KENNEDY SENIOR KAYLIN CANTU PLACES THIRD IN STATE MEET

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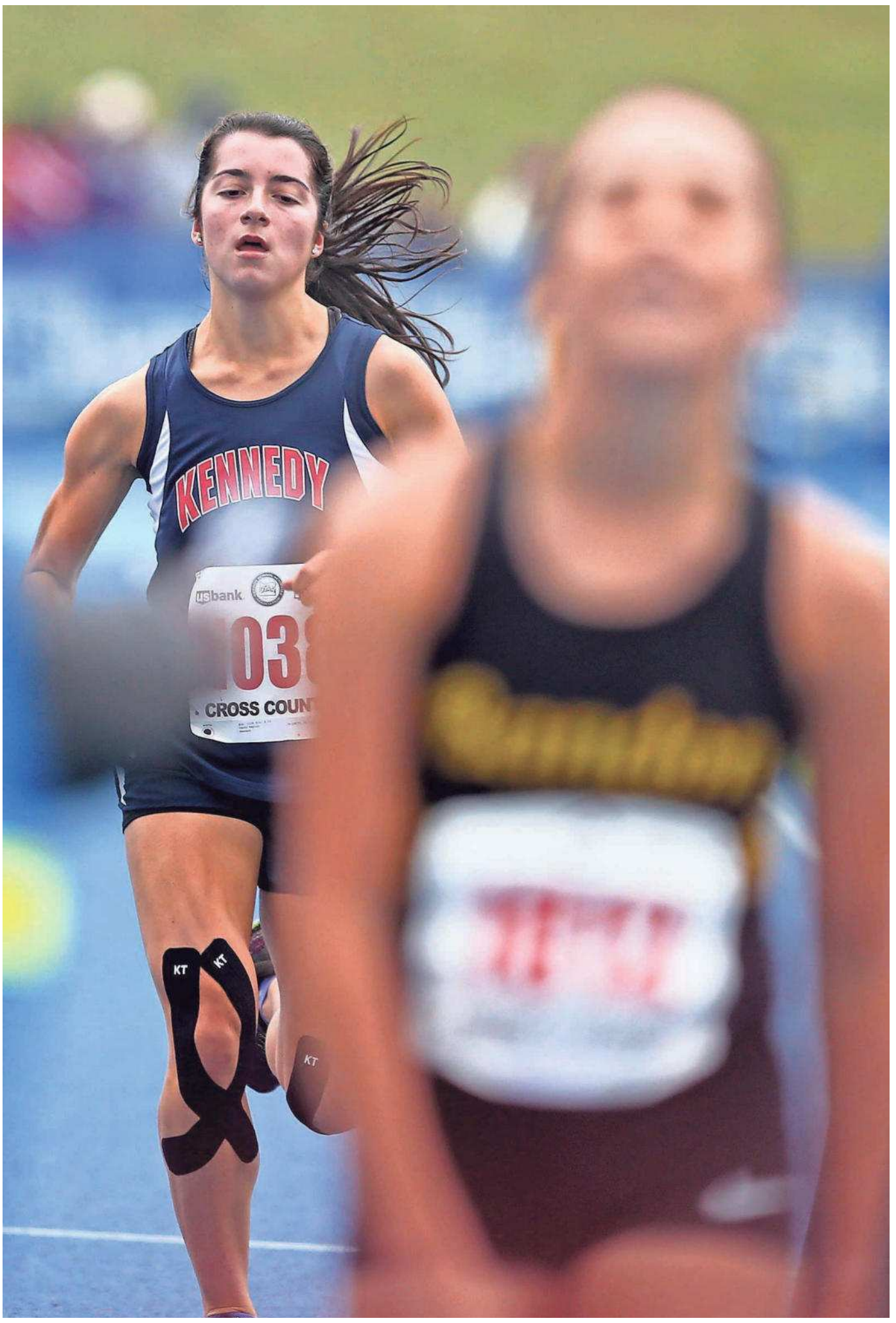

Kennedy's Kaylin Cantu finishes third in the OSAA class 3A/2A/1A State Championship girls cross country meet at Lane Community College in Eugene on Saturday, Nov. 4. ANNA REED / STATESMAN JOURNAL

EUGENE – A couple runners who had been the No. 2 on their cross country teams took themselves, and their teams, to new heights.

