

# Edwardsville Takes Winston Brown Invite Title, Alton High's Young Athletes Impress At Meet

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer  
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EDWARDSVILLE - The outcome of the annual Winston Brown Invitational boys track meet at the Winston Brown Track and Field Center in Edwardsville came down to the final race, the 4x400 meter relay, and the host Tigers finished sixth, which was enough to give them the team championship of what's called The Meet of Champions Saturday afternoon.

The Tigers won with 122 points, with St. Louis U. High, making their debut in the meet, second with 108 points, last year's champions Plainfield North came in third with 101 points, fourth place went to Mascoutah, who scored 77 points, and O'Fallon rounded out the top five of the 23-team field with 72 points. Collinsville finished eighth with 36 points, with Alton right behind in ninth place with 35 points, and Highland wound up in 20th place with five points.

The Tigers had several strong performances in the meet, and are improving day-by-day, but head coach Chad Lakatos also knows there are still some flies in the ointment that need to be fixed up. Still, he's very happy with how things are going for his team.

"Yeah, we've had a good day," Lakatos said, "our field events continue to be strong, and we've had some hiccups in a few relays, but on the track and overall, I think it's been a good day for us."

The field events continue to be a big strength for Edwardsville, and they had some big performances to help the Tigers in the team race.

"Well, obviously, our field events guys," Lakatos said. "Devyon Hill-Lomax, a sophomore, went six-seven (2.01 meters) today, he won that (in the high jump), Malik (Allen) continues to do his thing in the triple jump; we went one-two in there. Gino Montgomery got second. I thought Hugh Davis in the 1,600, he wasn't seeded to get third, but he did. So, great job and good team points there at the end, and we're gonna need those. It's going to come down to the 4-by-4, both (freshman-) sophomore and varsity, and we're going to be in a dogfight. There's a couple of good teams here, freshman and varsity scored, so obviously, we're going to have to put up some points to see where we're at in the team scores."

Overall, the Tigers continue to make progress towards the end of the season next month, and Lakatos is very confident that the team will be ready to go come postseason time.

"Yeah, it's mid-April," Lakatos said, "this is where we're starting to venture into most of May and it's what we call 'championship month.'" And so, we want to make sure we're hitting on all cylinders. When we get there, we've still got a few guys that are tight here



and there, and we want to try to get them right. So, we've had to hold some of these guys out. But I like where we're at. We just have to continue to support one another, and get guys healthy. And I think we'll be in good shape."

The end-of-season prospects for the Tigers seem to be very favorable and promising for the team as they looked to win the meet.

"Yeah, I think so," Lakatos said. "We're back and forth with SLUH, O'Fallon's strong, Plainfield North won it last year. So here we are. last event of the day."

Alton had many other standout performances, and held their own against some very strong competition.







"We're just out here competing with some of the best teams around," said Redbirds coach Jeff White. "It's good to see (Mary Institute-Country Day of Ladue, Mo.) and SLUH come over, Plainfield North and (Tinley Park) Andrew coming down, getting some goo competition. It kind of helps offset the cool weather today. It's not too bad, the sun's out, but I all wish it was a little bit warmer out. But after last year's meet here at the Winston Brown, I think we're pretty thrilled with this weather. We're just out here, seeing how much better we are getting week-to-week."

One of the surprise performers for Alton was sprinter Jayden Holeman, who put up personal record times in both the 100 and 200 meters, along with middle distance runner Hank McClaine, who's starting to become a very good contributor for the Redbirds.

"A lot of people are going to see Sam Elliott-Barnes," White said, "and he's obviously a very, very talented runner. But Jayden Holeman has been a guy who's really helped out on our relays, and he ran really well in the open 100 and the open 200 last week in Granite City. He got eighth today in the 100, ran an 11.30, and he's really helped out, like, our relays this season. In a lot of ways, he's been like some of the glue holding the sprint group together, especially on our relays."

The rest of the team aren't doing all that bad, either. Especially the younger brother of a prominent Redbird athlete from last season.

