

Area athletes take it to another level

County indoor track and field products star in college meets



Beyonce Kelly, shown in the Class 2A girls high jump at the 2018 MPSSAA state championship meet, now is competing for California University of Pennsylvania. Kelly set a personal record clearing 5 feet, 9 3/4 inches at the New Mexico Collegiate Classic in Albuquerque on Friday. Brian Krista/Baltimore Sun Media

BILL BLEWETT FOR THE AEGIS

With conference indoor track and field meets fast approaching, several Harford County collegiate athletes have shown they are ready for championship performances.

A leader of the California University of Pennsylvania track team is Harford Tech graduate Beyonce Kelly. In the New Mexico Collegiate Classic in Albuquerque on

Friday, the 5-foot-4 senior from Edgewood cleared 5 feet, 9 3/4 inches to break her own school record. She tied for sixth place among 40 invited jumpers.

A week earlier, Kelly raised the school record with a leap of 5-8 in the Youngstown State Mid-Major Invitational. She cleared that height on first attempt, and she cleared three heights Friday on the first attempt before taking three tries at 5-11 1/4.

Elizabeth Pickett, a University of Texas freshman from Bel Air, raced to a personal best in her first collegiate indoor track meet recently. Competing in the John Thomas Terrier Classic at Boston University, she was the top-finishing freshman among the eight University of Texas women in the 3,000-meter run. She went through her first half mile in 2:31 and the mile in 5:08, just 3 1/2 seconds slower than the Harford County record she set in the mile as a Bel Air senior. Her time of 9:51.13 represents approximately a nine second improvement.

Darian Hauf, a North Harford alum who won the conference championship in the pole vault as a Millersville University freshman last year, won the vault in the DeSchriver Invitational at East Stroudsburg University on Sunday. She cleared 12-1 1/4 to secure her second win of this indoor season.

Kieran McDermott (Bel Air) placed fourth in the 500 in 1:05.03 in the Harvard-Yale-Princeton meet Jan. 28 in Boston. The senior also ran the 4x800, holding the lead for Princeton on the second leg. Princeton won the relay and the meet. McDermott, who holds the Maryland state record in the 800, ran a career best of 1:49.07 in May 2022 on the Princeton track.

Alexander Kirkland (John Carroll), a sophomore at the Naval Academy ran a personal best of 14:57.55 in the 5,000 to finish second in the Wesley A. Brown Invitational in Annapolis on Jan. 21. One week later in The Patriot Games at George Mason, he was the No. 3 finisher in the 3,000 for Navy in 8:43.94.

Shamar Barnes (Edgewood) placed second in the 200-meter dash in the Penn State National meet Jan. 28. Timed in 22.10 seconds, he finished 0.04 behind UMBC teammate Jaeden Burke. A week later he was fifth in 22.23 in a 200 at Liberty University.

Also for UMBC, Harford Tech grads Zachary and Daron Taylor raced to career bests in the 800 on Jan. 20 in an invitational meet at Liberty University. Zachary placed fourth in 1:53.87 and Daron 11th in 1:56.87. Returning to the Liberty track Sunday, Zachary placed sixth among 80 runners in the mile in 4:17.43. In the Jan. 20 meet Alex Xavier (Fallston) placed eighth in the 5000 meters in 15:49.84.

Morgan Kornke (Fallston) ran 3:21.11 in the 1,000 meters Saturday at the Camel City Invitational in Winston Salem, North Carolina. The meet was her first since returning from a foot injury. She was Appalachian State University's No. 2 finisher in the race.

Shannon Dooley (Harford Tech), a senior at Slippery Rock University, finished second in the 500 meters in 1:07.10 Saturday in a meet in Alliance, Ohio. A week earlier, Dooley ran 1:55.03 in the 800, sixth among 92 runners on the Youngstown State University track.

Kaya Simpson, a senior at Manhattan College, was second in the 60-meter dash in the Metropolitan Championships in New York City. His time of 6.94 seconds, a career best, qualifies him for IC4A meet. His finish was one of the decisive performances for his team, which won the title by a single point.

Jai Raccioppi (CMW) ran a season's best of 51.83 to place 10th in the 400 at the New Balance Track and Field Center in New York City on Friday. His time ranks third best in the Middle Atlantic Conference this season.

Katie McNesby (CMW), a freshman at Shippensburg University, achieved the conference qualifying performance of 10-6 in the pole vault in the second meet of the season at Bucknell.

Thomas Niblock (Patterson Mill), a freshman at Salisbury University, was a member of the 4x400 relay team in a meet in Virginia Beach on Sunday. The team finished second in 3:23.65.