



State champ Todd Smart goes the distance.

Todd Smart becomes Plymouth's state track champion

Shelby Journal
PLYMOUTH — This time Todd Smart got it right.
 Last year the Plymouth track star fell in the 300 hurdles at the regional track meet. Yet, he went on to finish runner-up in the 110 high hurdles at the Division III state meet at Ohio Stadium.

This past weekend, however, Smart turned it around and became his school's first state champion by turning in a time of 38.73 seconds to win the 300 hurdles. Earlier in the

day, Smart had finished sixth in the 110 highs.
 "I said all along that the 300 was his better race, but everyone else was convinced it was the 110," Plymouth track coach Marty McKenzie said. "He doesn't have the speed of his opponents in the highs, and today his technique cost him. But his technique was right there in the 300."
 Smart looked to have the inside track on both races during the prelims. The Plymouth junior turned in the fastest opening day

times in both events with a 14.76 in the 110s, and a 39.41 in the 300s.
 With six other state qualifiers having an equal or better regional time than Smart, the 300s appeared to be an uphill climb. But Smart's style pulled him through.
 "A lot of kids can out-run him between the hurdles — especially in the 300s — but he's got such good technique going over the hurdles that he gets down off them a lot quicker," McKenzie said.
 Bulking up to play football last fall helped

strengthen Smart's legs, and it showed in his finals title.
 "He was third after three hurdles and second coming around the curve, and then he really opened it up at the end," the coach said.
 It was a race that was run according to plan. It was also the opposite of the way Smart ran his 110 hurdles event.
 "It was just a bad race," the Plymouth junior said. "I didn't feel nervous, but something was definitely wrong."

State hurdle champion!

Plymouth's Smart wins 300-meter low hurdles

By Lisa Cohen
T-J Sports Editor

After finishing first in the preliminaries of the 110-meter high and 300-meter low hurdles, Plymouth's Todd Smart came out a Division III champion in the lows and placed sixth in the highs at the state track tournament last weekend.

Ironically, the high hurdles are the junior's best event. He entered the tournament with the best time in the state for any division at 14.30 and ran a time of 14.76 in the semi-finals on Friday.

But, then in the finals he hit all of the hurdles and finished sixth with a time of 15.03.

Smart did manage to compose himself for the 300-meter low hurdles, an event which he had to run approximately 40 minutes later. He had the best time entering the finals at 39.8, and came out to better that in the finals with a time of 38.73.

The Plymouth hurdler had finished as the Division III state runnerup last year in the 110-meter highs and did not advance out of regionals in the lows.

Not only is being named state champion an accomplishment, but so is the fact that Smart is the first track state champion in the school's history.

Hard work had paid off for Smart, who said he practiced for his "weaker" race, the 300-meter lows, a week prior to state competition.

"I'm happy to be a state cham-

pion, but also disappointed with my terrible time in the high hurdles," Smart said. "I don't know which is my better race now!"

Following his disappointing performance in the high hurdles, Smart went one direction at Ohio State University's stadium and his coach, Marty McKenzie, went in the other direction. After both had composed themselves for the 300-meter low hurdles, McKenzie told Smart to forget about the highs and get a good start in the lows.

Smart was in third place going into the curve during the 300-meter lows, but put on steam towards the end to overcome runnerup Eric VanHouten of Fredericktown who had a time of 39.12 and Wellsville's Jon Pullie who was third with a 39.55.

Finishing fourth was Rob Polsinelli of Steubenville Central Catholic (39.61), while fifth went to Tim McNeal of Warren Kennedy (39.78) and sixth was Matt Studenbaker of West Alexandria (40.24).

"I'm very pleased for Todd and I've been telling him for three years that the 300's are where he's going to win it," McKenzie commented. "He had to run his career best to do it and we are very proud of him. I'm sure his goal next year is going to be to win the 110-meter highs. Hopefully he won't be the only Plymouth one here and that will take some pressure off."

