

LIBERTY GIRLS SPRINT TOWARDS STATES

The Liberty girls 4x100 experienced a track runner's worst nightmare last season. In the regional final to make the state tournament, the team dropped the baton, eliminating their hopes at making the state tournament. The team of Kennedy Elfers, Lexie Mitchem, Natalie Nichols, and Sophie Sampson, have bounced back, and returned as one of the top relay teams in the state in 2024.

Their 4x100 is currently ranked sixth in the state in division one, and made it to both the state and national tournament during the indoor track season. The quartet finished sixth in the state at the indoor tournament in March. They would finish 27th in the nation in the 4x200 meter relay at the New Balance Nationals tournament.

"Nationals was so much fun, it was great getting to see so many talented people all in one place," said Elfers '24.

Elfers has been on Liberty's top relays since she was a freshman, and is running at Ohio Wesleyan University in college.

"Everyone has gotten much stronger and has put in a lot of work in the off-season which puts us in a great position to succeed this year," said Elfers '24.

Sophie Sampson, the team's anchor, will run at Buffalo University next season, and is ranked 8th in the state in the 100 meter. Natalie Nichols will also run in college, as she is going to Otterbein University.

"I'm super excited to be joining Otterbein's track and field program next year! I'm look-

ing forward to competing at collegiate level, and seeing what I can accomplish." said Nichols '24.

Nichols is 9th all time at Liberty in the 100 meter dash. Lexie Mitchem rounds out the rest of the group, and is 12th all time at Liberty in the 100. She was also on Liberty's varsity soccer team, which finished second in the state.



Sophie Sampson brings home the win as the anchor. Liberty has made the jump this season to become one of the top teams in the state. "Everyone has gotten much stronger and has put in a lot of work in the off-season which puts us in a great position to succeed this year," said Elfers '24. PC: Arnav Sawant

The squad has Liberty's best ever time in the 4x100 of 48.41, when they broke the meet record at Liberty's own prestigious freedom relays. They broke their own school record, which they set in 2024.

"It was such a great experience, and definitely my favorite memory from my time spent at Liberty," said Nichols '24. "Our relay has always worked so hard, so to see the hard work pay off was amazing, and, since we are all seniors, I think it's great we get to leave our mark on Liberty's track history."

The team has a great shot at getting back to outdoor states this season, and competing potentially for a state championship. Getting back to states for the outdoor season will not be an easy task. The central Ohio region is always the toughest region in Ohio. They'll face tough competition such as Westerville Central, home to Olivia Pace, who is the top runner in the state in the 100 and 200.

"Competing in Central Ohio is always pretty tough. The competition is super challenging and really pushes me. It also really motivates me and the team to constantly work hard and improve." said Nichols '24.

However, Liberty has never been more prepared for a state tournament run. It's hard to find a more experienced group of sprinters in Ohio, and a faster group.

"We're ready to take what we've worked so hard for." said Elfers '24.



Liberty's 4x100 stands on the podium after winning the 4x100 at Freedom Relays. It broke the meet record, and Liberty's all time record. "Our relay has always worked so hard, so to see the hard work pay off was amazing, and, since we are all seniors, I think it's great we get to leave our mark on Liberty's track history." said Nichols

'24. PC: James Dingus