

Thorsett, Bowen qualify for state in cross-country

By **Charlie Kanzig**
Correspondent

Ella Thorsett and Kate Bowen have punched their tickets to run at this Saturday's OSAA Oregon State Cross-Country Championships. The full Outlaws team fell just short of qualifying after placing third at the Oregon West District meet held November 2 at Stayton.

Philomath's Hannah Hernandez dictated the pace of the race, bidding her time to move away from Thorsett and Bowen for the win in 18:54. The victory made it four in a row for the Philomath senior.

Thorsett placed second in 19:04 and Bowen finished third in 19:44.

The top two teams and any individuals not on a qualifying team advance to state.

The Outlaws knew they had their work cut out for them to keep pace with Philomath and Stayton in the quest for a state berth, and as the race progressed it became clear the scores would be close for the top three squads.

Stayton's girls pushed the pace over the first mile, but Philomath edged ahead in the team race by the half-way mark of the 5,000-meter course. Philomath won with 41 points, followed by Stayton with 48 and Sisters with 54.

It was clearly a three-team race as fourth-place Newport finished way back with 137 points, followed by Cascade (146), Sweet Home (152), and Woodburn (154).

Emma Singleton placed eighth in 20:53 as the third scorer for Sisters. Sadie Sharp ran a personal record of 22:14 to place 20th and Pearl Gregg finished right on her heels in 22:16 as the fifth scorer. Skylar Wilkins, who showed dramatic improvement during the year, also ran a personal best (22:23) to place 23rd and freshman Annie Cohen produced her lifetime best three places behind in 22:57.

"Our girls did all they

could, honestly," said Josh Nordell, head coach of the team. "We would have needed a real breakout performance by one of the other scorers or for one of the other teams to falter for us to move into the top two."

Unlike other OSAA team sports that use both league standings and power rankings to determine seeding for state, in cross-country just two teams make it from each district regardless. The Outlaws were ranked seventh in the final coaches poll of the year.

So, placing a close third at a district meet and missing a berth at state is a bit like finishing a close fourth in the Olympics and, according to Nordell, stings a bit more when it is clear your team is much better than many of the other teams that made it to state from other districts.

"We are clearly among the top six teams in 4A," he said. "I am proud of the girls and know they ran their hearts out and wish they were running one more meet this year."

The 4A team battle is predicted to be among Siuslaw, Philomath, Marist Catholic and Stayton.

Thorsett and Bowen figure to be among the top individual runners at state. Bowen placed seventh at last year's state meet, while Thorsett, a freshman, has ranked among the top four 4A runners all season long. She holds the second-fastest 5,000-meter time among entries at 18:19.1.

Anika Thompson of Junction City holds the top time of the year at 18:01, which she ran at the Sky-Em District meet held at Lane Community College on a course virtually identical to the state meet course. She finished second at state last year behind Solace Bergeron of Tillamook.

Seven of the top 10 finishers at last year's state meet return.

"It should be a very exciting race among the top 10 girls at state," said Nordell.



PHOTO BY CHARLIE KANZIG

Ella Thorsett and Kate Bowen with eventual winner Hannah Hernandez of Philomath at Saturday's District meet in Stayton.

"Our two girls are in excellent condition and have shown their competitiveness all season long. They belong in that top group and I know they will give it their all."

The 4A girls will toe the line at Lane Community

College in Eugene at 11:45 on Saturday, November 9. The Outlaws boys team will run at 12:20.

Tickets cost \$10 for adults and \$5 for students and are available onsite or at www.osaa.org.

RECORD COLD: Outlook is warmer, with average precip

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There were 24 days with the low temperature below 32 degrees. There was one day when the high temperature stayed below 32 degrees.

Precipitation totaled 0.01 inches during October, which was 1.04 inches below normal. Measurable precipitation — at least .01 inch — was received on one day.

Precipitation this year has reached 11.34 inches, which is 1.64 inches above normal.

The outlook for November from NOAA's Climate Prediction Center calls for above-normal temperatures and near- to below-normal precipitation. Normal highs for Sisters fall from 54.0 degrees at the start of November to 41.0 degrees at the end of November. Normal lows fall from 29.0 degrees to 23.0 degrees. The 30-year normal precipitation is 1.86 inches.

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