



Cove's Tim Stevens three-peated in both the 1A boys 1,500 and 3,000.

Stevens cements legacy

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

Cove's Tim Stevens wrapped up his prep track and field career as one of the best, if not the best, 1A distance runner the state has ever seen.

The senior added two more state championships to his list of accolades, winning both the 1,500 and the 3,000 to three-peat in both events and lead the Leopards boys track and field team to a seventh-place finish at the 1A state meet Friday and Saturday in Monmouth.

"It's pretty special," Stevens said when asked to reflect on his prep career. "I'm really glad to be in this position and to have the opportunity to do something like this, and I'm just thankful to God for it all."

On Friday Stevens broke the record in the 1A boys 3,000 by nearly five seconds, pulling away early and lapping the back end of the field in the final seconds as he finished in a time of 8:38.20, nearly 30 seconds ahead of the runner-up.

"(Breaking the record) was a goal last year, and I was fairly close," Stevens said. "This season I ran 8:44 (in an earlier meet). It was definitely a goal of mine being that close to it."

Although he just missed his ideal target pace of 68-second laps, which would have netted him a time of 8:30, Stevens said a quick start was the key to putting himself in position to run down the record.

"The fast (first) lap was intentional in that we were trying to get out fast, that way I settled into the correct pace rather than a slower pace," he said. "Hopefully it offset falling off a little bit by going out fast. Really I just wanted to do my best and try and honor God while I'm at it."

On Saturday, Stevens turned in a time of 4:01.26 in the 1A boys 1,500, less than a second off his own state meet record set a year earlier.

The two victories accounted for 20 of Cove's 27 team points. Both of the Leopards relay teams also made it to the podium. The 4x400 relay team of Quinn Dobbs, Blake Witten, Jack Silveira and Stevens came in fourth in a time of 3:37.37, and the 4x100 team of Witten, Camren Chrusoskie, Stevens and Silveira timed in at 46.66 to take eighth.

Individually, Silveira added an eighth-place finish in the 800 in 2:07.57.

COVE GIRLSTAKE FIFTH PLACE

While they didn't have a state champion,



Cove's Sophie Pettit was second in the 1A girls 100 to help the Leopards to fifth.

the Leopard girls did follow up last year's title by placing fifth and landing 40 points.

Seniors Sophie Pettit, Alisa Fox and Allie Best and junior Austin Kendall did the bulk of the damage for the Leopards. Pettit, who was battling through a meniscus injury suffered during basketball that kept her out much of the spring, barely missed out on a four-peat in the 1A girls 100, finishing in second in the race with a time of 12.83. The senior, who is set to compete at Weber State, was also fifth in the long jump with a mark of 15 feet 8-1/2.

Cove head coach Dena Ledbetter commended the senior for her efforts in spite of the injury.

"Every time she runs, it would pop and hurt, (but) she decided, 'it's my senior year, I've gotta go for it,'" the coach said.

Fox placed third in the 1,500 in 5:14.03 and came back to add a sixth-place finish in the 800 in 2:32.40. Best, meanwhile, was third in the javelin with a throw of 115 feet 7, and Kendall timed in at 17.13 to place fourth in the 100 hurdles.

Cove added a second-place finish by its 4x100 relay team of Rachel Baird, Kendall, Fox and Pettit that completed the race in 52.60, which Ledbetter said was as school record. ■

LHS boys come in fifth

By Juli Bloodgood
The Observer

This year's OSAA State Championship result for the La Grande Tigers boys track and field team fell short of the hopes of repeating last year's glory, but the team didn't stop working through injuries and dashed hopes at the 4A track and field meet in Gresham Friday and Saturday.

Not having the team in full health had a noticeable impact on the final outcome of the competition.

"It was a huge letdown," head coach Julie Bodfish said, "but that's just how it goes sometimes."

Her answer was "no" when asked if coming in as the defending champions from last year had a negative effect on the athletes's performance. "This is a pretty relaxed meet," she added.

The highlight of Friday's events was the 4A boys 3,000 battle between La Grande senior Bennett Welch and junior Kale Cassidy of Baker. Welch held first place until the final lap before finishing the race in second.

"I really thought I had it until the end there," he said.

Coming in second place did not seem to bring Welch down, though, as his time of 8:54.67 broke his personal record of 9:00.07.

"My goal was to break that 9 (minute-mark), and I did that," he said.

There were some other bright spots of the competition, according to Bodfish. She referred to Terence Clay who placed fourth in the high jump at 6 feet even, Jacob Huntsman who placed fourth in the pole vault at 13 feet, and Nathan Reed's third place in the boys 300 hurdles with a season record of 41.43 seconds.

"That was the race of the day!" Bodfish said, speaking of Reed's Saturday effort.

Reed, who had broken his leg during wrestling in the winter, said, "(I) didn't do what I wanted today (but it was an) honor just to be here."

The fact he was running at all was an impressive feat. In only his fourth competition this year, he placed third and was just 1.40 seconds behind his personal record from last year.

