

**HIGH FLYING** During his second attempt, senior Javon Thomas performs the triple jump at the Liberty Eylau track meet March 27. He jumped a 41.4' and placed fourth overall. *photo by s. rogers*



# JUMPING OVER HURDLES

Bad weather gives sluggish start to track season giving team members little time to make necessary improvements before heading to district meet

**by TYLER SNELL**  
co-news editor

The runners crouch into starting positions with feet locked against the blocks. In a split second, the gun is fired and track runners are off to the races to capture the gold. Legs and lungs burn, but they push through the pain for that sweet taste of glory every athlete strives for.

Boys and girls varsity track teams began their seasons with a rough start, largely due to weather complications.

"Earlier in the season, the relays kind of struggled with all the rain and lack of practice," junior Chaz Davis said. "I feel towards the middle of the season we will be one of the best in the state again."

After the loss of Kevin Harris and Trey Walker, who graduated last year, many were doubting how this year's team would perform. However, many current team members don't see the loss as a setback.

"Nothing has really changed since last year because we still have speed," senior Dale Williamson said. "It will just have to be a process that we will have to keep working at. We are getting better and better in practice everyday."

Working day in and day out, the team has been practicing even while facing complications with rain and winter weather. It has been especially hard with the pressure of last year's state winning team over their heads.

"It's kind of putting a lot of pressure on

us because we feel we have to get back to their level," Davis said. "We are realizing that we just have to work harder, and it will take work to get where they were."

Senior Javon Thomas said he feels the same about the triple jump event.

"I have to work harder because there are a lot of people from other schools that are jumping pretty far," Thomas said. "The team as a whole has to work on running hard in practice because that is what getting to us. We have to stay together as a group and work on things individually."

Despite finishing fifth in the first track meet at Hallsville, freshman Elias Thurman thinks the future is bright.

"We are getting better, track meet by track meet," Thurman said. "[Fifth place isn't] good, but we will be higher by the end of this year."

The boys relays consist of Williamson, Thomas, senior Jarion Anderson, and Davis. At the track meet at Liberty Eylau on March 26, the team finished second to the host Leopards. The girls also finished second behind the host team after coming close out of the field events. Liberty Eylau won with 201 points over 129 by the girls.

Girls also had a shakier start due to weather but look forward to advancing in the district, regional and state meets.

"I think we are doing better than [where] we started out, even with the canceled track meets," sophomore Takeba Dowden said. "We need to stay focused on getting where we need to be and work hard

and not slack off."

Freshman Ryann Williams and senior Chauzney Hooks lead the distance group, competing in the 800 and mile.

"I think [distance is] doing pretty good," Hooks said. "We will do our best, and we will get there."

The field events are just as successful as the distance events.

"Field is doing really good. Everyone is getting first, second and third, so we are contributing to the points," junior Kaylyn Coleman said. "We should all go to district, regionals and field should go to state. The jumping and throwing events have really pulled through."

Looking toward post-season meets, some feel that the relay handoffs are in need of a tune up.

"Our relays did good, but some of our handoffs weren't as great as they need to be," Williams said.

Teammates said these minor problems can be easily fixed with more practice.

"We have some unexperienced people on relays, so the handoffs are a little slow, but we are getting better," Dowden said. "We are definitely progressing."

The teams competed in the district meet Wednesday and will compete in the regional meet May 1.

"I like competing and getting better," freshman Will Harrell said. "It's just challenging and fun to try to get better. Sometimes you can do something that most people can't and that's just a great feeling."

## RECORD BREAKER

Sophomore Grant Jarvis broke 26-year-old records in the 3200 and 1600 meters, formerly held by former Texas High runner Drew Prisner.

"It felt fantastic once I broke the 3200m record," Jarvis said. "I was behind my target pace with a lap to go and sprinted out the last lap fast enough to make it, so it was a huge a relief. I thank God for it and will have to drop 7 seconds if I want my name beside the 1600m school record."



**FAR AHEAD** Sophomore Grant Jarvis broke two 26-year-old records during the Liberty Eylau track meet. He did not compete in district because he participated in a triathlon in Mexico.