

# SPORTS

## Gorge distance runners increase workout pace anticipating first meets

By Joe Petshow  
For Columbia Gorge News

In a strange way, the late Arthur Lydiard probably would have appreciated at least one consequence of COVID-19. Lydiard, who is considered by some as the most influential distance running coach of all-time, was an advocate of training vs. racing, especially at the youth level. Lydiard was quoted as saying, "Encourage kids to enjoy running and play in athletics. Don't force them to run too much competition."

Well, Arthur, we've got you covered on the competition part — at least during the past year. Competitive running, or head-to-head competition of almost any type, has been nonexistent, as per a pandemic. Virtual competitions are commonplace, thanks to technology, where runners use global positioning systems to register times. But that may change soon, as COVID restrictions ease and high school coaches resume official practices which include in-person racing.

The six-team Intermountain Conference, for example, which includes The Dalles and Hood River Valley, will hold dual meets to coincide with COVID protocols (that limit the number of people at gatherings).

"Starting March 3, every school will have five meets, if they choose to do that," said The Dalles Coach Bob Thouvenel. Race schedules are a moving target at this point, and district and state competitions are up in the air, but students are slowly returning to (physical) classrooms and, thusly, the practice fields.

Hood River and The Dalles are scheduled to race March 10 at Sorosis Park in The Dalles.

"For the first time in a while, parents are frequently emailing me again, asking about workouts," noted Brandon Bertram, Hood River Valley cross country coach. And none too soon, he added. Athletes have been able to train on their own, but the camaraderie aspect of high school sports cannot be emulated virtually. "It's always a concern when young athletes step away from the team energy" part of sports, Bertram said.

Many runners have stayed in shape through school-run conditioning sessions or athlete-led workouts. "They've been working out three nights a week since the first of the year," Thouvenel said about many of his runners.

Prep distance runners in the Gorge enjoy at least one advantage over their state-wide peers: A seemingly endless number of scenic training routes, many far removed from the clutter of vehicles and other distractions. Gorge runners also benefit from experienced coaching staffs, a fact that might not be evident in the day-to-day grueling nuances of hill work, repeat 800-meter runs, and interval ladders. But it's hard to ignore results.

A Hood River, The Dalles or Columbia cross country team (girls or boys) has won at least one district championship every year since 2011 (see breakout box this page). In 2019, the last year Oregon high school cross country was held, each school won a district crown: Columbia and The Dalles boys, and Hood River girls.

### Gorge Girls Team Outlook

The Hood River girls have been the dominate high school cross country program in the Gorge the past decade. The Eagles won the past four district titles and seven of the past nine, qualifying for the state championships each year. The Dalles won the other two district championships, in 2014 and 2015.

Coach Bertram has helped develop distance

running at the youth level, in part as an elementary school physical education teacher in Hood River. The Eagles have one of the deepest programs in the state, at any enrollment level. For example, in 2019, HRV's eighth through 14th runners would have qualified for the Class 5A state meet as a team (based on district-meet times), by finishing a close second to The Dalles.

The Riverhawks also benefit from numbers in their distance running program, headed by Thouvenel, the dean of conference coaches (now in his 53rd season). The Dalles has had either a boys or girls team compete at the state cross country meet every year starting in 2013. The Riverhawks return four of their top seven runners off of last year's girls district runner-up team.

"They have been running," Thouvenel said of his core group. "Well, about three of those, they haven't stopped for the most part. ... Some of the better kids at all the schools, are still going."

The Columbia girls were 14th at the 2019 IA WIAA state meet in Pasco, Wash. Columbia qualified for state after finishing third in the Trico League meet and third in the IA District IV meet. Coach Michael Hannigan's girls team has finished third or better the past five district meets, including back-to-back runner-up finishes in 2016 and 2017. Columbia will be looking to fill its top three varsity spots, as those runners from the 2019 state-meet team have graduated.

### Gorge Boys Team Outlook

The Dalles boys edged Crook County and Hood River for the 2019 district cross country title, the first for Thouvenel, he said, in more than 20 years. "We were trying to remember back that far," he said. The 2019 championship is hard to forget, as The Dalles placed four runners in the top 10 at district, led by the runner-up finish of freshman Juan Diego Contreras.

Hood River saw its string of successive boys state-meet team appearances end at seven in that district meet, where the Eagles finished third — one point behind Crook County. Bertram said his team is hungry to start a new streak. "We're always aiming at an IMC championship," he said. "We have a young boys group and they've got the sauce."

Columbia competed in the IA WIAA state meet in 2019, finishing 12th as a team. Four of the seven Bruin competitors that day were underclassmen, including No. 2 and 3 runners, Jacob Lockman and Thomas Ziegler. Those two were the top Columbia runners at the 2019 IA District IV championships, which the Bruins won at Lewis River Golf Course in Woodland, WA.

Columbia, LaCenter and, more recently, Seton Catholic in Vancouver, WA., have consistently led the league and district team competition. Columbia has won the past two district team titles and four of the past six. The Bruins have finished either first or second at district since 2014 (see breakout box this page).