McKenzie said that 50 people from Plymouth, including family and friends, came to Columbus to cheer



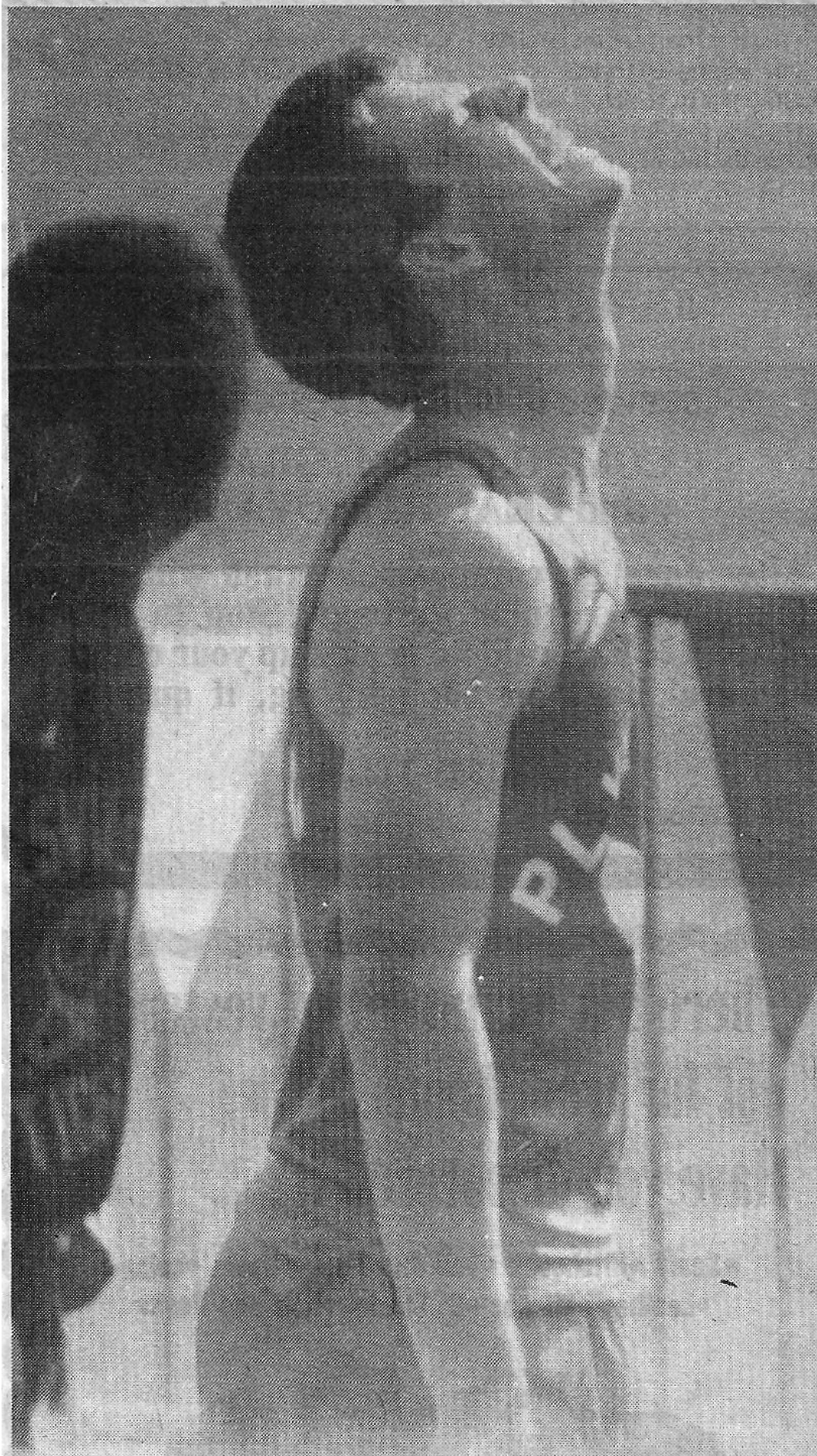
Cal Miller, 3rd in discus

on the star hurdler.

