

# Outlaws earn fourth-place trophy at state meet

By Charlie Kanzig  
Correspondent

Sophie Borders saved her best race for last on her way to ninth place in a personal record time at the OSAA Cross Country Championships held Saturday, November 5, at Lane Community College, leading the Outlaws to a fourth-place finish. That result earned the team another trophy for the program's collection.

Borders and Anna Bartlett ran close together throughout the race, just as Coach Josh Nordell had hoped they would. Bartlett also ran a personal best, finishing 10th, giving both girls a place on the podium.

Borders met her personal goals of cracking 20 minutes (19:59) and finishing in the top 10, but the team fell a little short of its hopes after placing second at last year's meet. Bartlett's time of 20:09 was over 40 seconds faster than at last year's meet.

"We knew it would be a four-team race, but Tillamook and La Grande, who placed first and second, were very tough up front and really were the two top teams at the meet," said Nordell.

Tillamook won the meet with 71 points to edge La Grande (76), while Philomath (123) edged the Outlaws (127) for the third time this season.

"We were so evenly matched with Philomath it was crazy," said Nordell.

The Outlaws had some struggles in the race due to sickness earlier in the week that hit three runners.

"The girls were brave, bold and strong and gave it their all," said Nordell. "They represented Sisters amazingly well and were a model of poise."

Tate Ricker (21:23) placed 29th, matching her second-best time of the year despite being congested to start the week. Engracia Diez, typically the fifth runner for Sisters, came through next in



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

In heavy rain, Outlaw girls cross country team finished fourth at the state championship.

46th place with her second-best time ever (21:58) and senior Zidane Galant-LaPorte ran the fastest in her career (22:32) to complete the scoring for the Outlaws.

Molly Winter (23:11) and Amy Hills (23:14) gave it their best, according to Nordell, despite not being fully recovered from upper-respiratory illness that they battled all week.

"Having all seven runners healthy at the same moment the first week of November is what every cross-country coach dreams of, but that wasn't in the cards for us this year."

The race for trophies turned out to be too close for comfort for Sisters as Scappoose finished fifth, just four points behind the Outlaws.

La Grande on the other hand had a nearly flawless day to give the number-one-ranked Tillamook team all it could handle. The Tigers'

entire team consists of just six girls, and every single one of them ran personal bests at state, making them the big surprise of the meet.

"They sort of came out of nowhere, although we had our eye on them," said Nordell. "I think we'll invite them to our home meet next year so we can race against them before the state meet."

Celie Mans, a senior from Siuslaw, won the 4A girls title with a time of 18:55 after being challenged through the first two miles by freshman Solace Bergeron of Tillamook (19:07) and junior Linnaea Kavulich of Scappoose (19:11).

Jordan Pollard, the lone entrant from the boys' team, placed 22nd in 17:18, which was not the result he had hoped for. After winning the Sky-Em District meet, Pollard had reason to believe he could run with the top group, but his dream race did not materialize, leaving him to look to his

senior year.

"Jordan has become a great runner, and I think that greatness means giving it your all even when you are not feeling great," said Nordell. "He has already proven he can run with the best, and I have no doubt he will be a factor at the 2017 state meet."

Michael Brown, a North Bend senior, won the 4A boys race in 16:13, while John Kavulich of Scappoose (16:17) and Robby Vos of Phoenix (16:20), both juniors, placed second and third respectively.

Valley Catholic unseated the defending champions from Seaside in the team race as they placed five runners in the top 26 to score just 58 points. Seaside finished second (79), Phoenix third (121), and North Bend fourth (147).

"We had a great year," said Nordell. "These kids are of the highest quality as people, and I couldn't be more proud of them."



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Sophie Borders and Anna Bartlett running strong in heavy rain finishing 9th & 10th at State Cross Country.

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