

# Cross-country team readies for season

By **Charlie Kanzig**  
Correspondent

After a three-day camp near Tillamook last week, head coach Josh Nordell sees plenty of promise in his charges as the Outlaws prepare for the 2019 competitive season.

Nothing will come easy in the tough Oregon West Conference, but Nordell has clear proof that many of the Sisters runners did a fair share of summer training, which will bode well as the season progresses.

"I'm excited about the fitness of the athletes coming into the season," said Nordell. "Overall I feel like we are ahead of where we were last season, but of course we are just beginning the process."

Wildfire smoke last year made training a challenge, but the Outlaws dealt with the situation quite well. Nordell thinks that the forced rest in early September actually may have helped keep most of the runners injury-free.

"But I am not hoping for any fires this year," he said.

The Oregon West Conference was stacked with talented boys last year and the early-season injury to then-sophomore Will Thorsett set the Outlaws back. The team placed a distant fifth among the seven league teams, it's worst finish in many years.

Things are expected to look quite a bit different this year as the Outlaws return all of their top runners, including junior John Peckham, who finished fourth last year at the District meet with a best time of 16:05 to qualify for state. Last spring he placed fifth at the state track meet in the 3,000 meters, staking a claim as one of the top returnees among 4A runner this season.

For his part, Thorsett placed ninth in the same race with Peckham and has remained healthy throughout a summer of training.

"Those two guys are so good for each other," said Nordell, "and then we have Ethan Hosang who is very committed as well."

Hosang, another junior, placed eighth at the District cross-country meet in 2018 with a time of 16:42 and ran 16:33 as a freshman, giving the Outlaws more depth and experience than any of the other teams in the league.

Newport returns three top runners as well, so the team race will likely come down to the fourth through seventh runners. This is where Nordell will have to wait and see how things develop during the season.

Senior Josh Liddell and junior Sam May put in

summer work, according to Nordell, and look ready to make major contributions to the team. Time will tell who else on the team will rise up.

"We are in a good situation with our top five guys and there are others who are working hard and are showing the desire to improve," said Nordell.

The girls team is in the position of defending their district meet title from last year and hunting for another state trophy to go with the one they got last year for fourth place.

"Last year the Outlaw girls did the unbelievable," said Nordell. "No one expected them to be the district champions, but they picked up a lot of steam in the final weeks of the season and peaked at the perfect time," he said.

The Outlaws edged Philomath and Stayton last year for a stunning victory. "The other teams were absolutely in shock," said Nordell.

The team is led by senior Kate Bowen, who has picked up a number of state-level medals since arriving in

Sisters in the second half of her sophomore year. Bowen finished second at last year's Oregon West district meet and went on to place seventh at state with a time of 19:16. She placed fourth in the 1,500 meters and fifth in the 3,000 meters at the state track meet in May, cementing her place among the best 4A runners for the upcoming season.

Sophomore Emma Singleton showed amazing improvement during her freshman season and placed eighth at the district meet. She qualified for the state meet in the 800 meters during track. The Outlaws did lose seniors Ella Cole and Amy Hills, but Nordell hopes to fill the gaps with new and returning runners.

"Pearl Gregg had a breakout season last year as a sophomore and Iris Diez, another junior, will be ready to make a difference as well," he said.

Nordell, in his seventh year, is assisted by Rima Givot, Charlie Kanzig, Sarah Thorsett and Dennis Dempsey.

"I am lucky to have a lot of help to allow us to



PHOTO BY CHARLIE KANZIG

The Outlaws are ramping up for the fall season in some spectacular settings.

individualize workouts when necessary," he said. "We have a lot of fun together as well."

The Outlaws kick off the competitive season on September 14 at the Northwest Classic in Eugene at Lane Community College.



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