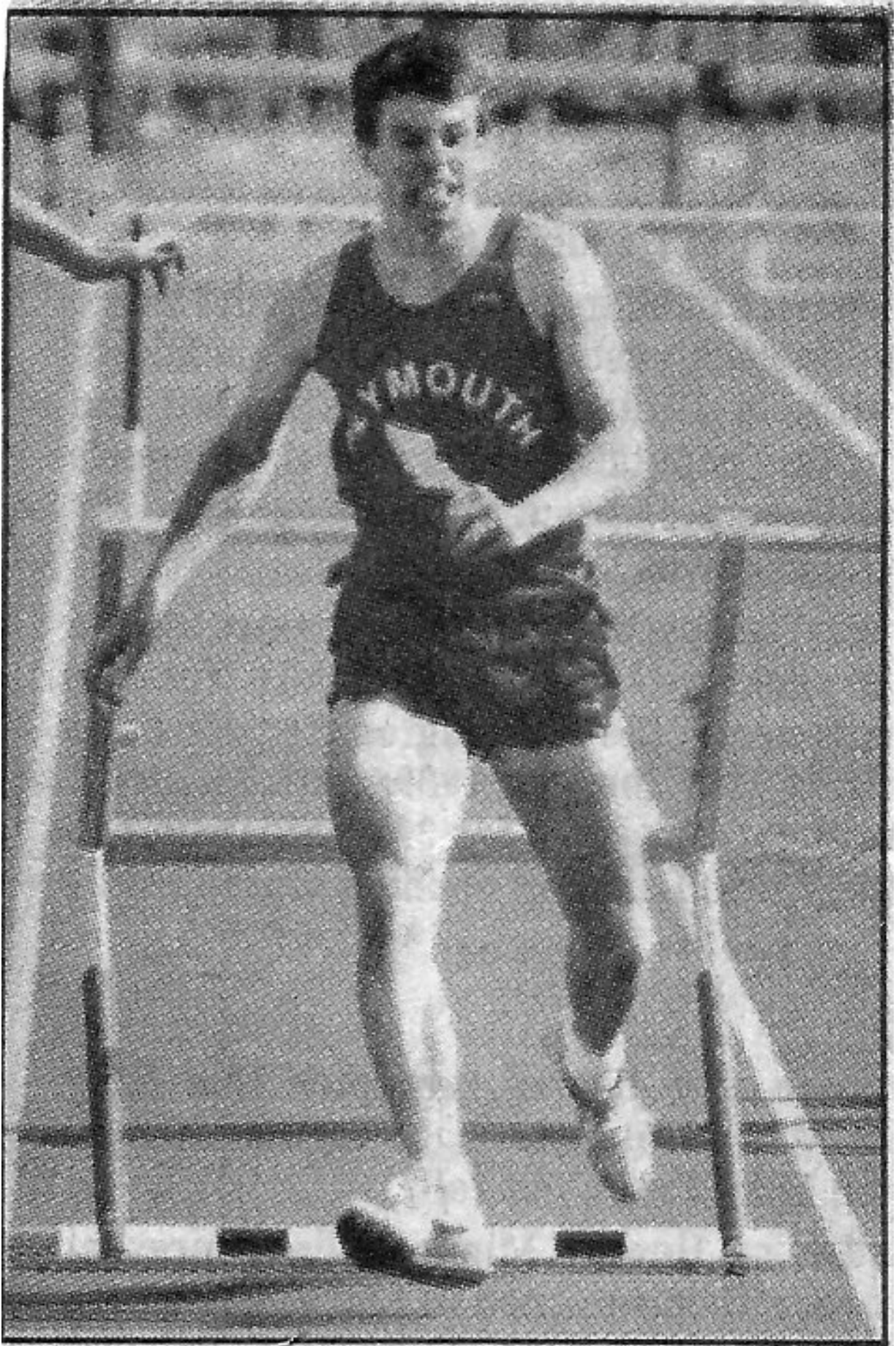
Scott Thompson of Lima Central Catholic won the high hurdles with a time of 14.55, followed by Delon Jackson of Newcomerstown (14.57); Pullie of Wellsville (14.70); Matt Newsome of Ashtabula St. John (14.88) and Kevin Huntley of Fremont St. Joseph (14.94).

In other Division III action, Seneca East's Cal Miller placed third in the discus with a throw of 152-11. Last year as a sophomore he placed fourth in the discus event.

