

Record breaking year for North Hastings High School Huskies track and field team



By Bill Kilpatrick

The year is shaping up well for the North Hastings High School Huskies track and field team. On May 17 450 athletes from the Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board competed in the Bay of Quinte Track and Field meet at Mary Anne Sills park in Belleville. The Bay of Quinte meet is the first qualifying competition at the secondary level and all athletes who finished in the top eight at Bay of Quinte move on to the central Ontario qualifier on May 25. Forty athletes from North Hastings High School participated at the Bay of Quinte regional qualifier and 33 of those athletes will be moving on in a total of 68 different events. Barb Gillis, one of the five track and field coaches, could not be happier with the athletes' performances. Gillis added that, besides pole vault, there is a Huskies athlete that moved on in every event. Gillis said that coaches try to encourage each athlete to participate in at least three different events and this strategy has resulted in some great successes for the team. Gillis pointed out that of the 33 athletes who are moving on, 10 qualified in all three of their events, 13 qualified in two events and the remainder qualified in a single event. Of the seven relay teams that competed all seven have moved on to the central Ontario championship, a success that Gillis described as "incredible." Each competitor that participates accumulates points for their team and this year the boys' team, in the words of Gillis, "crushed" the 2006 Huskies' record of 186 total points by accumulating 201 points giving them a third-place overall ranking in the district. The girls' team finished sixth overall with 133 points giving the entire Huskies team (boys and girls) a point total of 334 and an overall ranking of fourth place in the district. Gillis proudly spoke about another highlight from the Bay of Quinte competition: Jessica Boyd's performance. Boyd who not only qualified in all three of her events she also threw a three-kilogram shot put 9.45 metres breaking the Huskies' novice girls' shotput record of 9.27 metres that was set in 2006. Gillis wanted to also thank members of the community for some major improvements that have greatly assisted the athletes this year. Mike McCaskie of McCaskie Aggregates donated sand for the jumping pit greatly increasing the softness of the landing for the athletes and decreasing the chances of athletes getting injured. Gillis also mentioned Brennan Bierworth of Bierworth Readimix and Donnelly Sheppard of North of 7 concrete who helped install a new discus and shot put circle for the athletes to safely train on and use. Gillis would also like to thank the other coaches, Andrew Edgar, Brian Poste, Jessica Hicks, and Alex Comrie for their time, energy and expertise in assisting the athletes with their preparation. Most of all Gillis wants to congratulate the athletes on their achievements so far, pointing out that, "coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic this has been an outstanding year for our athletes. We have a great presence, so much promise and so many talented athletes which gives me lots of hope for future successes" at the central Ontario meet on May 25 and beyond. A schedule of events for secondary school track and field competitions. Thursday, May 25 COSSA - Central Ontario Secondary School Association (Belleville) Thursday, June 1 and Friday, June 2: Eastern Ontario Secondary Schools Athletic Association (Ottawa) Thursday, June 8 to Saturday, June 10: Ontario Federation of School Athletic

Associations Ontario Championships (Ottawa)