

# EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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## Maher putting in the work to be No. 1

Pendleton hurdler has his sights set on state titles

By ANNIE FOWLER  
East Oregonian

Lane Maher sets the bar pretty high for himself.

The Pendleton junior is one of the top hurdlers in the state, but until he is No. 1, he said there still is work to be done.

"I've been chasing Ty Rohrman of Hermiston, and now he's graduated," Maher said. "I have always wanted to be that guy, for people to say, 'It's him.'"

Maher will put his skills on display at the 5A Track and Field Championships on Friday and Saturday at Mt. Hood Community College.

There, just one guy, senior Dylan Murray of Willamette High School (6A last year) has better times than Maher in both hurdle events. He clocked a 13.93 seconds in the 110s on May 18, and a 37.60 in the 300s on May 3.

"I've ran against him before, and he's very good," Maher said of Murray. "I would love to get where he's at. I'm pretty far behind, but I'm not going to make it easy on him."

In Eastern Oregon, others say the same about Maher.

Maher set a school record in the 300 hurdles, turning in a time of 39.11 seconds at the Intermountain Conference district championships in Prineville last weekend. The previous record of 39.34 was set by Kevin Robinson in 2012.

"I'm very happy about that," Maher said. "That (school) record is something I have been working for since my freshman year."

Maher also won the 110 hurdles at district, turning in a time of 15.05 to land on top of the podium.

His PR in the event is 14.74, which



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Pendleton's Lane Maher won the 110-meter hurdles last Saturday during the IMC championships in Prineville. Maher turned in a time of 15.05 seconds and punched his ticket to the 5A state championships.

he ran at the Kiwanis Twilight Invitational in Hermiston, while running against two of the top hurdlers from the Mid-Columbia Conference — Parker Morgan of Kamiakin, and Beau Franklin of Hanford.

"I'm working for that one (school record) as well," Maher said. "This year was some of the best competition I have had. Going to any of those big meets, you get in the mindset you have to go fast. It always makes you better."

### Not an easy event to learn

Maher started hurdling in middle school, but it wasn't until he got to Pendleton High and started working with coach Ben Bradley that things started to fall into place.

"It was a hard thing for me to learn," Maher admitted. "Ben has been very helpful the past three years."

For an event that requires competitors to be part sprinter and part jumper, Bradley said it did not take Maher long to grasp the nuances of the event.

"His No. 1 thing is fearlessness," Bradley said. "His freshman year, you could tell he was going to conquer it. There is no hesitation. His focus and concentration are on winning. He listens to me, and hears what I say."

After Maher set the school record in the 300 hurdles, Bradley feels the 110 record (14.46 by Kelly Simpson in 1999) is within his reach.

"I think he is more than capable," Bradley said. "I think he may have a chance at state. There are kids there to pull him along. I think he has a chance if the conditions are right."

Maher is a little hesitant to say he can pull off that feat off this weekend.

"It's crazy," Maher said. "Some of those records have not been broken in a long time. I have a 14.74, that is a lot of time to make up in that short of a race. I don't know if I will get that this year."

### Staying the course

This is Maher's second trip to state. As a sophomore, he was fourth in the 110s (15.36) and third in the 300s (39.99).

That he is on the track and at the top of his sport this spring is impressive.

He broke the fibula in his left leg on Dec. 18 in a basketball game against Milwaukie and missed the rest of the season.

"I was able to come back just in time for track," Maher said.

## Romero relishes being the unknown

Hermiston junior will compete in the javelin Saturday morning

By ANNIE FOWLER  
East Oregonian

No. 10 in the nation. No. 3 in Washington, and the top-ranked 3A javelin thrower heading into state.

While all that looks impressive, Hermiston junior Jazlyn Romero said she doesn't let the numbers get in her head.

"I try not to let it blow up my ego," she said. "Anything can happen when you are competing. At the Pasco Invite, I was the only one from Oregon competing. To them, I came out of nowhere."

