

SPORTS

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GIRLS TRACK & FIELD

Fairfield rallies for win

The Mules finished with 105 points to claim the BDC title

JOHN D. HOMAN
The Southern

MCLEANSBORO — The Fairfield Mules came from behind to capture first-place honors in the Black Diamond Conference high school girls track and field championship Wednesday in Hamilton County.

Fairfield finished with 105 total points, outpacing runner-up Sesser-Valier, who finished with 82 points. Host Hamilton County was third at 77 points. Flora was fourth with 65. Vienna was fifth with 59 points. Johnston City placed sixth with 44 points. Goreville was seventh at 38 points. Christopher/Zeigler-Royalton was eighth with 28 points. Carmi finished ninth at 24 points and El Dorado rounded out the field with 14 points.

Sophomore Amiah Hargrove of

the Bearcats was one of only two athletes to earn two first-place finishes as an individual competitor, winning the 100 meter dash in 12.82 seconds and following up with a first place in the 200 meter dash at 27.34 seconds.

The other to win a pair of events was Emersyn Robbins of Fairfield (long jump and 400 meters).

Freshman Maya Rounds of Sesser-Valier enjoyed a big day, as well, throwing a personal best in the discus at 105 feet, 11 inches. She was also second in the shot

put with a heave of 33 feet, 1 inch.

Senior Maddie Karcher of the Hamilton County Foxes placed first in the 3200 meters with a time of 12 minutes, 59 seconds; third in the 800 meters (2:42) and third in the 1600 (6:09).

Freshman Ella Sager of Fairfield earned a first in the 1600 meters (5:44) and second in the 800 (2:41).

Others who claimed firsts at the conference meet include: Macie Tosh of Goreville in the 110 meter hurdles (16.83 seconds); senior

Emmalee Tolbert of Johnston City in the shot put (34 feet, 8 3/4 inches); Cassidy Webb of Fairfield in the pole vault (6 feet, 6 inches); Micah Reynolds of Sesser-Valier in the high jump (4 feet, 10 inches); Alyssa Young of Flora in the triple jump (31 feet, 1/4 inch); Brooklyn McKee of Sesser-Valier in the 800 meters (2 minutes, 32 seconds); and Destiny Hocker of Fairfield in the 300 meter hurdles (51.27 seconds).

Please see BDC, Page C3

Salem officially rejects invitation

It's official. Salem High School has notified River-to-River Conference school administrators that it is declining a formal invitation to join the league.

Tony Wilson, Pinckneyville High School principal and president of the conference,

said this week that the conference reached out to Salem a couple of months ago, informing school officials in that community that there would be an opening within the Ohio Division of the River-to-River beginning the 2023-24 school year.

That opening came about when Ohio Division members Benton and West Frankfort announced plans to shift to the Mississippi Division, thus filling the vacancy created by Sparta's move to the Cahokia Conference.

With one school more than it now needs, Carterville, a member of the Mississippi, was pushed to the Ohio.

So, if you're keeping score at home, that leaves six schools in the Mississippi a little over a year from now (Du Quoin, Nashville, Pinckneyville, Anna-Jonesboro, Benton and West Frankfort) and five in the Ohio (Herrin, Carterville, Massac County, Harrisburg and Murphysboro).

The downside to having only five league schools in the Ohio is that you must play at least five conference games to be a conference representative in the football playoffs. Five league schools translates to only four league games. The only other way you can qualify for the playoffs is total wins.

"Salem politely declined our offer and says they are happy with their current situation," Wilson said.

Salem is a relatively new member of the Cahokia Conference. There had been speculation that the Wildcats might be interested in relocating if certain other schools joined the Cahokia. That has not yet happened, however.

Salem would have been a good fit enrollmentwise. Its last official enrollment count with the IHSA was 646, which would make it the second-largest school in the Ohio next to Herrin.

