

## Newton girls find silver lining at Drake Relays

By Troy Hyde  
Sports Editor

DES MOINES — When Newton senior JaQuay Priest found out teammates Addy Terpstra and Chloe Rora-baugh were not going to be able to run in the Drake Relays, she fell straight to the ground in shock.

“I thought our team was done and we were going to do bad,” Priest said. “But when you have a positive team and people who push it and give it their all, anything can happen.”

The Cardinals came into the season with nine girls competing for four spots on the varsity shuttle hurdle relay team.

Competition has been so stiff that Newton co-head girls track and field coaches Rachel Tomas and Rachele Tipton still didn’t have an official four runners a few days before the Relays kicked off.

The foursome ended up being sophomore Macy Lampe, freshman Mack Sims, Priest and freshman Tori White and the Cardinals finished 13th in the 16-team field on Saturday morning.

“It’s been stressful, but it’s helped the team,” said Lampe, who was the only Cardinal running on Saturday that competed on the squad at last year’s Drake Relays. “The competition in this event is so tough. Everyone runs similar times, but it’s made us all better and helped us grow.”

They had the ultimate



Troy Hyde/Newton News

Newton senior JaQuay Priest ran the third leg of the girls’ shuttle hurdle relay at the Drake Relays on Saturday. The Cardinals finished 13th in the event.

growth moment late in the race when White fell on the second-to-last hurdle.

White had plenty of emotions after the race. She felt like she let the team down. But none of her teammates blamed her for anything and it can no doubt bring them all closer together for the final few weeks of the season.

“It was a good experience. I wouldn’t want to be here with any other team,” said Priest, who ran on the Drake Relays shuttle hurdle team as a sophomore. “These girls put their hearts into this race. We gave it our all. Tori pushed so hard

and fell. It happens.

“There’s so much competition with this team. You have bad days, but it feels like we can’t have bad days. That’s probably why we are all heated up. This is a wake-up call for us. I think we’ll come to practice on Monday more determined and more focused.”

The Cardinals’ official time was clocked in 1 minute, 9.53 seconds.

They were in third place in their preliminary heat at the time of the fall. Only the top four teams advanced to the finals later in the day.

Newton was still better

than conference rival Norwalk in the race. The Warriors (1:10.08) finished 14th.

Solon, perhaps Newton’s biggest competition in Class 3A at the upcoming state meet, advanced to the finals and placed third overall in 1:05.92.

Dowling Catholic won the Drake Relays title with a time of 1:03.20.

“We went into the race wanting a season-best time knowing we had great competition to push us,” Tomas said. “We didn’t run as clean of a race as we would have liked. The girls were competing and

we are proud of their efforts.”

The Cardinal foursome who competed on Saturday does not have the team’s season-best time, but the 1:07.75 they ran last week was still fast enough to clinch a Blue Standard time.

Lampe said that time gave Newton the confidence it needed to compete with the best teams at the Relays.

“It was really fun. Despite the time and despite the fall, we did really well,” Sims said. “This team has put in so much hard work. I’m really proud of all of us.”

White has come on as of late. Once she started three stepping, her times improved significantly.

“Someone will be there to take a spot if any of us have a bad day,” White said. “That’s why we are all pushing each other so hard. Everyone wants to be on this team. We have nine amazing hurdlers with only four being able to do it.”

“I loved coming here and getting to race. I didn’t even think I would be out on that track this year because we have such great hurdlers on this team. Just being able to be here with these girls is really amazing. Everyone strives to be the best we can be.”

### Cardinals score 100 points at Tulip Time Relays

PELLA — With the top two hurdlers unavailable, the Newton girls’ shuttle hurdle relay team marched on.

GIRLS TRACK | 2B

## Newton boys move up in 4x400 relay at Drake Relays

By Troy Hyde  
Sports Editor

DES MOINES — Despite competing in his third Drake Relays on Friday, Newton junior Cody Klein also experienced a few firsts on the blue oval.

He was competing in a relay with his brother and one of his closest friends for the first time.

He also ran in an event that wasn’t the 4x800-meter relay.

“It’s a cool experience either way, but it’s less stressful having to run just one lap,” Klein said. “It’s awesome to be able to do this with Caden. I love running with him and he pushes me to be at my best, too.”

Klein and the rest of the Cardinals came into the Drake

Relays with no expectations. They had the 24th and final qualifying time in the 4x400 relay and the foursome of Caden Klein, Nate Lampe, Curtis Payne and Cody Klein ended up 20th in Friday’s final event of the day.

Newton finished the race in 3 minutes, 29.45 seconds. The Cardinals foursome had their sights set on finishing in front of ADM, but the Tigers placed 15th in 3:28.13.

“They are coming along,” Newton head boys track and field coach Chad Garvis said. “I’m excited to see what the next few weeks bring. We should have a handful of relays qualify for the state meet and these four guys will be a big part of that.”

Little Hawkeye Conference

rival Norwalk ended up 11th in 3:26.14. Class 3A Mount Vernon was the runner-up in 3:19.48 and Ankeny won the Drake Relays title with a time of 3:19.19.

“The goal was not to get last and to get ADM. We didn’t get ADM, but we didn’t get last,” Caden Klein said. “It was an awesome experience and running on this track has been a dream of mine. I watched the last few years and made it a goal to get here myself.”

Payne had competed on the blue oval at the state meet before, but this also was his first Drake Relays experience.

“There’s better energy and it’s way louder and way faster,” Payne said.

BOYS TRACK | 2B



Troy Hyde/Newton News

Newton junior Cody Klein, left, receives the baton from junior Curtis Payne during the third and final exchange of the 4x400-meter relay at the Drake Relays on Friday.

## Strong finish helps Lynnville-Sully’s Gruver medal at Drake Relays

By Troy Hyde  
Sports Editor

DES MOINES — Everyone in attendance inside Drake Stadium on Saturday afternoon knew Lynnville-Sully senior James Gruver had a strong finish to his 400-meter hurdles race at the annual Drake Relays.

Because famous track announcer Mike Jay said so.

It was Gruver’s finish that allowed him to win the opening heat of the race and helped him secure his first career Relays medal.

“I left it all on the track. I’m pretty tired,” Gruver said.

“My goal was to get top eight. I was able to do that.”

Four runners surpassed Gruver in the final heat, but his fifth-place finish in his first and only Drake Relays came with a career-best time of 54.45 seconds.

There were a total of 16 runners in the field, and Gruver has dealt with a

hamstring injury most of the season.

“I wanted to run under 55. It feels amazing,” Gruver said. “I was hurt to start the year so I wasn’t sure I’d get here. But I kicked my butt in gear and was able to get in.”

Linn Mar’s Nicholas Gorsich won the Drake Relays 400 hurdles title with a time of 52.28 seconds.

Mount Ayr’s Ryce Reynolds, the defending Class 1A state champion, was the runner-up in 52.57.

The 400 hurdles runs in the Gruver family. His sister Abby Gruver was a state qualifier in the event and his father Doug Gruver and uncle Mike Gruver also competed in the event.

“There’s a lot of expectations. There’s a lot of history in our family with this event,” James Gruver said. “The experience was really good. I just tried to do my best.”

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Troy Hyde/Newton News

Lynnville-Sully senior James Gruver, right, rallied to win this heat of the 400-meter hurdles at the Drake Relays in Des Moines on Saturday. Gruver placed fifth overall with a career-best time of 54.45 seconds.