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Locals finish strong in track

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The Herald-Dispatch

CHARLESTON -- Huntington High's Daniel Brown knew he was running out of time. The senior positioned himself in the starting blocks for the Class AAA 200-meter finals well aware he'd finished third in the 100 and the 4x100 relay team for the Highlanders had been remade following an injury to Tyler Hutchison and failed to place.

The gun sounded, Brown exploded out of the blocks, around the curve and down the homestretch to claim victory in 21.66 seconds in his final race in the West Virginia High School Track Championships at Laidley Field. This time he got the best of George Washington's Shaquille Williams and Jefferson's Dante Price, who finished one-two in the 100 after a photo finish.

"Was I mad? Yea," Brown said, recalling a fist pump as he crossed the finish line. "That put a fire in me. I definitely had to make up for that 100. I was last out of the blocks and it cost me. No excuses. God blessed me on this one."

Brown admitted to being a bit on edge prior to the race. Hutchison hurt his foot in the shuttle hurdles Friday night and didn't run at all Saturday.

"I'm thinking this isn't happening to me again," said Brown, who finished third in the 100 and 200 in 2009. "God put me through this. I said it's me off the blocks this time. I was so determined. There was no one that was going to beat me."

Brown, along with Hutchison before the injury and Ashton and Samuel Smith in the distance events, helped fuel Huntington High's resurgence this season. The Highlanders won two meets.

"I hope we've got it going," Brown said.

Another reason the win was special is now Brown joins uncle Clint Hayes in the state win column. Hayes set records in winning the 110 and 300 hurdles in 1990 and they still stand.

"I was thinking about that," Brown said.

**Sholten Singer/The Herald-Dispatch**

Daniel Brown of Huntington High rockets ahead during the second day of competition for the West Virginia State High School Track and Field Championships on Saturday, May 22, 2010 at Laidley Field In Charleston.

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Meanwhile, Cabell Midland freshman Jacob Burcham had quite a state debut as he just missed winning high-point honors in Class AAA boys. Jefferson's Brandon Doughty finished third and Burcham fourth in the 800, giving Doughty the No. 1 points award with 24.

Burcham helped the Knights win the 4x800 Friday night. He ran a personal-best 9:15.94 in the 3200 later Friday, but came in second to Fairmont Senior's Brandon McVicker, who won in 9:14.23 (state record). On Saturday, Andy Bailey of St. Albans set a state record in winning the 800 (1:54.03). In the 1600, Burcham's 4:17.06 was his third-best time of the season, but Doughty clocked in at 4:14.30 to win and help Jefferson go on to win the team championship.

"He anchors the state championship team and it took two state records to beat him," Cabell Midland coach Chris Parsons said. "He runs his third best time in the 1600 and it takes a 4:14 to win that. He's helped create quite a buzz. Everybody's going to have to up their game. If people think it was tough this year, wait until next year."

Bailey, who last week signed to run track at Morehead State, made his final race his shining moment. The record he broke had stood for 26 years.

"It's a win I've been wanting for four years," said Bailey, who moved to the front early and stayed there. "I didn't want to get bunched in. Today I feel the race I ran, I knew I could pull it out. I moved hard and never looked back. On the second lap, I knew it was mine. Nobody could stop me today. Every scenario played out."

Bailey then praised Burcham's effort.

"He's incredible. I wish him the best the next three years," he said.

In the 1600, Doughty said he had extra incentive.

"I didn't do what I needed to do in the 3200," he said. "I had to make a move for my team. The event was loaded and I was a little nervous, but obviously I'm glad how it turned out."

Doughty knows he'll see more of Burcham next year.

"For a freshman, to have one of the best times in the nation, that's pretty good for a West Virginia kid," he said.

Burcham knew he'd done all he could in the four events.

"I knew what to expect," he said. "There's great competition here. I gave it all I had. I feel I left it all on the track."

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