The same will happen at the 3A State Track and Field Championships this weekend at Mt. Tahoma High School in Tacoma.

With Hermiston joining the WIAA this school year, Romero will be an unknown to most — Kennewick's Madeline Gebers has gotten a dose of Romero all spring.

"Knowing we were going into the WIAA, I kept an eye on throwers," said Romero, who will compete Saturday. "They had no idea I was coming."

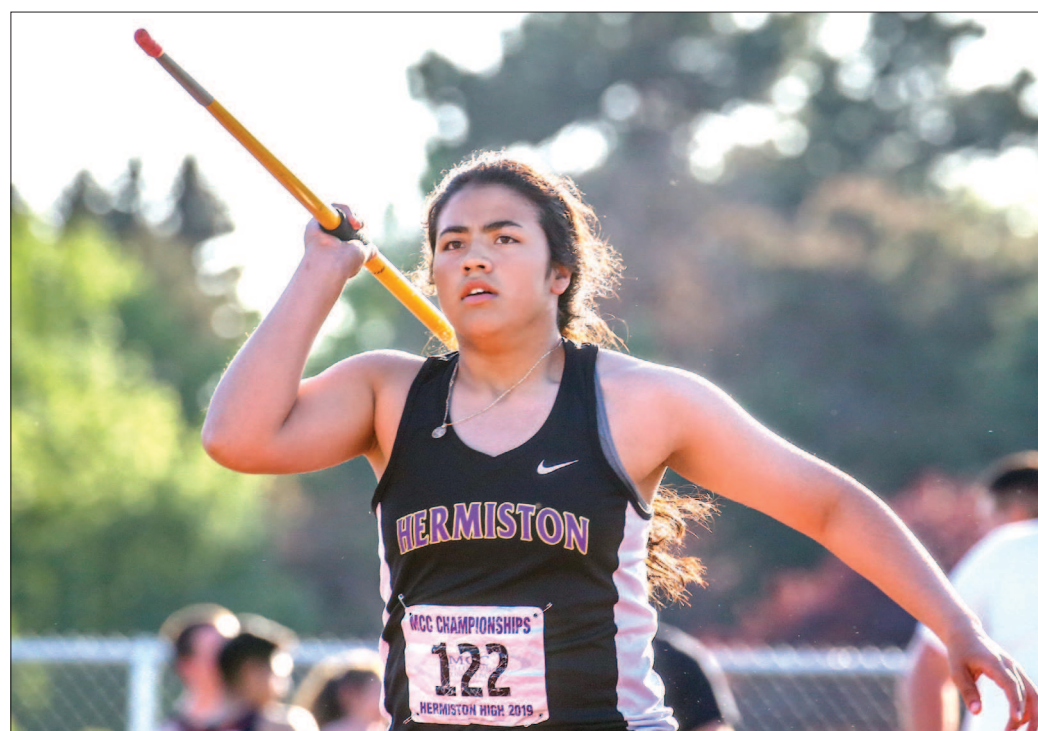
Romero's seed mark at state is 143 feet, but her top mark going into state is 151-9.

Ella Haskins of Bishop Blanchet has thrown 128-2, and Gebers 126-11. The field of 16 throwers ranges from 100-9 to Romero's top mark.

"Every day is a new challenge," Romero said. "The javelin is very technical — you can't perfect it."

Hermiston coach Emilee Strot said Romero has the talent and mental toughness to find herself with a gold medal on Saturday.

"What I appreciate most, is she has confidence, but she



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Hermiston's Jazlyn Romero is the top-ranked 3A javelin thrower headed into the state track and field championships this weekend in Tacoma. Romero will compete on Saturday.

is humble," Strot said. "She is going in like she is not the best in the state. She is going in like every other meet — to be on the top of the podium. She will not consider herself the best until it's over."

### Improving on good

As a freshman, Romero was less than a foot shy of earning a spot to state. She finish third (110-1) at district behind teammates Makayla Akers and Madelyn Juul.

