

Teams seek to defend titles

By **Charlie Kanzig**
Correspondent

Tradition is powerful, and the Outlaws cross-country team has plenty of it to uphold entering the 2016 campaign. Both the boys and girls teams have won the district titles more often than not over the past decade-and-a-half, including last year.

For the girls, repeating looks pretty likely, while the boys, like last year, will have a battle on their hands come late October, when the state-qualifying Sky-Em District meet will be held.

The girls team returns the core of the squad that won the District title last year and went on to snag the second-place trophy at State. It was the third time in school history that the team had been the runner-up, and it may be too early to tell if the Outlaws can capture the top spot for the first time.

Top returners for the Outlaws include senior Sophie Borders, who led Sisters in every meet last year. She won the District title and placed 12th at State. Junior teammate Anna Bartlett's summer training already appears to be paying off, as she is ahead of her pace from last year in which she placed third at District and 20th at State. She ran solo at last Friday's Mountain View XC Run-off, finishing ninth overall in 21:28.

Other varsity runners returning include sophomore Amy Hills and juniors Serena

Salisbury and Engracia Diez. Senior Zidane Galant-LaPorte, along with new team members Tate Ricker and Molly Winter also look ready to contribute at the varsity level, according to Coach Josh Nordell.

"We're just getting started, so it's anybody's guess who will rise up," he said.

Last year's state champion, Siuslaw, has not yet run a race this season, but always seems to be in the hunt, according to Nordell. Other teams that return top runners include Phoenix, Molalla and Philomath, all of which, like the Outlaws, have traditionally strong teams.

For the boys it's the passing of the guard as the team that squeaked out a dramatic

one-point win at District last year graduated four of the top seven runners. The team finished seventh last year at State. Seaside is the heavy favorite to repeat as State champions as they return six of their top seven runners. Other top teams may include Phoenix, Tillamook, Valley Catholic and Newport.

Junior Jordan Pollard started the season with a decisive victory in the Jere Breese Memorial race in Prineville on August 27 and will be looking to pull along returning varsity runners Cole Pade and Will Werts, along with varsity hopefuls freshman Josh Liddell, sophomores Jack Berg and Jackson Bowe, as well as junior Peyton Myhre and others.



PHOTO BY CHARLIE KANZIG

The Lady Outlaws are fielding a strong cross country squad this year.

"Everyone is working hard, so it will be exciting to see how the boys and the girls develop as the season progresses," said Nordell.

The Outlaws host a meet this Friday afternoon, which is a change from past years when the meet was held on Saturday. The meet has

incorporated the theme of the Sisters Folk Festival and will include some live music at the finish, if all goes as planned, according to Nordell. Six teams will join the Outlaws on the fields and trails behind Sisters High School. The meet begins at 4 p.m. There is no charge for fans.

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