

# Hawaii Tribune Herald

## Edwards makes big statement

Multi-talented Trojan is the dominant track athlete this season

by Wayne Joseph  
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KEAAU - Ka'u High School's Larissa Edwards took to the track this past weekend and made a clear statement about being the person to beat this season.

Edwards, a tall, slender senior, qualified for state in four individual events while singlehandedly racking up 38 points for the Trojans.

Edwards began the afternoon at the Keaau track by running a blistering 15.71 seconds in the 100 hurdles, outpacing her closest rival by nearly two seconds in the Big Island Interscholastic Federation track and field meet.



**Ka'u High's Larissa Edwards runs the hurdles during a BIIF meet held Friday at the Keaau track. She won four individual events on the day. - Rick Ogata/Tribune-Herald**

"This is my favorite event (100 hurdles)," Edwards said. "I think I can get into the mid-14 second range later in the season."

Edwards, who placed second in the state last year in the 100 hurdles, has her sights set on becoming a state champion.

Shortly after winning her first race, Edwards was back on the track again, winning the 100-meter dash in 13.17 seconds with Kamehameha standout Cheray Brzezowski taking second in 13.21.

"The 100 (dash) isn't my main event and I prefer the hurdles and the 200," Edwards said.

In the 300 hurdles, it was Trojan teammate Jana Larson (49.48) edging Edwards (49.88) to display Ka'u's one-two supremacy in that event. Earlier, Larson qualified for state in the 1,500 (5:19.27) distancing herself from the rest of the field by more than 30 seconds.

Edwards later appeared on the track to win the 200-meter dash (27.29), beating Hilo's multi-talented Daysha Viernes (28.20)

Viernes, who has great speed in a variety of sprinting events, is the defending state champion in the pole vault.

Standing at 5-foot-3 and weighing in at a mere 115 pounds, Viernes has proved that upper body strength and technique are the most important components in vaulting.

"I used a very small pole and used a short run today," Viernes said of her state qualifying 10-foot clearance. "The pole weighs 40 pounds and is 13 feet long -- it's really made for someone that weighs 125 pounds."

Viernes, who is coached by her father Sherman, believes that she can go over 11 feet this year. "I need to focus on myself and not anyone else, just have fun, with no pressure," she said.

On the opposite side of the Cougar track was Waiakea's Cassie Morigaki, who was competing in high jump against the BIFF runner-up from last season in Hawaii Prep's Mindy Campbell.

Both Morigaki and Campbell cleared 5 feet (state qualifying height is 4' 10") as the bar was raised by two inches.

"I tried not to hear the height so that I wouldn't psyche myself out," Morigaki said. "I've never cleared 5' 2" before and I wanted to remain calm and just focus on having fun."

As a result, Morigaki was able to clear the bar and win the event, setting herself up as the girl to beat. "I think I can do better if I work harder at it," she said. "My goal this season is to also qualify for the triple jump and do my best at the hurdles."

On the boys side, it was Hilo's Scott Hunter turning heads with his lack of hair and his ability to leap over tall buildings.

Hunter surpassed the minimum state qualifying height in the pole vault (12 feet) with a clearing leap of 12' 6".

In the triple jump, it was Keaau star Mtume Msikizi-Jackson hop-skip-and-jumping his way in the triple at 42' 3.5", with Ka'u's Jacob Edwards also qualifying for state at 42' 3".

Cougar Nicholas Hagemann made state in the 1,500-meter run (4:27.47) running against Hilo's talented distance runner Mark Turner (4:29.84).

"This was just a warm up for me as I need to run the 3000 later," Turner said immediately following his 1,500.

Turner won the 3,000 (10:03.31) by beating Hagemann (10:21.23) as both boys continued their friendly track rivalry.

Wrapping up the Keaau meet was Christian Liberty Academy's Nick Ucker's state qualifying performance in the 800-meter run. Ucker, who was the state runner-up in the 1,500, showed his strength and speed in producing the win (2:06.25) over Hilo's talented Amor Love (2:08.70).

On Saturday the BIFF hosted a western divisional meet with Konawaena playing host and it was the Ka'u brother and sister team of Jacob and Larissa Edwards that stole the show.

In the girls 100 hurdles Edwards again ran away from her competition with a 15.82 second performance and was followed by brother Jacob's stellar performance in the 110 at 15.50 seconds.

Jacob Edwards later returned to capture the 300 hurdles (41.34), edging Kona's Daniel Royce (41.54), while sister Larissa returned to win the 200 dash (27.18) over Honokaa's Beverly Quiamas (27.20).

Earlier in the morning Quiamas outbattled Edwards to win the 100 dash in 13.13.

Kona's Lindsey Dahl laid claim to the BIFF's fastest time in the girls 300 hurdles with her flawless 48.54 second performance.

#### Upcoming meets

The BIFF track & field season continues this coming weekend with an eastern divisional meet at Kamehameha on Friday, starting at 2 p.m. A western divisional meet will be held Saturday, hosted by Konawaena and starting at 9 a.m.

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