As a sophomore, she improved by leaps and bounds, throwing a season-best 142-10 to finish second behind Pendleton's Emanuela Casadei (143-3), an exchange student from Italy, at the Intermountain Conference district meet.

Romero went on to finish third at the Oregon 5A state meet with a mark of 134-3. Casadei won with a toss of 145-4.

"She told me after state, 'Don't give up, I want to hear good things about you in Italy,'" Romero said of Casa-

dei. "It's amazing how she connected with all of us."

The competition in the Mid-Columbia Conference this spring has not been as stiff as Romero had hoped. She has won every meet but two this season — she was sixth at the Pasco Invite, and second at the Dean Nice Invite in Gresham.

"That's the hardest part," Romero said. "You just have to try and stay positive and be better than yourself the day before."

Romero threw her PR of 151-9 at the MCC district meet in Hermiston, and celebrated with Strot.

"It was in the air for so long, I thought it had to be far," Romero said. "All I heard was 150, and coach and I are jumping up and down like little girls."

Romero has flourished under the tutelage of Strot, a former college thrower who qualified for the NCAAs in the shot put and discus when she competed at UC Berkeley

and Kentucky.

"We are really fortunate with the coaches we have," Romero said. "It's not every day you have four former Division I athletes on your staff."

Romero has endeared herself to Strot, who first saw Romero on the basketball court the summer before her freshman year.

"She is standing out in the track and field world," Strot said. "She is so strong and explosive, and brilliant in the classroom and on the court. I'm excited to see what she does. She is already getting phone calls and letters."

Despite her success, Romero said she still gets a few butterflies before each meet.

"I always get a little nervous, but once I get into the environment and on the runway, everything is fine," she said. "I just take a deep breath and let it fly."

That's when everyone else gets nervous.

## Lillard, Kemba, LeBron among All-NBA picks

By BRIAN MAHONEY  
AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK — Giannis Antetokounmpo and James Harden got the most votes, and Damian Lillard and Kemba Walker also were big winners when the All-NBA teams were announced.

Those guards can cash in with supermax contracts based on their selections to one of the three All-NBA teams that were announced Thursday.

LeBron James also was voted to the third team, tying the NBA record with his 15th All-NBA selection.

Rounding out the first team were Stephen Curry, Paul George and Nikola Jokic, who was Denver's first All-NBA selection since Carmelo Anthony in 2010.

Antetokounmpo and Harden were unanimous selections, receiving all 100 votes from a panel of writers and broadcasters who had to choose two guards, two forwards and one center for each of the three teams.

Walker was the final selection but all that matters is that he made it. By doing so, he became eligible to receive a five-year contract extension worth about \$221 million from the Hornets if he opts to stay in Charlotte, a reward the NBA put in recently as further incentive to keep players with their current teams.

The Hornets could have offered him about \$30 million less if he wasn't selected and failed to earn the criteria for the largest possible contract.

Lillard, a second-team selection, can get more than \$190 million over four years with a new contract in Portland.

Antetokounmpo will have his chance for a mega deal in Milwaukee after next season. He's an MVP finalist who was also a first-team All-Defensive selection for a Bucks team that had the best record in the league and hosted Game 5 of the Eastern Conference finals later Thursday.

"It's a pretty incredible season but he's much more focused on tonight and getting ready to go," Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer said.

Golden State's Klay Thompson, Washington's Bradley Beal and Minnesota's Karl-Anthony Towns were also in position to cash in with those lucrative extensions, but none was an All-NBA selection.

James has been a lock for most of his career, but was no sure thing after an injury-shortened first season in Los Angeles. His streak of 11 consecutive seasons as a first-team player, a record he shared with Karl Malone, came to an end. He did, however, make his 15th consecutive appearance on the All-NBA roster — joining Kobe Bryant as the only players to make that many teams in consecutive fashion. The 15th All-NBA nod also tied James with Bryant, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Tim Duncan for the most in league history.