

Outlaws race at Nike Portland XC

By **Charlie Kanzig**
Correspondent

In the words of Head Coach Josh Nordell, running a quality 5,000-meter requires a certain complicated sophistication.

“There are actually more factors to races than most people realize,” he explained. “There’s the course, the conditions, the competition, the unforeseen surprises that the kids need to deal with to produce the outcome they desire.”

His philosophical words came after being asked to reflect on the Outlaws’ progress as the season enters October, when meets really begin to matter.

“The kids learn from every single race they run,” he said. “Running 3.1 miles well is hard, but they are beginning to understand their pacing, their strengths, how to be mentally strong and all that stuff.”

An early wake-up call due to being in the first race of the day was the first challenge at last Saturday’s Nike Portland XC meet held at Portland Meadows. The race included thousands of runners from hundreds of schools, divided among five separate racing divisions.

The athletes run around the grounds at the horse track, not on the track itself.

For the most part schools were free to choose which division to run in based on their team’s relative strength, which is why Nordell chose Division 3 since the girls were running without lead runner Kate Bowen and the team is relatively inexperienced at the varsity level.

Even in Division 3, the girls faced their toughest competition of the season, finishing in 20th place among 27 complete teams. The fast course along with the depth of the field paid dividends, however, as most of the girls ran season bests.

Ella Cole paced the team with her best mark of 2018, finishing 28th in 21:03 among 190 finishers. Amy Hills (21:58), Pearl Gregg (24:17), Iris Diez (24:24) and Emma Singleton (24:44) completed the scoring for the Outlaws. Chloe Gold (26:02) and Skylar Wilkins (27:26) came through as the sixth and seventh runners for the team.

“We are definitely in a mode of building this team to be more competitive at the varsity level,” said Nordell. “Our fourth through seventh runners are working hard to improve and I know we all have to be patient about their progress.”

For her part, Bowen ran in the elite Danner Race, which

included 15 girls who ran under 18:30, making by far the fastest and deepest field of girls to toe the line in Oregon so far this season. Bowen finished in 19:33, her best time of the year. She was second among 4A girls in the race behind Junction City’s Annika Thompson who ran 18:53. The winner, Ella Borsheim of Seattle’s Bellarmine Prep, won the race in 17:32.

The Outlaws boys ran in Division 2, where they finished in 21st place as a team. Like the girls, the boys are looking to close the gaps between their top two runners and the next five and Nordell noted improvement in that area. However, as a team the boys placed second among 4A squads, just one place behind

Valley Catholic.

John Peckham once again led the way for the team despite not getting the start he was hoping for at the outset. He finished in 33rd place among 182 racers, with a time of 16:52, just five seconds shy of his personal best. Ethan Hosang crossed the line next in 54th place with a time of 17:20

“Both these guys wanted a faster time, but that will come as we get into October,” said Nordell.

The next two scorers, Sam May and Josh Liddell pushed to their bests of the season finishing in 18:27 and 18:30 respectively, while Vicente Rebolledo completed the scoring with a clocking of 19:02.



Ethan Hosang finishing strong at Saturday's Nike Portland XC meet. PHOTO BY CHARLIE KANZIG



The girls cross-country team is pulling together and improving weekly. PHOTO BY CHARLIE KANZIG

Jack Berg (19:23) and Max Palanuk (19:54) took the sixth and seventh positions. In addition, Austin Pade ran 19:19 on his own in the Division Three race.

“We do look forward to the expected return of Will Thorsett from injury, but for the meantime the boys are doing all they can to gel as a team and I am hopeful about their progress,” said Nordell.

The Outlaws travel to the

Paul Mariman Invitational hosted by Philomath High School on Saturday, October 6. The meet is much smaller in scope than the team’s last two competitions with just fourteen teams, which should give Nordell and his runners a more accurate look at how they stack up against schools from the 4A ranks.

“It’s a well-run meet with only 4A and 3A teams, which will be good for us,” he said.

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