

Girls win district cross-country title, boys take second

By **Charlie Kanzig**
Correspondent

Sophomore Ella Thorsett claimed the individual title, and she and her teammates also took the top team honors at the Oregon West District meet Saturday April 3 in Sweet Home. The finish qualified the squad for next Saturday’s 4A state meet in Eugene.

Thorsett described her 54-second victory over second place Ingrid Hellesto of Philomath as a “tempo run,” indicating that she is ready to defend the state title she won as a freshman. She clocked 20:14.5 over a very challenging, hilly course that included two creek crossings.

Senior Pearl Gregg helped the team effort with a solid fourth place finish in 22:17.1, while juniors Brooklyn Liddell (23:42.1) and Sasha Stolasz (23:48.9) placed 10th and 11th respectively.

Freshman Ella Bartlett (24:56) and senior Mary Root (25:12) pushed each other to also finish in the top twenty. Neya Kountchev came through as the seventh runner for Sisters in 29:36.8.

The Outlaws tallied 40 points, well ahead of Philomath (55) and Stayton (60). Other scores included Newport (103), Sweet Home

(104), and Cascade (142).

The victory qualified the Outlaws to face off in the state meet against 11 other 4A schools from around the state.

Dulce Dunham, Annie Cohen and Raven Miller finished as the top three in the junior varsity race.

“I think we surprised the other teams with our margin of victory today,” said head coach Josh Nordell. “The girls, four of which are in their first season of cross-country, really put it together, and ran courageously on a really tough course.”

Ethan Hosang, undaunted by hills, mud, and creek crossings, led from start to finish to remain undefeated on the year with a time of 16:56.7. Will Thorsett placed third (17:49) and Sam May sixth (18:13), but the boys team could not overcome the overall depth of archrival Philomath, which placed all seven of its runners in the top 15 to win the meet with 34 points.

Sisters finished second with 49 to earn a berth at the state meet.

“Those three seniors up front did all they could to keep us in the hunt,” said Nordell.

The remaining team scores include Sweet Home (98), Stayton (105), Newport

(113), Woodburn (140), and Cascade (184).

Max Palanuk (19:38.4), Hayden Roth (20:05.1), Cole Jervis (20:13.2), and Kaleb Briggs (20:23.9) completed the top seven varsity scorers for Sisters.

“If we can move our fourth through seventh runners up a bit more, we will be plenty competitive at state next week,” said Nordell.

Erik Ryan (third), Eli Palanuk (eighth), and Jackson Griffin (ninth) all placed among the top 10 in the junior varsity race.

The Oregon Schools Activities Association (OSAA), which normally oversees championship events, made the decision earlier this year, due to COVID-19 restrictions and the shortness of the season, to leave the organization of a state championship event up to the 4A schools themselves. Thanks to the efforts of Chris Johnson at Siuslaw and Pat Zweifel at Tillamook, among others, the meet will take place in Eugene on Saturday, April 10, at Marist High School. Girls will run at 11:15 a.m. and the boys at high noon.

“We are grateful to be able to have a championship event to conclude this season,” said Nordell. “These kids have dealt with a lot of



PHOTO BY CRAIG MAY

Ethan Hosang led from the start in district competition, finishing undefeated on the season.

challenges and disappointments, but continued to work hard in practice and push

themselves in meets, so it’s really good to have them competing at state.”

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