I'm excited about going to state to have people close (in races) because I always do so much better with competition," she said. "It is hard to tell where you are at when you are alone out there in front."

Knodle ran her season-best 300 hurdles time at the Big Northern Conference meet last week in 45.26 seconds, nearly 3 seconds ahead of the second-place finisher.

She also won the 100 hurdles in a meet-record 15.23.

"With the 100s I'm so happy everything has been going so good," said Knodle, who finished sixth in the event at state last year (15.42).

"The 300 always can use more work because that is more endurance. I'm getting there. You always want to peak at sectionals."

Other top area competitors at the Byron Sectional include Byron's Chloe Wild, who won the BNC high jump title

at 5-2; Oregon's Krista Greene, who won the long jump at 15-6 1/2 at the BNC meet; and Winnebago's 800 relay team, which captured a first at 1:52.43 in the BNC meet.

Class 1A: Rockford Christian Sectional

Christian Life comes into the sectional after winning the Northeastern Athletic Conference championship last week.

In addition to winning three relays (3,200, 400 and 800) at the NAC meet, the Eagles got firsts from Stephanie Bennett in the 400 (1:02.69), Elizabeth McGraw in the 1,600 (5:53.12), Sydney Barnes in the discus (91-10) and Emily Palmer in the high jump (4-8).

Rockford Christian has one of Illinois' best hurdlers in senior Courtney McKibben, who finished fifth at state in the 100s last year (15.40) despite stress fractures in her right tibia. She was fourth at state as a sophomore, and earlier this season she beat Knodle head-to-head.

McKibben was ill and didn't compete in the NAC meet.

The Royals also got firsts in the NAC meet from the 1,600 relay (4:37.06), Jamie Tuneburg in the shot put (31-1) and Kymmie Cox in the triple jump (32-4).

Class 2A: Richmond-Burton Sectional

Belvidere North, which finished second to Harlem in the conference meet last week, will see plenty of new competitors as the Blue Thunder are the lone NIC-10 team in this sectional.

North is led by NIC-10 pole vault champ Baily Murphy, who finished second at state last year at 11-0, and Cetrena Simmons, who won the high jump (5-4) and triple jump (34-4) at the NIC-10. She also was second in the long jump (15-10) and fourth in the 400 (1:02.91).

Class 2A: Rochelle Sectional

Belvidere sophomore Annie Hodges will attempt to return to state in the triple jump. Last year she was eighth at state (36-2) after finishing second in the sectional.

East freshman Logan Tillmon could qualify for state in the 200, which she won at the NIC-10 meet (26.72), and the 100 hurdles, which she finished second in at the NIC-10 meet (15.95).

Rochelle's Lexi Sondergoth, who was fourth at state in the long jump last year, has gone 17-5 this season. She also has run a 11.90 in the 100, a 59.80 in the 400 and a 26.20 in the 200.

Burlington Central brings a strong team to the sectional after easily winning the Big Northern Conference meet title last week.

Class 3A: Hononegah Sectional

Harlem, fresh off claiming its first outright conference title in 30 years, leads the larger NIC-10 schools into this

sectional.

Huskies senior Jenna Combs will try to again qualify for state in the 100 hurdles and 300 hurdles, both of which she won at the NIC-10 meet last week.

Last year at state Combs was sixth in the 100 hurdles (15.14) and fourth in the 300 hurdles (44.09).

Harlem sophomore Leah Raffety will run for state berths in the 1,600 and 3,200. She won both at the NIC-10 meet.

Her teammate Autumn Miller has a chance to advance in the shot put after throwing a personal-best 41-1 at the NIC-10 meet.

Hononegah's top individuals are Courtney Clayton, who won the NIC-10 400 (1:01.61), and Kelsey Laska, who won the NIC-10 800 (2:26.59).

Other NIC-10 champs seeking a state berth in this sectional are Boylan's Rachel Evett (discus) and Auburn's Sierra Woods (100).

Reporter Doug Goodman can be reached at 815-987-1386 or dgoodman@rrstar.com.

Qualifying standards

CLASS 1A	Manual	F.A.T.
3,200 relay	10:23.5	10:23.74
400 relay	52.0	52.24
Discus	107-6	
3,200	12:17.0	12:17.24
100 hurdles	16.4	16.64
High jump	5-1	
100	:12.7	:12.94
800	2:27.0	2:27.24
Long jump	16-4	
800 relay	1:51.5	1:51.74
400	1:01.8	1:02.04
Pole vault	8-9	
300 hurdles	48.6	48.84
1,600	5:36.0	5:36.24
Shot put	35-6	
200	26.8	27.04
1,600 relay	4:16.5	4:16.74
Triple jump	33-5	

CLASS 2A Manual F.A.T.

3,200 relay	10:12.0	10:12.24
400 relay	51.0	51.24
Discus	112-6	
3,200	11:54.0	11:54.24
100 hurdles	15.8	16.04
High jump	5-1	
100	12.4	12.64
800	2:23.7	2:23.94
Long jump	16-10	
800 relay	1:49.0	1:49.24
400	1:00.6	1:00.84
Pole vault	9-0	
300 hurdles	47.6	47.84
1,600	5:27.0	5:27.24
Shot put	36-6	
200	26.0	26.24
1,600 relay	4:11.5	4:11.74
Triple jump	34-6	

CLASS 3A Manual F.A.T.

3,200 relay	9:45.0	9:45.24
400 relay	49.8	50.04
Discus	117-6	
3,200	11:31.0	11:31.24
100 hurdles	15.2	15.44
High jump	5-3	
100	12.2	12.44
800	2:20.5	2:20.74
Long jump	17-3	
800 relay	1:45.5	1:45.74
400	59.5	59.74
Pole vault	10-0	
300 hurdles	46.7	46.94
1,600	5:17.0	5:17.24
Shot put	37-6	
200	25.8	26.04
1,600 relay	4:06.5	4:06.74
Triple jump	35-6	