

HIGH SCHOOL

WL track athletes to sing anthem

Quartet to sing before girls finals, then 3 will compete in boys finals

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Coach Lane Custer inquired about it without the kids even knowing.

What were the chances a group of West Lafayette kids who have a quartet group could sing the national anthem prior to the track and field state finals?

Indiana High School Athletic Association administrative assistant Kelsey Hoefler responded.

"We would love to have your Quartet sing the national anthem," she said via email.

So on Friday night before the girls state meet at Indiana University, Alex Hummels, Mitch Witt, Cooper Williams and Dylan Williams will sing "The Star-Spangled Banner."

"I am pretty nervous. I've never sung in front of a crowd this big before," Dylan Williams said. "Luckily I will have three other guys with me, so that kind of takes some of the pressure off."

On Saturday, Hummels and the Williams twins will be participants in the boys state meet.

The singing group started as a fun barbershop quartet about six years ago and blossomed into what will transpire before a large crowd.

The quartet all will wear West Lafayette No. 40 football jerseys to honor Christian Burns, who was killed in a single-car accident early Tuesday morning. Burns wore No. 40 for the football team and also competed for the track team.

"I am in choir at West Lafayette and a cappella groups, so it is kind of second nature," Hummels said after last Thursday's regional. "But it is really cool to perform at a big venue like the state track meet. That is going to be really exciting."

There's a distinct change when you perform in a theater versus in vast openness such as the Robert C. Haugh Complex, site of the state finals.

It will, however, not be their first attempt at singing the national anthem prior to a track meet.

In the West Lafayette Relays and Hoosier Conference meet this season, they got a tune-up, long before they knew they'd be performing at state.

But on Saturday, the crowd will be multiplied.

Cooper Williams and Dylan Williams know how to excite a crowd to open the state finals already, last year rallying to win the meet-opening 3,200 relay.

"There's pressure, but hopefully like running, with the nerves, I perform better," Dylan Williams said.



JOHN TERHUNE/JOURNAL & COURIER

West Lafayette's Dylan Williams hands the baton to Evan Johnson as he takes off on the third leg of the boys 4x800 meter relay at the Hoosier Conference track and field meet May 6. Williams will perform as part of a quartet singing the national anthem before the girls state finals.

CRUM

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"That set him back. He still went pretty high during indoor season, but it wasn't what he wanted to do."

The Hot Dog sophomore is finally hitting his stride at the right time.

He cleared 16-10 $\frac{1}{4}$ at the April 23 Hot Dog Invitational.

The sophomore state record is 17 feet and that is the realistic goal for Saturday's meet, along with a state championship.

Two weeks ago, the rest of the competitors were done before Crum began his routine.

When you're this much better than the competition, meets become an extension of practice. During the sectional and regional, he tinkered with different poles, trying to find the right formula that will allow him to be Frankfort's first state champion in track and field since Bob Laverty won the long jump in 1955.

So two weeks ago at West Lafayette, he grabbed his tool of choice and public

"I perform best under pressure when everybody is watching. It drives me to do things more correct to be stronger."

COLTON CRUM

IHSAA STATE FINALS

Saturday
At Indiana University
Time: 3 p.m.

Tickets: \$10

If you go: Robert C. Haugh Track and Field Complex at 1601 N. Fee Lane in Bloomington.

entiate from practices.

"I like to put on a show," Crum said. Heath enjoys the show, too, so long as Crum wins the meet or, in the case of last week's regional, hits the standard mark to move on, which he did with ease to return to the state finals.

"I perform best under pressure when everybody is watching," Crum said. "I

HENDERSON

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"When I think she's done, she wants to work harder. She understands what it takes to be a good thrower. I like the drive that she has."

Henderson enters Friday's meet as the fourth seed in shot put after breaking a regional record a week ago and is seeded second in the discus. Her goal this year was to finish top three in both events and break the school shot put record of 46 feet, 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches.

Henderson hit 44 feet on the nose at the Lafayette Jeff Regional, 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches better than the shot put distance Liz Honegger set the record at in 2003. She also was the regional discus champion at 141-4.

A week after setting that regional record in 2003, Honegger would close her high school career with state titles in both the shot put and discus.

Henderson plans to end her senior year the same way. The only thing is that's a full year from now.

She may be ahead of schedule.

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there was trouble getting academic records from her previous school.

"She more or less had to redshirt her freshman year," he said.

In addition to adding wrestling to her extra-curricular activities in the winter, Henderson lifted with the football team in the weight room.

She got stronger and fine-tuned her throwing technique. She added distance and became more consistent.

"Next year I think she can not only be the best in the state, but one of the top in the Midwest and top 20 in the nation," Madlung said.

And while she has aspirations of top-three finishes Friday night, the true test will be not choking. To do that, she'll have to beat her No. 1 competitor