### Gorge Individual Outlook

Among the top individual Gorge high school boys runners are Josh Haynes of Hood River Valley, Diego Contreras of The Dalles, Lockman of Columbia and Justin Peck of Trout Lake.

Haynes, a senior who will run next fall at University of Montana, was hampered by a



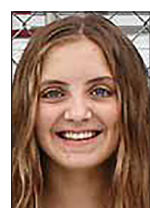
Brandon Bertram, HRVHS's head cross country coach, talks with a runner. Bertram, a Westside Elementary physical education teacher, has worked to develop runners at the grade school and middle school levels. Kirby Neumann-Rea photo/file

foot injury his junior year. He was third at the IMC district meet as a sophomore in 2018. Diego Contreras followed up his district runner-up finish with a 10th-place showing at the 5A state meet in 2019.

Lockman, a senior, has been Columbia's No. 1 or 2 runner the past two seasons. Peck, also a senior, might be the best of the group. He was runner-up in the WIAA 1B/2B state cross country meet a year ago. He may have to wait until track and field starts to add to his running resume. Trout Lake decided it will not field a cross country team this season — in part because of requirements forcing athletes to wear masks while running, according to Steve Allaway, athletic director.



Chloe Bullock



Hanna Ziegenhagen

best by more than a minute and half at the 2019 5A state meet; and Huxtable was the runaway winner in the IMC district junior varsity race — with a time that would have placed her eighth in varsity competition. Ziegenhagen leads The Dalles returners, having placed seventh as a junior at district, two spots ahead and nine seconds faster than Duyck, also a senior.

### Cross Country Run Down

**Washington Boys District 4 Cross Country Championships**  
2014 1. Columbia; 2. Eatonville  
2015 1. Forks; 2. Columbia  
2016 1. Columbia; 2.

LaCenter  
2017 1. Montesano; 2. Columbia  
2018 1. Columbia; 2. Montesano  
2019 1. Columbia; 2. LaCenter

### Boys District Cross Country Titles

Year — League — Champ  
2011 Columbia River, Hermiston  
2012 Columbia River, Hood River  
2013 Columbia River, Hermiston  
2014 Columbia River, Hermiston  
2015 Columbia River, Hood River  
2016 Columbia River, Hood River  
2017 Columbia River, Hood River  
2018 Intermountain, Crook County  
2019 Intermountain, The Dalles

### Girls District Cross Country Titles

Year — League — Champ  
2011 Columbia River, Hood River  
2012 Columbia River, Hood River  
2013 Columbia River, Hood River  
2014 Columbia River, The Dalles  
2015 Columbia River, The Dalles  
2016 Columbia River, Hood River  
2017 Columbia River, Hood River  
2018 Intermountain, Hood River\*\*  
2019 Intermountain, Hood River  
\*\* Also won the 5A state title

### Gorge Cross Country Boys Returners

(5000 meters, 2019, athletic.net)  
Justin Peck, TL 15:59.8  
Juan Diego Contreras, TD 16:00.4  
Josh Haynes, HRV, 16:24.0  
Elliot Hawley, HRV, 16:27.1  
Jack Grim, HRV, 16:35.4  
Nick Caracciolo, TD, 16:40.4  
Mason Stock, TL, 17:05.5  
Jacob Lockman, Col., 17:11.0



Nick Caracciolo of The Dalles High School finishes a cross country race. The Dalles and Hood River cross country compete in The Dalles March 10.

### Cross Country Meets Involving Gorge Teams

(As of Feb. 21; meets are tentative, schedule is subject to change)

**Feb, 27:** Columbia at Seton Catholic, Vancouver.  
**March 3:** The Dalles at Crook County; Hood River at Pendleton.  
**March 6:** Columbia at White Salmon Invite.  
**March 10:** Hood River at The Dalles.  
**March 13:** Columbia at Trico Championship.  
**March 17:** The Dalles at Pendleton; Hood River at Ridgeview.  
**March 20:** Columbia at District 4 meet, Vancouver.  
**March 24:** The Dalles at Ridgeview; Hood River at Redmond.  
**March 31:** Redmond at The Dalles; Crook County at Hood River.  
**April 7:** IMC open date, TBD.  
**April 10:** The Dalles at Oregon City Invite

Shane Pearson, TL, 17:17.8	Lucy Hennessy, HRV, 19:53.0
Josiah Sohal, HCS, 17:23.9	Amelia Huxtable, HRV, 19:56.1
Joshua Humann, HRV, 17:23.9	Foneta Duyck, TD, 20:06.0
<b>Gorge Cross Country Girls Returners</b>	Mieka McKnight, HRV, 20:18.4
(5000 meters, 2019, athletic.net)	Myana Stock, TL, 20:28.4
Chloe Bullock, HRV, 19:24.8	Kate Pauly, HRV, 20:55.6
Hanna Ziegenhagen, TD, 19:26.4	Clara Parkinson, HRV, 20:57.7
	Izzy Simpson, HRV, 21:02.

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