

Bulldogs Place at State

By Judy Rogers

Despite multiple weather delays resulting in the KSHSAA state track meet in Wichita concluding on Sunday for the first time in the 109 year history of the meet, the Golden Plains track team members were able to place in multiple events and post some season best results.

The first event for the Bulldogs was senior KayCee Miller in Long Jump early Friday morning. Miller jumped 16' 4.5" for sixth place making her the first female Bulldog track member in school history to medal in the state meet in an event all four years of high school. Tate Bruggeman completed the feat while in high school as he placed in the high jump all four years he was in school. Miller placed 8th as a freshman, 7th as a sophomore, was state champion as a junior, and finished sixth as a senior. "I knew it was going to be difficult to defend my state championship from last year," said Miller. "Going into state, multiple people had jumped over 18 feet. I was confident I would end my jumping career on a good note. I would definitely consider placing sixth without jumping my personal best was ending on a good note."

Following Miller's long jump on Friday, the meet was postponed until Saturday eliminating the opportunity for preliminaries in the running events. All track events on Saturday were timed with the top 8 placing.

The 4 x 100m relay team of Miller, Ashley Stoll, Brooke Stoll, and Mabel Lugo ran early Saturday afternoon. The girls ran their best time of the season of 51.81 seconds to place sixth in the state. This was their second year to be on the state podium in this event.

Both Ashley Stoll and Mabel Lugo ran the 400m. The girls ran in separate heats. Lugo ran first finishing fifth in her heat with a time of 1:02.99. Stoll placed sixth in her heat at 1:01.22 finishing 8th overall to claim a spot on the podium. This was her second year to place in the 400.

Brooke Stoll ran the 800m with her best time of the season at 2:32.39. She just missed out on a medal with a ninth place finish. "I think that we had a very good end to the season despite all of the weather delays," said Brooke. "I am very proud of how we overcame all of the injuries and sickness this year to finish the season on a good note!"

Jacob Ritter jumped 19' 2" in long jump. As a senior, this was his first trip to the state meet. "Although I didn't jump as well as I wanted," said Ritter. "It was a great experience and end to a great season." Miller also competed in the 200m dash running her best time of the year at 27.84. She was also a four time state competitor in the 200m.

The meet was once again postponed with the remainder of the 200m dashes and the 4 x 400m relays rescheduled for Sunday morning. The Bulldog relay team of Miller, Stoll, Stoll, and Lugo stepped on the track ready to run. They again ran their best time of the season of 4:09.13 to place second as state runner-up.

These four girls have placed first in this race at every meet they ran in the past two years including setting the school record repeatedly and winning the state championship last year. They faced multiple challenges this year with early season injuries and late season illness, but they worked together as a team to push through to continue to support one another to accomplish their goal.

“I was very happy with how we ended our final race together as a team and couldn’t have asked for better teammates!” said Ashley Stoll. “It was hard to stay focused and keep the nerves under control with all the delays, but I think we managed it well! I enjoyed competing and am excited to see what next year will bring.”

With Miller graduating, this was the last time these four girls will run together. “My high school career has come to an end with a great state track meet!” said Miller. There are lots of memories made at GP that I will never forget! Thanks to my family, coaches, and friends who have supported and inspired me. Once a Bulldog always a Bulldog!”

“I’m looking forward for one of the freshmen coming in to step up and to have a shot to compete again in this race.” said Lugo. “I really have hope that we can come back and compete. The past two years this race has been my favorite to compete in and I couldn’t ask any other way to finish than the way we did. Thank you for my teammates giving me the best memories and for making it a really fun season! And thank you to KayCee for pushing me and guiding me through everything. I wish her the best in the future!”

“This group of girls brought home medals in the 4x100, 4x400, long jump and the 400,” added Coach Travis Smith. “For all the ups and downs of the weekend with the weather issues, they did a fantastic job! I couldn’t be more proud of the season these young girls had! I am proud to be their coach!”