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High school track

Ewer already winning for M-G, but yet to step on track

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Madison-Grant senior Emma Ewer has yet to compete for the Argylls this spring, but she already earned a small, potentially important victory for her season. Ewer is the lone Grant County female track athlete to return after making it to state last sea and she helped get M-G's graduation date changed by two days after she discovered it was scheduled for the same day as year's girls' state finals.

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Emma Ewer has won a lot of races in her three seasons on the Madison-Grant track team. If she can stay healthy, she's sure to win several more by the time the spring outdoor season concludes.

A minor nagging muscle strain kept Ewer from competing during the indoor season, but she'll be ready to go when M-G goes to Daleville on Monday for a three-way meet that also includes Bluffton.

However, Ewer has already earned what she hopes will be an important win that will allow her to eventually finish her senior year the way she wants, back at the state track and field championships in Bloomington.

Ewer won the 200 meter Goshen Regional championship last spring to earn her first-ever trip to the state, but found out early on during the 2021-22 school year that if she was fortunate enough earn a repeat trip, she might have to make a difficult decision.

"At the beginning of the year, we were talking about it, graduation is going to be this date, trying to figure things out for caps and gowns. I was like, 'Uh oh, oh no, that's the same day as outdoor state,'" Ewer shared while watching part of the Hoosier State Relays Saturday in Bloomington.

Indeed, Madison-Grant's seniors were originally scheduled to walk for graduation on Friday, June 3, the same day of the girls state track and field championships are going to be held on the campus of Indiana University.

"I went to the administration, (Superintendent) Dr. (Scott) Deetz just happened to be sitting there and I was like graduation is the same day as outdoor state, I don't know if I'm going to make it, but I've worked my whole life for graduation. I've worked my whole life for track," Ewer said. "I shouldn't have to decide."

And now she doesn't have to decide.

Ewer's plea was answered with a positive result, and along with some help, M-G's Class of 2022 will now graduate on Sunday, June 5, all together.

"I was supposed to write an email to our administration and they set up a meeting without our class president, Mason Richards," she said. "He was really good about finding a day that we could do it."

Now the rest is up to Ewer, and going back to state is what she fully intends to do.

Ewer has been one of the top sprinters in Grant County since her freshman year and after having the 2020 state tournament canceled by Covid, she thrust herself onto the state stage with her regional championship.

Ewer actually qualified for regional with runner-up finishes in the 100 meters and pole vault as well last year, but opted not to run the 100 then had to scratch out of the regional pole vault.

But pole vault is something near and dear to Ewer's heart and she hopes to have an opportunity to potentially compete for a state-meet berth in it as well.

"That's what my dad (Jason Ewer) did. That's where I grew up at the IWU track and that's where he coached so I was there every single weekend," Ewer said of where her interest in pole vault first started. "My mom worked weekends, so if my dad was there, we were there. So that's where I grew up with pole vault.

"Every weekend we were there, he drove the bus and he'd bring laundry baskets," she continued. "I used to come in a laundry basket to keep me contained there. That was my thing. Gymnastics is similar to it and I have a gymnastics background so I have that air awareness, per se."

Ewer's best vault to date was 9-foot, 6-inches, which matched the sectional winning height at Western last year. She wants to beat the mark this season, perhaps by as much as a foot, which would likely put her in the neighborhood of a state berth.

Other than that, Ewer's goals are pretty simple.

"Twenty-five," as in seconds, she shared. "I want to break the school record in the 200. Then, just have a fun season, a really enjoyable season."

Aside from her on-track performance, Ewer has added a bit of a new role, one as a leader for the M-G girls team that has 18 girls out, including some freshman that could make a big impact.

"I'm a natural leader because of being an older sister and growing up as a team, I was the oldest one," she said. "It's natural, but it's also hard because sometimes they don't know what I'm doing so and I have to explain it. It takes a little bit more time out of the practice, but I think it's a good thing. It helps me remember the little things. If I can explain it then I know how to do it."

This year's Argylls girls team is the biggest, by numbers, in coach TJ Herniak's six-year tenure. M-G also has around 30 boys on its roster as well, so Herniak is really excited to see what kind of potential both teams have this spring.

“We haven’t approached 50 (athletes) in my six years of coaching,” Herniak said. “I’m excited that we’ve got the problem of now we have to decide who is going to run what event, instead of saying who can we put in this event so we have somebody running it.

“We’ve had years past where we haven’t been able to field relay teams. We’re deep enough this year that we’ll have a relay team on the track for every meet and we won’t miss one. It will be nice to have that.”

M-G girls will also feature senior Azmae Turner, who was a regional qualifier in high jump last season. Freshmen Aida Sites and Abbey Brown and were also girls Herniak said could have an immediate impact.

On the boys side, junior sprinter Tanner Brook, who was a regional qualifier in the 100 and 200 meters last season, and competed in the HSR state indoor championships on Saturday, is set to have a big season for the Argylls.

Senior thrower Gabe Wedmore also qualified for the HSR and Herniak thinks he could have a big season as well.

“Gabe Wedmore is someone, when he as a freshman I don’t think people envisioned him developing into a dominant football player, a good wrestler and a good shot putter as well,” Herniak said. “He’s well on his way and we’ve just gotten started.”

Herniak said freshmen Andy Stanley, Zander Gillespie and Boston Caudell bring talent and add depth to M-G’s roster, as do sophomores Clayton Hull and Caleb Ewer. Senior Cameron Harris, who is out for track for the first time, and senior Patrick Deckard, will help the Argylls compete in mid-distance and distance running events.

One thing that excites Herniak the most is Wedmore, Harris and Deckard are his only seniors.

“Our boys team is going to be competitive. We’ve got depth at sprints. We’ve got a couple distant runners, they’re not necessarily Oak Hill-level elite but they’re getting better. They will be competitive,” Herniak said. “Our relay teams are going to be outstanding. They’ll give our school records a run for their money.

“We’ve got a legitimate shot in big meets to have two kids placing in every event and it’s exciting to see that we’ve now go that depth to do that,” he added. “Our girls should be competitive this year too. We should be more competitive than we’ve been since I took over coaching. If everything falls the way we think it can, we’re going to be in for a really good year.”

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