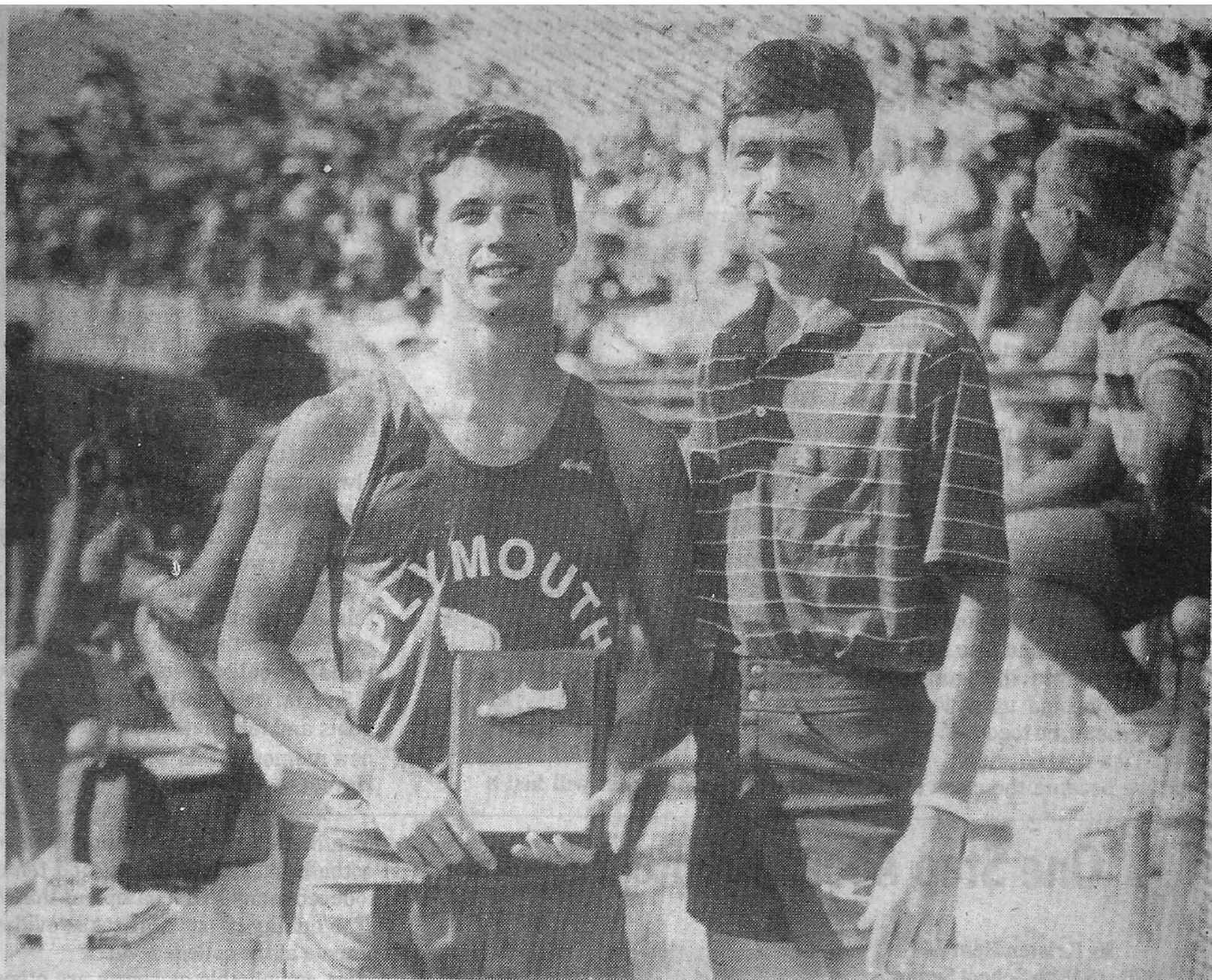
The Tigers' 3200-meter relay team of Micah Getter, Kevin Dick, Chad Reed and Shawn Stevens placed sixth with a season best time of 8:08.69.



