

Outlaws tracksters qualify for State

By **Charlie Kanzig**
Correspondent

Sisters High School will be well represented at this week's OSAA 4A Track and Field Championships after some clutch performances at the Oregon West Conference District Meet held May 9 and 11 at Reed Stadium.

Athletes qualify for state by placing in the top two, meeting a qualifying standard, or being selected as a wildcard. The OSAA added the wildcard qualification in all events this season so that one additional athlete in each event who owns the best third-place mark among the six 4A District is added to the meet.

In all, eight boys qualified in a total of 10 different events along with five individual girls in a total of six events earning the honor to compete for glory at Mount Hood Community College May 17 and 18. The meet is being held at Mt. Hood for 2019 while Hayward Field in Eugene is being rebuilt. The 3A Championships will be held simultaneously at Mt. Hood, while the 1A and 2A meet will take place at Western Oregon University. The 5A and 6A meet will take place the following week, also at Mt. Hood Community College.

Day One of District included plenty of drama and last-minute heroics, some resulting in tremendous joy and others in the agony of defeat.

In the boys pole vault three athletes, including Garrett Kersavage of Sisters, cleared the bar at 13 feet, a personal best for Kersavage. The other two vaulters, both from Philomath, had season bests coming into the meet at 13 feet 6 inches. When the bar moved up to that height, none of the three found success and Kersavage was crowned champion based on fewer misses.

In the girls high jump, freshman Hollie Lewis found herself in a battle for the second qualifying spot after clearing 5 feet. Cascade's star freshman Emma Gates, the state leader, seemed a lock to take the top spot, which she ultimately did in a meet record of 5 feet 7 inches. Neither Lewis nor Ariana Manning of Philomath could make 5 feet 2 inches, leaving Lewis in second place based on misses and punching her ticket to state. Fellow frosh Lexie Miller finished fourth in the event at 4 feet 10 inches.

Qualifiers in the boys long jump came down to the wire. Heading into the final round Hayden Sharp and Ben

Johnson owned the top two spots at 20 feet 8 inches and 20 feet 5.5 inches respectively until Tristan Calkins of Sweet Home passed them by on his final jump with a mark of 21 feet 1 inch, knocking Johnson to third and out of the state qualifying.

Kate Bowen qualified in the first running event of the competition by placing second in the girls 3,000 meters in a time of 11:30.23, earning a return to the state meet where she finished third last year. Hannah Hernandez of Philomath led from start to finish, clocking 10:57.01.

Moments later, sophomore John Peckham ran a strategically perfect race on his way to second place in a personal best of 9:08.15. The winner and 4A state leader, Leo Johns of Newport, had a hard time shaking Peckham and finished in 9:04.31.

"John knew he had to make a strong move with three-and-a-half laps to go, and when he did the rest of the field could not match him," said Assistant Coach Josh Nordell. "Leo seemed surprised as well, as he continually looked over his shoulder to see who was on his heels."

Hudson Jones got to rub shoulders with the state's best shot putter, which may have helped propel him to his personal best of 41 feet 4 inches, good enough for fifth place.

Will Thorsett, ranked fifth coming into the meet, finished a strong third in 9:28.67, giving the Outlaws valuable team points, while Josh Liddell also picked up points with a sixth-place finish of 10:15.55. On Sunday, Thorsett learned he had officially qualified for the state meet as a wildcard entrant.

"He earned it," said Nordell.

Like the boys long jump, the girls competition came down to the final jumps. Samantha Silva of Sisters, who placed ninth at last year's state meet, took command of the event with a personal best of 16 feet 7.5 inches, but the pre-meet favorite, Melia

Morton of Philomath, who struggled in the preliminary round, prevailed on her final jump, outdistancing Silva by just one inch. Hollie Lewis picked up some points for the team, finishing fifth at 14 feet 10 inches.

Great performances by the Outlaws continued on Saturday right from the get-go. In the first event of the afternoon, Shelby Larson overcame an injury suffered during warm-ups to win the event with a clearance of 9 feet.

"It was touch and go for Shelby, who was in a lot of pain after landing badly in a warm-up attempt," said Head Coach Jeff Larson, Shelby's dad. "She regrouped and got the job done."

“His [Skylar Larson] focus and confidence under those conditions was nothing short of fantastic.”
— Dennis Dempsey

Her brother Skylar also showed courage in his best event, the high jump. After he and two other jumpers cleared six feet, Larson passed at 6 feet 1 inch and watched as the other two competitors cleared the height. This meant that he would finish third and miss qualifying for state unless he cleared the next height at 6 feet 2 inches, something he had never done before. Neither of the other two jumpers cleared the bar, but Larson pulled through in the clutch to win the event.

"His focus and confidence under those conditions was nothing short of fantastic," said assistant coach Dennis Dempsey.

Garret Kersavage placed second in the triple jump with a mark of 40 feet 11 inches to give Sisters state qualifiers in every single jumping event.

The running events



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Kate Bowen qualified by placing second in the girls 3,000 meters in a time of 11:30.23.

provided a slew of qualifiers as well. The 4x100-meter relay team of Johnson, Hayden Sharp, Korbin Sharp and Anderson won the event in 43.68. Johnson followed up with a personal best of 11.26 in the hundred that turned

from heartbreak on Saturday to joy on Sunday. What originally looked like his .01 second miss of placing second and not qualifying turned into learning on Sunday he had

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