Hunter Youngblood and Nick Tsiatsos, who despite both sustaining injuries on the field on Saturday, finished fifth and sixth in the boys long jump, respectively. Youngblood jumped 20 feet 9-1/2 inches, and Tsiatsos turned in an effort of 20 feet 8. Tsiatsos had also placed sixth in the triple jump with a mark of 41 feet 2-1/2.

The La Grande team "ran



Top: Bennett Welch, left, placed second in the 4A boys 3,000 to help the La Grande boys take fifth. **Bottom:** Anna Green was sixth in the 4A girls javelin and LHS's top girls placer.

with heart," according to Bodfish, despite the need to use two alternates in both the boys 4x100 and 4x400 relays.

In the 4x100 meter relay, Maxon Huxoll, Julian Harris, Josh Zollman and Sajun White placed ninth with a time of 45.58 seconds, and the 4x400 team of Owen Kreutz, Luke Bloodgood, Westin Blake and Sajun White finished fifth with a season best time of 3:30.61.

White was also seventh in the 400 in 51.86 and eighth in the 200 in 23.57, while Callum Ebel placed eighth in the 110 hurdles in 16.79.

Welch, the highest placing La Grande runner, regarded the day with measure, not seeing the need to be upset about the outcome of the meet, saying, "it's ephemeral, just a blip."

The Tiger boys team finished in fifth place with a total of 42 points. The state champion was Newport with 65 points.

TIGER GIRLSTIE FOR 21ST

While the La Grande girls fell short of last year's team total of 17 points, scoring seven to tie for 21st with Cottage Grove, there were several personal and season records at the 4A track and field meet in Gresham.

Jackie Martini ran fourth in her heat in the prelims of the 800, setting her personal record at 2:23.08. Martini ultimately placed seventh overall in the finals, turning in a time of 2:32.05.

In the girls 3,000, Rachael Keniry made it on the podium with a season best of 10:54.86 to take seventh.

Anna Green set two personal records at state. The sophomore had a throw of 101 feet 7 to get ninth place in the discus, but her best effort came during the opening day of the meet in the girls javelin, recording a throw of 113 feet 10, placing her in sixth.

The state champion for the girls was Hidden Valley with 97 points. ■

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be excited (for track)."

Homan said his performance in the finals of the hurdle race wasn't as clean as his preliminary race, but his time of 41.06 seconds was still good enough to win by nearly a full second.

"It felt good to finally get a first-place medal. I've put in a lot of work," Homan said. "This is my fourth time going to state. I've gone for plenty of events."

After running at state in the 3,000 as a freshman, Homan ran the 800 at state as a sophomore before settling into the 300 hurdles, taking fourth a year ago before winning this year.

"It's great. It's what we were wanting," head coach John Roberts said of Homan's title. "He's strong, and the hurdle coach has him (doing well) over the hurdles."

He also ran on both the



Joseph's T.J. Grote placed second in the 1A boys pole vault and was one of three Eagles to place in the event.

4x100 and 4x400 relay teams on Saturday, with the 4x400 team of Homan, Bayden Menton, Juston Rogers and Trey Wandschnieder placing eighth in 3:42.33.

But he was hardly alone in helping lift the Eagles to second. The biggest boost might

have come from seniors T.J. Grote and Kade Kilgore and junior Carsen Littlepage in the 1A boys pole vault as the trio took second, fifth and sixth, respectively. Grote cleared 12 feet 6 inches, while both Kilgore and Littlepage made it over 11 feet 6. Lit-

tlepage, in fact, set a personal best by 18 inches in the event.

"Since all three of us have been doing so well, we all just push each other," Grote said of the threesome that netted Joseph 15 points on Friday to help the Eagles take an early lead in the

team standings.

"They hit their (stride) this year and started vaulting well," Roberts said. "The bottom vaulter (Littlepage), he just started this year and got 11-6, and he got on the podium."

Grote added that the whole team has taken a supportive approach.

"It's been a fun team to work with. Everyone works hard, everyone cheers for each other (and) picks each other up. (We) worked hard to get second. It's been awesome."

Grote also credited Homan's leadership role in galvanizing the team.

"He helps everybody out, not just in his event," Grote said. "He pushes everybody and makes everybody work harder. He's been a great help to the team."

Freshman Henry Coughlan turned in a big weekend to help the Eagles' surge, individually taking second in the 3,000 Friday in 9:07.05,

and following Saturday by taking fifth in the 1,500 in 4:16.58.

"Running is his passion (and) I'm excited to see where he goes," Homan said, adding that the younger runners on the team "have a lot of potential."

Rogers and Menton rounded out the scoring for Joseph in the 1A boys 800, with Rogers, a sophomore, placing third in 2:02.82 and Menton, a freshman, fifth in 2:05.52.

"They've done a great job, (from the) younger boys all the way up to the senior boys," Roberts said.

Homan added that he hopes the Eagles' move to the top level of the state isn't a brief one.

"I hope we've got kids who can see past the work-outs and how painful it is, (and realize it) really is a team sport. I hope kids look past that and see how fun it can be, and the satisfaction about it," he said. ■