

# SPORTS

# Flag day

Steines wins 1,500 at Drake Relays; area earns four other top-10 finishes

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DES MOINES — The closing finish was strong, so was Calamus-Wheatland sophomore Noelle Steines' grip.

Clutched in her hand was the famous white flag presented to winners at the Drake Relays, which celebrated its 113th running this past weekend.

It wasn't going anywhere.

"I'm going to be holding on to this for like the next 48 hours," Steines said after winning the 1,500-meter run Saturday. "I'm so happy."

The Warrior's winning time in the race, 4:35.22, was more than 11 seconds better than her school-record clocking (4:46.85) set at last year's state meet and doubles as the 17th-fastest effort in state history.

The victory, meanwhile, matches the one that Steines' mother, Jessica, the Cal-Wheat head track and cross country coach, earned as a prep. Competing for Marshalltown, Jessica Huff won the 1999 800-meter run then later earned a second victory at the distance at Iowa State University.

On a local level, Steines' victory is the area's first at the Drake Relays since the Central DeWitt girls 4x100 team ran to a title in 2005.

It also capped a strong weekend for area track athletes as competitors from all three schools combined for five top-10 finishes.

Boxed in for stretches of the 800-meter run a day earlier, Steines made it a point to avoid the mass of competitors and get to the front of the pack in the 1,500.

"When I got out, I thought 'I'm really sitting good here,'" she said.

Steines sat in second after her first 300-meter lap and then stayed there as Mid-Prairie distance standout Danielle Hostetler eventually overtook early leader Clare Kelly of Van Meter.

Steines stayed on Hostetler's heels and then, with about 200 meters remaining, surged to the front.

"I got around to that last corner, and I felt great, Steines said. "[I told myself] I need to take full advantage of this and just push myself."

In a small case of déjà vu, the runner following Steines in the final stretch was Sibley-Ocheyedan senior Madison Brouwer, the same competitor who had battled her down the stretch at last fall's state cross country meet.

There proved to be no catching



The Observer photos by Ross Eberhart  
**Calamus-Wheatland sophomore Noelle Steines** is handed the famous Drake Relays white flag after winning the 1,500-meter run, Saturday, at the 113th running of the track staple. Steines dropped more than 11 seconds from her school record in the race, running the 17th-fastest time, 4:35.22, in state history while joining her mother, Jessica, as a prep Drake champion.

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**Northeast freshman Jasalyn Jensen** rises up in the blocks in the 4x100 relay.



**Northeast senior Jimmy Weispfenning** closes in on **Grant Gray** in the 4x100 relay. The Rebels improved 24 spots on their seeding.



**Central DeWitt senior Alex Fuller** hands the baton to teammate **Will Ginter** during the 4x200 relay, Friday afternoon, at the Drake Relays. The Sabers duo teamed with Alex Brown and Tristan Rheingans to post the time to beat in the first section, a season-best 1:28.50, that doubled as the second-fastest time in school history. Only four teams in the next two heats could top the time, giving the quartet a fifth-place finish.



**Central DeWitt senior Soren Maricle** claps after clearing 5-4 on her first attempt in the high jump. The clearance helped the Saber score a top-10 finish for the second straight year, finishing ninth overall.



**Central DeWitt junior Tristan Rheingans** went airborne at the finish line during the prelims of the 4x400 relay Friday night. Rheingans teamed with Alex Fuller, Will Ginter and Alex Brown to finish 12th in the race with a time of 3:26.19. A day later, Rheingans was back on Drake Stadium's blue oval, lowering his own school record in the 400-meter hurdles while finishing sixth overall with a clocking of 54.70.

