

## Gerke picks Coe for wrestling

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 26 April 2017 05:01 -

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Josh Gerke has been a prime example of perpetual motion during his senior year at Xavier High School.

He helped the Xavier football team reach the semifinals of the Class 3A playoffs in November, took three days off and promptly joined the wrestling team.

He placed third at the Class 3A state wrestling tournament at 145 pounds in February, took another three days off and began working with the boys track team.

Now he's gunning for a state title in the 800-meter run at the Class 3A state meet in May, but after that he's decided to settle down and focus on just one sport in college.

It will be wrestling. And it will be for the Kohawks at Coe.

"I committed to Coe College on Saturday, so I'm really excited about that," he said Tuesday after running in the 19th Annual Xavier Invitational track meet. "I've never gotten to focus on one sport, so I want to see what I can do."

He's not ready to turn the page on his running career just yet, however. He placed fifth in the 800 at state last year in 1:58.07 and feels he's on track for a good performance at state next month.

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"My times right now are better than what they were last year at this time," he said.

Gerke finished second in the 800 Tuesday in 2:01.03. He led all the way until Roger Cruz of Ottumwa passed him with a strong kick and captured the race in 2:00.34.

"I knew he was there," Gerke said, "but I didn't have a kick like he did."

Gerke has run the open 800 only twice this year. The first time was a 2:02.61 showing in Iowa City on April 8, so he chopped more than 1.5 seconds off his time Tuesday.

He said it always takes him awhile to get his "track legs" after competing in football and wrestling, so he's anxious to work on his kick and begin aiming for the state meet.

"It's hard to mix the sports, but I like the challenge," he said. "It does take me awhile to get there. I'm hoping to peak at the right time."

Gerke will not be competing at the Drake Relays in Des Moines this week. During the winter, he accepted an invitation to serve as a leader at a religious retreat for high school juniors this weekend and has no regrets about missing Drake.

"At first I didn't know it was the same weekend as Drake, but as I thought about it and talked to my parents I thought it was a good opportunity for me to give back to my class, because I've had a pretty blessed year with wrestling and football," he said.

"I felt this (the religious retreat) was more important."

His primary goal is the state meet, where he hopes to finish his remarkable prep sports career as a champion.

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"I've been close in every sport," he noted. "This is the last chance. I'm definitely going to go for it."



Ottumwa won the boys championship Tuesday with 152 points. Xavier finished second out of seven teams with 115 points.

Prairie ran away with the girls title with 208 points. Xavier finished fourth out of five teams with 80.

The Xavier boys claimed the 4x800 relay in 8:26.33 with Joe Scieszinski, Nathan Skala, Beau Van Berkum and Grayson Walther sharing the baton.

The Xavier girls took the shuttle hurdle relay in 1:10.15 with Jenna Schwach, Brie Baldus, Maddix Stovie and Theresa Lampe.

### BOYS TEAM STANDINGS

1. Ottumwa 152, 2. Xavier 115, 3. Marion 101, 4. Center Point-Urbana 94, 5. Iowa City Regina 72, 6. Iowa City High 35, 7. Burlington 18.

### GIRLS TEAM STANDINGS

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1. Prairie 208, 2. Ottumwa 123, 3. North Scott 108, 4. Xavier 80, 5. Regina 60.

### BOYS WINNERS

High jump - Jonathon Bossou, Ottumwa, 5-10  
Long jump - Blair Brooks, Marion, 22-0  
Shot put - Jared Brinkman, Regina, 61-0  
Discus - Jared Brinkman, Regina, 150-0 1/2  
800 sprint medley - Center Point-Urbana 1:35.92  
3200 - Dalton Bowers, Ottumwa, 10:04.71  
4x800 relay - Xavier 8:26.33  
Shuttle hurdle relay - Ottumwa 1:01.52  
100 - JoJo Frost, Center Point-Urbana, 11.24  
1600 distance medley - Regina 3:45.82  
400 - Sam Yeaway, Ottumwa, 50.45  
4x200 relay - Marion 1:33.79  
110 hurdles - JoJo Frost, Center Point-Urbana, 15.03  
800 - Roger Cruz, Ottumwa, 2:00.34  
200 - Blair Brooks, Marion, 22.64  
400 hurdles - JoJo Frost, Center Point-Urbana, 54.16  
1600 - Dalton Bowers, Ottumwa, 4:41.03  
4x100 relay - Regina 44.83  
4x400 relay - Ottumwa 3:30.12

### GIRLS WINNERS

High jump - (tie) Nicole Miller, Prairie; Kacy Nickerson Ottumwa; Taylor Peterson, Prairie, 4-10  
Long jump - Sarah Schmitt, Prairie, 16-0  
Shot put - Alicia Sill, Prairie, 36-5 1/2  
Discus - Alicia Sill, Prairie, 103-8  
800 sprint medley - Prairie 1:56.89  
3000 - Meghan Brune, Prairie, 12:13.82  
4x800 relay - North Scott 10:20.72  
Shuttle hurdle relay - Xavier 1:10.15  
100 - Raenice Hilderbrand, Prairie, 12.64  
1600 distance medley - Ottumwa 4:17.05  
400 - Kirstin Skriver, Prairie, 1:00.53  
4x200 relay - Prairie 1:54.22

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100 hurdles - Erica Loussaert, North Scott, 15.46  
800 - Allison Bookin-Nosbisch, Ottumwa, 2:27.15  
200 - Kirstin Skriver, Prairie, 27.00  
400 hurdles - Jessica Junker, North Scott, 1:09.76  
1500 - Presley Case, North Scott, 5:04.10  
4x100 relay - Prairie 51.01  
4x400 relay - Prairie 4:16.94