Please see HOMAN, Page C3

GIRLS TRACK & FIELD



BYRON HETZLER PHOTOS, THE SOUTHERN
Du Quoin's Olivia Philips (left) kicks past Anna-Jonesboro's Brodie Denny on the final lap to go on to win the 800-meter run during the SIRR Girls Conference track meet on Wednesday in Nashville.

TITLE TRACK

Du Quoin and Herrin run to their own beat en route to SIRR wins

DEREK BRIGHTWELL
The Southern

NASHVILLE — There's a lot to be said about Du Quoin and Herrin's victories in their respective divisions at the River-to-River Conference meet Wednesday in Nashville, but the Herrin team summed it best with a simple "Winning is good."

It's especially good for the Tigers who had a streak of six straight SIRR Ohio Division championships snapped two years ago. Head coach Dusty Mallow cracked a huge smile thinking about the sour taste that's finally out of his mouth.

"This feels real good," he laughed.

Both Du Quoin and Herrin started strong in the field events, with the Tigers holding a 12 point lead over Harrisburg and a 24 point lead over eventual second place finishers Murphysboro. Herrin was able to ride strong performances out of Karli Mann in both the triple and long jump — taking first in both and from

Loreal Tucker in the shot put



Herrin's Karli Mann (center) heads to the finish to win the Ohio Division 400-meter dash ahead of Murphysboro's Emilee Cue (left) and Herrin's Ava Greiner during the SIRR Girls Conference track meet on Wednesday in Nashville.

(second place) and discus (first)

"Traditionally, we've always been really good in the field,"

Mallow said. "I knew, on the track, we were going to score some points. I'm very pleased."

But the most dominant performance of the day was Du Quoin's. The Indians held a 21 point lead coming out of the field events built on the backs of four individual Mississippi Division championships during the first hour of the meet. Ellee Green cleared 5-foot-2-inches in the high jump to take first place, beating out teammate Sophie Hill and Nashville's Hailey Baugh who tied for second place with a five-foot jump. Kallie Oestricher's 8-foot-6-inch pole vault was good for first place while teammate Jalynn Wood finished second with a vault six inches lower. Love Dunklin and Grave Alongi took first and second in both the triple and long jumps as well. Adriana Stewart's shot put of 33-feet-5-inches was good for second behind Nashville's Kris May's throw of 33-feet-8-inches. Nashville's Alyssa Cole finished first in the discuss with a 118-11-inch throw and teammate Ruby Konkel took third. Du Quoin's Addi Darnell took fourth in the event to get the Indians four more points.

Please see SIRR, Page C3

SIU MEN'S GOLF

Salukis motivated by low seeding

Dawgs head to the Columbus Regional

BUCKY DENT
The Southern

CARBONDALE — Just before 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, SIU's men's golf team found out where they'll chase their NCAA Tournament dreams.

Then they found a motivating factor for their trip to the Columbus Regional May 15-18.

The Salukis are the 13th seed in a 13-team regional that includes

just one team they've played this year. That was 12th-seeded Wright State.

"We beat them pretty well," said SIU senior Birgir Magnusson. "It's motivating for us. We can't wait to go out there and take some names."

If the Salukis do that, they'll take some really impressive names. The top 5 seeds in the regional are Oklahoma State, Georgia Tech, Arkansas, Clemson and East Tennessee State. Or to put it another way, four TV league schools and a mid-major that's

punched well above its weight in golf for close to 30 years.

There's also the spectre of tournament host Ohio State and its home course advantage in the No. 6 seed. So the lineup of foes, which also includes Duke, Florida Gulf Coast, Northwestern and Kentucky, is formidable.

But all SIU has to do is finish in the top five teams over the 72-hole event to qualify for the championship round in Scottsdale, Ariz. from May 27-June 1.

Please see GOLF, Page C3



BYRON HETZLER, THE SOUTHERN

Matthis Besard, a senior on the SIU golf team, has won four tournaments this

season and placed second in another.