

# Eighth-grade boys capture crown

By **Charlie Kanzig**  
Correspondent

Going up against the large middle schools from Bend and Redmond is nothing new for the cross-country runners from Sisters, but there is an extra measure of joy when David beats Goliath.

Sisters placed three runners in the top seven to win the eighth-grade boys team championship at the Tuesday, October 18 middle school championship meet held at the Pine Nursery in Bend.

Ethan Hosang led the way with a brave effort resulting in a second-place finish in 10:16 for the 3,000-meter course. Hosang, hoping to take the kick out of his closest competitor, pushed the pace through the middle of the race, but could not hold off Jacob Knox of High Desert, who won the race in 10:13.

Will Thorsett and John Peckham finished sixth and seventh respectively at 10:50 to secure the win for the Outlaws. Operating procedures regarding scoring in cross-country in the Central Oregon Middle School District do not follow

typical rules. Instead of scoring the top five finishers from each school, the league rules score the top three. With just 15 points, Sisters narrowly defeated Pacific Crest Middle School, which scored 17. Cascade Middle School placed third in the team scoring with 30 points among fourteen complete teams.

Connor Martin (11:50) finished 20th, Simon Rhett (12:27) placed 27th, Josh Marion (12:33) 29th, and Max Springer 30th (12:41) for the eighth-grade team as well.

Coach Tiffany Tisdell remarked about how special this group has been throughout this season and throughout their middle school years, despite being pitted against the much larger schools.

“This group of boys has made a run for the district title the past two years,” she said. “They finished second the last two years to Cascade Middle School of Bend, but thanks to gutsy racing by every member of the team they got that championship title.

“Although cross-country can be an individual focus, this group knew they had to

run as a team and push each other to meet their goal of winning the championship. In addition to taking the district title, each athlete ran a personal best on this true 3K course. Part of what makes this story so touching is that these boys do not outwardly focus on themselves. They are the first to be on the sidelines of the other races, cheering their peers on and recognizing the performances of other runners whether the racers are on their team, another team, or simply a runner that was finally able to finish a race without walking. They have shown tremendous leadership at practice and meets — they are models of sportsmanship, hard work, enthusiasm, and fun. As hard as they work and focus on improving their running, they are equally able to laugh at themselves and keep things light when the team needs it.”

The eighth-grade girls ran close to one another as the team finished in eighth place. Scorers included Shelby Larson (13:59), Skylar Wilkens (14:09), and Pearl Gregg (14:17). Olivia King (14:41) and Iris Diez (14:47) also ran well for the Outlaws as all five finished within a minute of one another.

The meet included sixth- and seventh-grade races as well. Ella Thorsett led the way for the sixth-grade girls, finishing fourth overall in 12:32. Ashlyn Moffat, Ellie Mayes, Josie Patton and MacKenzie Smith also raced for the Outlaws. Bela Chladek came through as the top sixth-grader on the boys side with a time of 13:00, just ahead of Gus Patton in 13:13. Matt Riehle and Carson Slaughter



PHOTO PROVIDED

The championship Sisters Middle School cross-country team.

also competed for Sisters.

In the seventh-grade races, Sophia Chase was the lone Outlaw finisher in 14:11. Elijah Johnson and Ashton King ran 15:36 and 15:37 in the seventh-grade boys race.

With 28 kids on the middle school team, the program is very healthy and well-supported, according to Tisdell. Julie Patton served as an assistant coach, Jeff Larson prescribed many of the workouts, and Deb Riehle volunteered frequently, giving both the seasoned runners and those with little experience

good support.

“Our aim is to give every student a chance to improve, to learn to compete, and to develop a life-long love of the sport of running,” said Tisdell.

While she will miss her special eighth-grade squad, she is excited about her returning runners and about how the eighth-graders will be contributing to the high school program in the years to come.

“The high school team is going to love these eighth-grade boys and girls next year,” she said.



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Young Outlaws on the run.

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