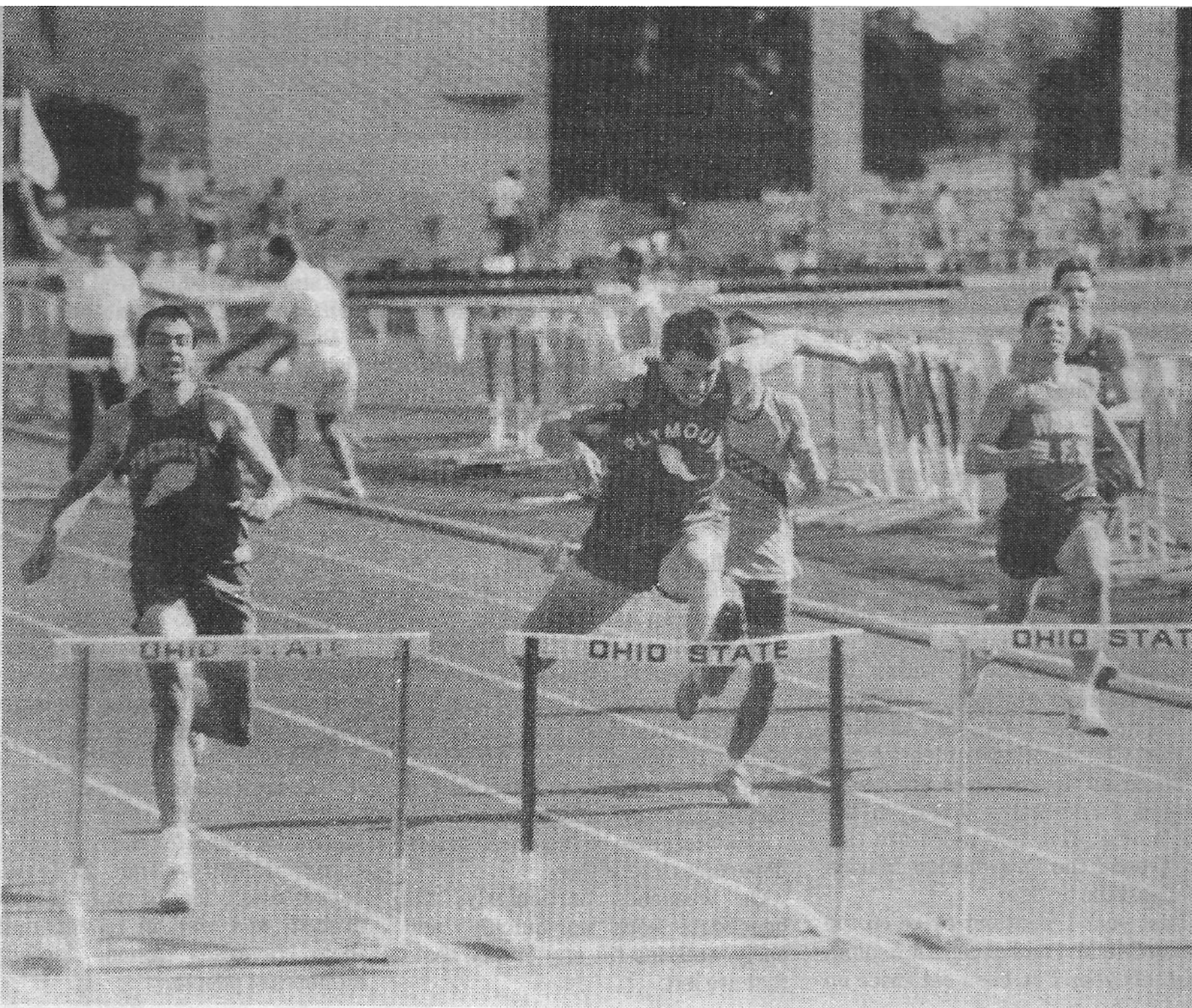
**Todd Smart, the agony of defeat
in the 110-meter high hurdles, sixth**



Todd Smart of Plymouth clears the last hurdle in route to a win in the 300-meter hurdles. (Photo by David DeNoma)



Todd Smart, Div. III 300-meter hurdles state champion with coach Marty McKenzie



TODD SMART clears the final hurdle in the 300-meter lows at The Ohio State University last weekend.

Smart, a junior, won the event and also placed sixth in the 110-meter high hurdles. (T-J photo by Lisa Cohen).