

5 gold medals, record-breaking relay highlight State Track last weekend

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt



Relay grabs gold, sets state record

HHS not only won the 4x200 relay at the 2A State Track Meet, but broke the state record in the process. Team members are pictured after their win, from left, Marissa Smith, Marci Vasa, Mallory Bennett and Heather Duester.□□

—Enterprise photo by Duncan Brandt



4 golds in 1 meet

HHS senior Marissa Smith lived her dream of claiming four gold medals in the Colorado State 2A Track Championships. She won the 100, 200 and 400 meter races and anchored the 4x200 meter relay.□□ □□□ □□□□

—Enterprise photo by Duncan Brandt



Repeat Gold

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HHS senior Kyle Carper repeated as the 2A State Triple Jump Champion last weekend at the state meet at Jeffco Stadium in Lakewood.

—Enterprise photo by Duncan Brandt

Four individual gold medals plus a gold-medal relay effort that set a new 2A State record capped a terrific track season for the Holyoke Dragons last weekend at Jeffco Stadium in Lakewood.

Senior Marissa Smith added crowning glory to her high school track career when she nabbed four gold medals, with the help of a relay team for one of them.

It was a top-notch day for the girls' relay team Friday when juniors Heather Duester, Mallory Bennett and Marci Vasa joined Smith to win the 4x200 in 1:45.69.

It wasn't until they climbed to the top of the awards stand, to the tune of the State Track Meet announcer, that they learned they had broken Limon's 2006 record of 1:46.45.

It was especially sweet for the Dragons, who went into the finals seeded second, having clocked a 1:46.79 prelim time behind Akron's 1:46.66. And in 2009, the Dragon team had placed second behind the Rams.

But this year, the Holyoke quartet bested the second-place Akron team in the finals by 1.04 seconds for a clear victory.

"We were just going for first place," said Duester, who said they were pretty excited when they were getting their medals to find out they'd broken a state record.

"It was the icing on the cake," added Bennett. "It was definitely the best part of the track meet."

Senior Kyle Carper made it to the top of the awards stand for the third straight year when he

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won the triple jump Friday afternoon. His previous golds included long jump in 2008 and both long and triple jumps in 2009.

Smith is the first Lady Dragon to claim four golds in a state meet, and joins an elite group of only two others in HHS history. Brandon Brown won four golds as a junior in 1998 and Russell Sprague earned four golds as a senior in 1999.

Last year, as a junior, Smith won the 200 and 400 meter races. This year, she grabbed the gold individually in the 100, 200 and 400 and anchored the 4x200 record-breaking relay.

Smith said she's been dreaming about achieving four gold medals at state since she was very young. "It felt good to actually live it," she added, acknowledging the role her relay teammates played in achieving her goal.

It was a big State Meet for the whole Dragon team, as both the girls and boys came away with third-place team finishes.

See this week's Enterprise for full details and more pictures from the May 20-22 Colorado State Track Championships.