"Hank McClaine, he's another one of our athletes that's had a really good day today," White said. "He went 2:01-nineties, I think, in the 800; that's a great (personal record) for him. He's a young guy, he's a sophomore, he's Simon McClaine's brother, and he's shown he's got some of the good talent in that family.. And so, I was really happy to see Hank run that race that he ran today."

And the team continues to make progress as things keep rolling along toward post-season.

"Absolutely," White said. "We talked about it last week. We've got a few things to figure out, a few things to get better. I'm real confident that in May, we're going to be an excellent team. I think our best races are still in front of us, and we are off to a good start."

The winner of the 100 meters was Henry Rohan of MICDS at 10.74 seconds, while Elliott-Barnes was second at 10.82 seconds, Zach Lane from Edwardsville was third at 10.89 seconds, with Jamonte Thomas of Collinsville coming in at 12.31 seconds. Omar Mims of O'Fallon took the 200 meters at 21.96 seconds, with Elliott-Barnes in fourth at

22.42 seconds, Jaydon Cole of Edwardsville was fourth at 23.06 seconds, Easton Miller of Plainfield North won the 400 meters with a time of 49.25 seconds, with Elliott-Barnes fifth at 50.71 seconds.

Owen Stahl, also of Plainfield North, won the 800 meters at 1:55.94, while McClaine came in eighth at 2:01.96. Jackson Miller of SLUH won the 1,600 meters at 4:28.69, with Davis finishing a surprising third at 4:33.57, Collinsville's Andrew Gonski was sixth with a time of 4:34.95, and Alton's Noah Gallivan was 10th at 4:40.42. In the 3,200 meters, the winner was Mason Scargall of SLUH, at 9:31.05, with Ben Perulfi of Edwardsville third at 9:40.11, and teammate Parker Weaver 10th at 10:06.41.

In the hurdles races, Jacob Oliphant of the Junior Billikens won the race at 14.74 seconds, with the Tigers' Brandon Houston placing ninth at 17.52 seconds, and teammate Chris Malone was 10th at 17.63 seconds. The 300 meters was won by Oliphant, who came in at 41.83 seconds, with Charlie McAfoos of Alton fourth at 43.09 seconds, and Malone finished 10th at 44.33 seconds.

In the relay races, O'Fallon won the 4x100 meters at 42.50 seconds, with Edwardsville fourth at 42.99 seconds, and Alton placed fifth at 43.68 seconds. Mascoutah took the 4x200 meters with a time of 1:28.84, while Edwardsville was third at 1:29.23, and Alton came in fourth at 1:30.81. The results of the 4x400 meters saw Plainfield North take first at 3:22.01, while Edwardsville finished sixth at 3:31.66, and Alton was seventh at 3:32.08. In the 4x800 meters, Mt. Vernon took the win at 8:02.88, with Highland fourth at 8:15.62, and Edwardsville finished fifth at 8:20.86.

In the field events, Devin Habermehl of Collinsville won the shot put with a throw of 17.33 meters, with Edwardsville's Iose Epenesa fourth at 15.63 meters, and Shane Box of the Kahoks ninth at 13.83 meters. In the discus throw, Salem's Caleb Smith won the event with a toss of 54.69 meters, with Epenesa second at 49.99 meters, Habermehl was third with a throw of 49.32 meters, Box was sixth at 41.75 meters, and Edwardsville's Dalton Brown was ninth at 40.88 meters. Hill-Lomax took the high jump by clearing 2.01 meters, while K.J. Thorps-Watt of Collinsville returned from injury to take fifth place, going over at 1.85 meters.

In the pole vault, Mascoutah's Robert Williams was the winner, clearing 4.01 meters with Jacob Veteto of Altamont, Williams winning the event on the fewest misses rule. Eli Gilmore of Edwardsville was third at 3.86 meters, Collinsville's Ben Stallings was fifth at 3.71 meters, and teammate Ayden Gratzl was sixth at 3.56 meters. Matt Pluff of Freeburg won the long jump, going 6.87 meters, while Jaydon Cole of the Tigers came in fifth at 6.63 meters, and teammate Jacob Wahl was eighth at 6.38 meters. In the triple jump, Allen continued his winning ways in the event, taking the crown with a leap of 14.94 meters, with Montgomery second at 13.65 meters.



[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)