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# State-bound Hippos prep for big show

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Whitney Maxey stands nearly a foot taller than Andrea Dominguez, but the size of their hearts measure about the same. Throw in a tireless work ethic and an impenetrable will and you've found the recipe for success that has thrust the duo into Class 3A's track and field spotlight.

The two will represent Hutto at this week's state meet at the University of Texas' Myers Stadium, Maxey heaving the discus and Dominguez blazing her way through the 100- and 200-meter dash races.

For Dominguez, a senior, the state meet is a familiar venue, having earned a berth in both her sophomore and junior years. Last year, with Hutto holding 2A status, Dominguez captured the state title in the 100 while taking silver in the 200. In 2001, she finished third in the 100 and fourth in the 200.

This time around, the 5-foot-nothing speedster hopes to climb to the top of the 3A awards platform.

"I know what I'm up against," Dominguez stressed, adding, "I believe I can win it. I know I can win the race. But I also know it's up to God, and whatever happens, happens."

Her father shares similar sentiments and, along with the rest of the Dominguez family, has done his part to mentally ready his daughter for competition.

"Psychologically, she's been convinced by all of us that she can win the race," said Martin Dominguez. "Most importantly, she has to believe that she can win the race."

In burning a path to the state meet, Dominguez ran a 12.21-second 100-

meter dash and a 24.99 200-meter race to capture District 24-3A titles in each event. At the Region III meet, Dominguez ran 12.43 in the 100 and 24.82 in the 200 en route, finishing second in both events to Navasota's Antonette Lee.

Dominguez enters Saturday's races knowing full well that track is an unpredictable sport — times and seedings hold no bearing on the race's outcome.

"More than any other sport, track is about what kind of day you have," she said. "Anybody can win on any day."

Dominguez cashed in with a big day at the region meet, though not without a fair share of pre-race jitters.

"Standing in the blocks, I was shaking," she recalled. "I was terrified. I wanted that race so bad. I didn't care how I did. I could come in first or second, but I just wanted to go to state. I came across that finish line and I was all smiles. I had butterflies."

While Dominguez is a savvy state meet veteran, Maxey is a newcomer. She enters the state meet on the heels of a region-winning hurl of 118 feet, four inches. Maxey won this year's district title with a throw measuring 133-0. Thus, placing amid the top of the pack at state is not far-fetched.

Maxey believes that how well she curbs her nervousness will dictate her performance at state.

"I'm trying not to be nervous. That's the biggest thing," she said, adding that she has received a little motivational assistance from her throwing coach, Angie Cabaniss. "My coach makes me say different things, like 'I will win state. I am a good discus thrower. I am not nervous.' It does actually help."

Maxey, a 5-foot-11 junior, not only excels in the discus ring, but also on the basketball court. A member of the 2002-03 Hippo squad that grabbed a playoff berth in its first year at 3A competition, the post force earned a notable individual honor, capping a fine season by earning a spot on District 24-3A's all district team.

While she enjoys track and field, basketball will always remain Maxey's primary love.

"Truthfully, the only reason I started track was so I wouldn't have to run in the [basketball] offseason. That's how I got into it. But then I made it to the regional last year and I wound up liking it."

Maxey and Dominguez share much more than the honorable distinction of being Hutto's sole state track and field qualifiers in school history. They're also close friends and will be each other's biggest supporters when the two-day state meet kicks off Friday.

"I'm just glad I'm not going alone," said Dominguez, who makes the trip alongside same-school company for the first time. "I get to cheer for someone."

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