

Three Outlaws take part in grassroots race

By Charlie Kanzig
Correspondent

A teenage runner from South Medford High School — motivated to have the chance to race some of the other top distance runners in Oregon after track was canceled and the cross-country season moved to February — has taken matters into his own hand. He organized a 5,000-meter race that was held Saturday, October 3, at Sheldon High School's track in Eugene.

The beneficiaries of the race being made available included John Peckham, Will Thorsett, and Sam Mays, of Sisters High School. The trio, along with some other teammates, have been training consistently since last March and have not raced since the state cross-country championships last November, in which Peckham placed first and Thorsett third.

The Outlaws represented three of the four 4A runners who took part in the race dominated by 6A and 5A runners who, like Peckham and Thorsett, entered the race with strong credentials.

Most of the entrants had never run a 5,000-meter race on the track before, so the 12-1/2 lap race was new territory.

Ryan Schumacher of Jesuit, fourth at last year's 6A state cross country meet held off the race organizer Michael Maiorano by five seconds to win in a fine time of 14:50. Jack Bennett, also of Jesuit, was next in 14:56.

Peckham and Thorsett finished in the thick of the next group across the line, with Peckham taking fifth place (15:27) and Thorsett eighth (15:34) as five runners finished within eight seconds of each other.

May, who specializes in the 800 meters in track, ran near his lifetime best for the distance to finish in 17:36.

Sarah Thorsett, a volunteer coach for both the cross-country and track teams, was on hand for the meet and came away very impressed with the Outlaws runners.

"They ran so smart," she said. "John and Will finished very strong, each with a 67-second final lap and Sam

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was impressive taking on such a long track race with such a great attitude. It was fun to see all three of them run so well after being off from racing so long.”

Volunteer Coach Dennis Dempsey said, “They ran great, which shows their commitment to training under ever-changing circumstances.”

Traditional fall sports will be allowed to take part in a four week “mini-season” beginning in mid-October, which may include some more races, according to head cross-country coach Josh Nordell.

It appears that at least three Outlaws will be ready.



Sisters Farmers Market adapted to health and safety protocols and served up a successful season, marking its last event for the fall on Sunday.

PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

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