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For those who are familiar with the track dynasties in Kansas, it comes as little surprise that a Cornelsen showed up in Hays and they are now the team to beat at the state track meet.

Ryan Cornelsen has taken up the mantle his father Gary Cornelsen established in Liberal and is literally running circles around the competition.

The Indians blew away the competition at the regional meet, winning with 188 points to 96 for second-place Salina South.

4th & GOAL



EARL WATT

Track can be whittled down to time and distance better than any other sport, and if the times that all state qualifiers turned in at the regional hold true at state, Hays will be the Class 5A state champion, and the Redskins will finish third.

According to the times and distances, Hays is headed to the state meet with 80 points, Leavenworth should score 58, Liberal will score 55, Shawnee Heights will score 53, and Topeka Seaman will score 51 to round out the top five.

That's if everything remains the same from the regionals.

Of course, if that is all there was to a track meet, we wouldn't need to have a championship, would we?

What we know is Hays is the clear 22-point favorite.

Can Liberal make up the 25-point deficit?

Sure they can, but it will take a championship effort to do so.

Eli Altamarino's time of 51.35 seconds in the 400 meter dash places him 12th. He would have to trim off a second and a half to reach the state scorers, and in a lap, that is possible.

Mershek Wiltshire is also the 12th qualifier in the 800 meter run. He is a little more than a second away from the scorers as well. Again, a second in two laps is not impossible to improve.

Daniel Frazier is the top qualifier in the mile, and he has to win it for Liberal to remain in the hunt. He is also the second qualifier in the two mile, and if he can sweep the long distance events he can add two more points to the team total.

So far, if these three athletes can achieve four points, Liberal is now down to needing 21 more.

Liberal's 4x100 meter relay team is the eighth qualifier, but only a half second away from fourth. If Liberal can make the fourth place position, that would be six more points, leaving Liberal 15 points away from Hays.

In the 4x400 meter relay, Liberal is the fourth qualifier. If they reach third, that is another point in the race for the title, and that leaves 14 more needed.

Liberal is the fifth qualifier in the 4x800 meter relay. Squeeze that up to fourth, and that's two more points, leaving 12 more needed.

Trenton Wilson and Chase Eatmon are the 11th and 12th qualifiers in the high jump respectively, but are only two inches away from scoring. If one of them can scratch out a point, that leaves 11 needed.

Eatmon is also the 12th qualifier in the long jump, but he is six inches away from the scorers, so we won't add any points in this scenario.

However, Eatmon is the seventh qualifier in the triple jump. If he can improve to sixth, that is another point, and we are down to 10 needed.

Javonta Lewis and Rex Heronemus also qualified in the triple jump in 12th and 16th respectively, but they are several inches away from scoring. If they do end up with points, it would be a definite plus.

Nolan Larking is the ninth qualifier in the javelin. If he can improve a foot on his 159-foot, 7-inch throw, he can finish with a point, leaving Liberal nine short.

That leaves the hurdles.

Trenton Hammond is coming in as the top hurdler in both the 110 and 300 meter events, and he must win them.

Ayodele Braimah is the fourth qualifier in the 110 meter hurdles, and he will need to shave .06 seconds off his time to finish next to his Hammond to score two more team points. But, Hays' Adam Deterding is the second qualifier, tied with Leavenworth's John Warren. If Braimah moves to second, and Hays slips to fourth, it is a four-point swing, and Liberal is only five points away.

That leaves the 300 meter hurdles. Hammond is already first, but Braimah, who has finished toward the front of the pack all season, but he was the 13th qualifier at regionals. Edwin Sobalvarro was the 14th qualifier.

Braimah would have to finish fifth, score four points, and push current fifth place qualifier Deterding from Hays down to sixth for a swing of six points and enough for the Redskins to edge out the Indians by a point.

It is a tough road, but not an impossible one.

The Redskins reined supreme on the track for 14 straight years by accomplishing great times at state. If they do it again, they can be champions.

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