

## OSAA STATE TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONSHIP PREVIEW

# IN THE CHAMPIONSHIP MIX



Ronald Bond/Observer file photo

La Grande's Nick Tsiatsos is the defending state champion in the 4A boys triple jump.



Ronald Bond/Observer file photo

Shelby Moncrief and the Enterprise Outlaws are the state leaders in the girls 4x400 relay.



Ronald Bond/Observer file photo

Joseph's Ellyse Tingelstad is the defending state champion in the 1A girls 1,500 and 3,000.

### ■ Tiger boys hope to become just third 4A boys squad to repeat in two decades

By Ronald Bond  
The Observer

The La Grande Tigers boys track and field team is hoping to move into rarefied air in the 4A track and field scene.

Only two boys teams in the last 20 years — Sweet Home (2008, 2009, 2010) and Henley (2015, 2016) — have won consecutive state championships at the 4A level. La Grande, coming off its first track title in 2018, is hoping to join those two programs.

How realistic is the Tigers' chance at repeating? They have 25 entries in the state meet, which is being held today and Saturday in Gresham, and at least one in every event. That includes a defending state champion in the triple jump in Nick Tsiatsos, the state leader in the pole vault in Jacob Huntsman, and three of the four links from last year's 4x400 relay team in Luke Bloodgood, Hunter Youngblood and Sajun White.

They also have a great opportunity to score a lot of points in the long jump and high jump. Neither Tsiatsos nor Youngblood are seeded first in the long jump, but both are within 6-1/2 inches of Klamath Union's Darius Holmes, who had the best mark across the state during the district meets (21-foot-7-1/2) to enter as the top seed.

Both Zach Wiggins and T.J. Clay, meanwhile, hit 6-foot-0 in the high jump at district, and with a good day could boost into the top four and help LHS's cause. Bennett Welch could also bring home an individual state title. He's seeded third in the 1,500 but is less than a second behind state leader Kale Cassidy of Baker. The two had a neck-and-neck battle down the stretch at district a week ago, a fight to the finish that could be repeated at state.

For the Tigers to be truly in the state title discussion,

though, they will need some of the aforementioned possibilities to become reality plus some additional big days from athletes. Here are a few to keep an eye on:

- White is currently seeded seventh in the 200 and 10th in the 400, but with a drop in time would help La Grande's odds.

- Josh Zollman, while seeded just seventh in the 100, is only 0.30 seconds off the lead.

- And the 4x100 relay team, while seeded sixth, is just 0.42 seconds behind top seed Gladstone.

Several other LHS athletes who dominated at district are currently seeded on the edge of placing or outside of placing range, but a career day could help increase La Grande's odds: Callum Ebel or Clay in the 110 hurdles, Owen Kreutz or Keith Oswald in the javelin, or Nathan Reed, who is working back from a broken leg, in the 300 hurdles.

Currently, the Tigers are projected to finish in fourth place in a hypothetical meet. Newport enters as the state favorite. Mazama, Sisters and Marist are also teams the Tigers will be

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### ■ Enterprise girls in range to compete for program's first track and field title

By Ronald Bond  
The Observer

The Enterprise Outlaws girls claimed their first cross country title two years ago, and they have the potential to follow with the program's first state title on the track this weekend at the 2A state track and field meet in Monmouth.

A handful of individual athletes to watch this weekend includes Kyla Hook in the 1,500 and 3,000. The sophomore is seeded ninth in the 3,000 based on her district time in the race but actually holds the top time in 2A this season at 11:15.74. Hero Peters in the 100 and Shelby Moncrief in the 200 also have times in those respective races that rank second and third on the season. The Outlaws also boast the top-seeded 4x400 relay team in the state — an event they have won the last two years — and have a former state champion in the high jump in Karli Bedard, who won two years ago.

Enterprise figures to be right in the thick of what should be a tight race for the 2A girls title. Monroe is the favorite — by just four

points over Grant Union — in a hypothetical meet, and Kennedy is another school in the mix.

The Outlaws boys could also get on the podium, though they might be more hard-pressed to contend for the program's sixth boys title as East Linn Christian enters as a heavy favorite, projecting to score 22 points more than Heppner, who enters ranked second.

Enterprise comes in ranked fourth but does have the state favorite in the 400 in Foster Hobbs, who has the best time of the season by nearly a full second. The Outlaws also have strong relay teams — the 4x100 team is second by a mere 0.05 seconds, and the 4x400 team, though in third, is less than two seconds off the pace of top seed Heppner. Enterprise is also the defending champion in the mile relay, and freshman Zac Knapp is third in the 3,000.

The Union Bobcats boys' best chance for a state champion, on paper, comes in the form of 800 runner Matthew Sheehy, who is seeded third in the event but just 1.08 seconds

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### ■ Joseph, Cove and Elgin all in range to get on the podium in Monmouth

By Ronald Bond  
The Observer

Local 1A schools have provided plenty of fireworks at state the last three years, and they could do so again in 2019 at the state track and field meet today and Saturday in Monmouth.

Joseph won state on the girls side in 2016 and 2018, and Cove claimed the girls championship a year ago. Though neither is favored this year, both teams could put themselves in the discussion if their hold serves in their top events and they steal some points in others. Elgin is also a team to watch on the girls side.

On the boys side, meanwhile, Joseph is a team in the mix for the program's first track title, while Elgin is coming off a district championship and has a shot at the podium — and a Cove senior should finish his career with a proper send off.

The Joseph Eagles girls have become a powerhouse when it comes to producing champion distance runners. Ellyse Tingelstad is a heavy favorite in both the 1,500 and 3,000 — events she won a year ago. A repeat in both events would

give Joseph four consecutive titles in the 1,500 and five straight championships in the 3,000. The Eagles also have the top seed in the 800 in Ella Coughlan, who also has the second-best time in the state in the 3,000 behind Tingelstad. The Eagles could score 38 points in just the distance races if everything breaks correctly, and with a little fortune in the relay races — they are, to be fair, seeded second in the 4x400 — they should come away with some hardware. Joseph is currently seeded third.

The defending champion Cove Leopards have some work to do, as they're projected to score 42 points and tie for fifth. They got a major lift a few weeks ago with the return of Sophie Pettit from a meniscus injury, and the senior will aim to defend her individual titles in the 100 (top seed) and long jump (third seed). A victory in the 100, in fact, would give her four straight championships in the event. Cove also has the second-seeded 4x100 relay team and the third-rated 100 hurdle runner (Austin Kendall) and javelin

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80/85	6.6%
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