

BY KEN KARRSON

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CHARLESTON | As Bill Moran and Donald White presented medals to the top finishers of the 3,200-meter relay at the boys state meet Saturday afternoon, they were aware of one thing.

Their record was safe for at least another year -- and probably longer.

Thirty-three years have passed since Moran, White, Steve Ibarra and Mike Clark completed what was then the two-mile relay for Thornton in 7:38.00. The manual time in what would be 3,218 meters still stands as Illinois' best, although the IHSA now officially recognizes Algonquin's FAT clocking in 2006 as the state standard.

Nevertheless, the ex-Wildcats have not been forgotten by older track fans.

"People still ask about it and they're just in amazement," said Moran, who was a sophomore in 1976. "I have a 9-year-old now and he's starting to understand, and he's like, 'Dad, that was a long time ago.' It was fun to be a part of."

White, the brother of Thornwood girls track coach Roy White, said the goal that day was modest.

"We had some pretty good half-milers, so we thought, 'Hey, maybe we can place,'" Donald White said. "We thought, 'Let's break eight minutes.' We're very appreciative we just happened to be in the right place at the right time."

Good sport: Anything but a victory is tough for athletes to accept once they reach the state finals, but Seton Academy's Sean Martin took the high road after placing third in the Class 1A long jump.

He was especially complimentary toward event champion Zach Riley of Herrin, who got off a winning leap of 23 feet, 5 1/2 inches before going on to clear a 7-foot high jump and claim a title there as well.

"He's a good guy," Martin said. "I met him at Prep Top Times. No matter who beats you, it's a tough loss, but I respect him and I congratulate him. He did a great job."

"Things didn't go my way, but I'm thankful for what I got."

Nothing to smile about: After being nosed out for a state championship by Marian Catholic's Erick Gavin in the 110 high hurdles, Thornton's William Lindsey had a smile on his face as he returned to the finish line to learn of his fate.

That smile was just a frown turned upside down, however.

"That was an evil, I-can't-believe-it smile," Lindsey joked. "It wasn't a real smile. I still ran fast, I guess, but it's not satisfying. But hey, whatever happens, happens."

"I've still got to see him in summer track, so I told Eric, 'I'm going to get you.'"

Movin' on up: T.F. North's Justin Higgenbotham entered Saturday's Class 3A triple jump finals as the last qualifier, but he managed to move up six spots and take sixth overall after going 45-9 1/2 on his first try.

"I honestly thought my second jump beat that, but I scratched it," Higgenbotham said. "I felt a little more prepared today. We actually got to use the scratch board on the indoor pit (while practicing), so that helped."