Sprague senior Kaylee Mitchell ran a brilliant and aggressive race Saturday to place fourth at the OSAA Class 6A state cross country meet at Lane Community College to lead the Olympians to a seventh-place finish in the team standings.

Stayton junior Matthew Frazeur used a strong final mile to place fourth in the 4A state cross country meet to lead the Eagles to a second-place team trophy, the best team finish in the school's history.

"I think overall we all pushed ourselves the hardest we've ever done," said Frazeur, who placed 27th at the state meet last year. "We've put in the work. I think it will pay off."

Both Mitchell and Frazeur placed in the top five of the state despite not winning their district meets.

They rose to new levels at the state meet, and it made huge impacts on their teams at the state meet.

"It means a lot for me," said Mitchell, who placed 12th in the state as a junior. "I feel like I've grown as a person thanks to my teammates and my coach.

"I have never gone into a race before with the mentality I did today. I was just enjoying it. My dad told me to just smile. Just smile. Soak it up. Enjoy the last little bit you have. That was what we all wanted to do."

Ever since Mitchell arrived at Sprague to start her junior season – she competed in cross country at Astoria in her sophomore year – she had an immediate impact on the team.

But she had been overshadowed by teammate Ginger Murnieks, a junior who won the Greater Valley Conference district championship the past two years.

In Saturday afternoon's 6A state meet, they ran side-by-side for the first mile of the race behind packs of runners from Jesuit and Sunset.

But after the first mile the Jesuit and Sunset girls took off and Mitchell followed them.

"I had to make the decision, are you going to stay where you are or are you going to stay with that front pack?" said Mitchell, who was third in the district meet the week before. "I was like, it's you senior year, you got nothing to lose, stay with the front pack. I'm not used to staying with the front pack."

Mitchell finished strong to finish the 5,000 meter distance in a personal record of 18:04, behind Jesuit's Makenna Schumacher, Sunset's Kelly Makin and Alexis Kebbe.

South Salem junior Anna Chau placed 12th in 18:47.

Sprague placed seventh in the team standings with 203 points. Murnieks placed 16th, Elise Abbott was 21st, Reily White was 78th and Eden McCall was 114th.

In the 4A boys, Frazeur hung out in the top 10 for much of the race as he tried to hang with senior teammate Casey Pugh, who won the district championship the week before.

But in the final 1,500 meters he passed runner after runner and emerged in fourth place in 16:47.

"I saw Casey, got past him and then I saw Tanner (Sayers) from Sweet Home and started clicking it off from there," said Frazeur, who finished in a time of 16:47, 24 seconds behind winning John Kavulich of Scapoose.

Pugh was 10th, sophomore Ben Kirby was 12th, senior Brody Johnson was 44th and sophomore Isaac Nieto was 52nd to give Stayton second place with 96 points, 16 points away from state champion Crook County.

In the 4A girls, Stayton freshman Hailey Notman was a surprise by placing sixth in 19:35.

In the 5A boys race, Woodburn junior Geovani Bravo placed a strong sixth in 15:53 after finishing fifth in the Mid-Willamette district meet.

Kennedy senior Kaylin Cantu equaled her career best by placing third in the 3A/2A/1A girls meet for the second year in a row and placed in the top 10 of the state in all four years of high school.

She was with leaders Maya Rayle of Catlin Gabel and Sailor Hutton of Bandon for most of the race, but Cantu finished in 19:00.

"It's been a really good experience," Cantu said. "Every year I wanted to improve. This year I got the same place, but I'm still happy I get to go to (all-star meet) BorderClash this year for the first time. That was my goal to place all four years and get to go to BorderClash, so that's cool."

Kennedy placed fifth in the team race, one spot out of earning a team trophy. Junior Alejandra Lopez was fifth in 19:26.

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Silverton football advances in playoffs

Silverton's Levi Nielsen (4) looks to pass in the Thurston vs. Silverton football game in the first round of the OSAA class 5A playoffs at Silverton High School on Friday, Nov. 3. Silverton won the game 31-14. ANNA REED / STATESMAN JOURNAL

Silverton fans cheer in the Thurston vs. Silverton football game in the first round of the OSAA class 5A playoffs at Silverton High School on Friday, Nov. 3. Silverton won the game 31-14. ANNA REED / STATESMAN JOURNAL

Silverton's football team beat Thurston 31-14 on Friday in the first round of the OSAA Class 5A state playoffs.

The Foxes, the eighth seed, next will face No. 1 Mountain View in the second round.

Mountain View is 10-0 overall this season.