

EAST OREGONIAN SPORTS

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A RUN FOR TOKYO

Enterprise High and Western Oregon University standout goes to Olympic trials

By RONALD BOND
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — David Ribich is set to make a run for the 2021 Olympics.

The former Enterprise High School and Western Oregon University standout will compete at the U.S. Olympic Trials inside Eugene's Hayward Field, vying to earn one of three spots in the men's 1,500-meter run to the Summer Olympic Games, which start next month in Tokyo.

The trials started June 18 and run through June 27. Ribich takes to the track for the first time Thursday, June 24, in the first round of the 1,500.

Competing in the trials has been a lifelong goal for Ribich, and he knows garnering one of those coveted top three spots will be a challenge.

"It's going to be one of the hardest teams to make for Tokyo," he said, speaking of a field that includes Matthew Centrowitz, the reigning Olympic champion in the 1,500. "Going into that race, it'll be a tall order."

Ribich enters the trials as an underdog, and as such, feels no pressure.

"I approach it just like that," he said of the dark horse role. "Try not to make it a bigger deal than it is. ... Taking it one moment at a time and letting myself be present in that race is what it's about."

He is ranked 28th out of 30 competitors in the 1,500 with a qualifying time of 3:37.44. He said, though, that time was from June 2019, and since then, he has been keeping up with some of the top-seeded runners in the race, including his Brooks Beasts Track Club teammate Henry Wynne.

"I've been working closely with him the last four months," Ribich said of Wynne.

Wynne has the third-best qualifying time at 3:34.08, and Ribich said in training, "We're not separated by more than a few decimals."

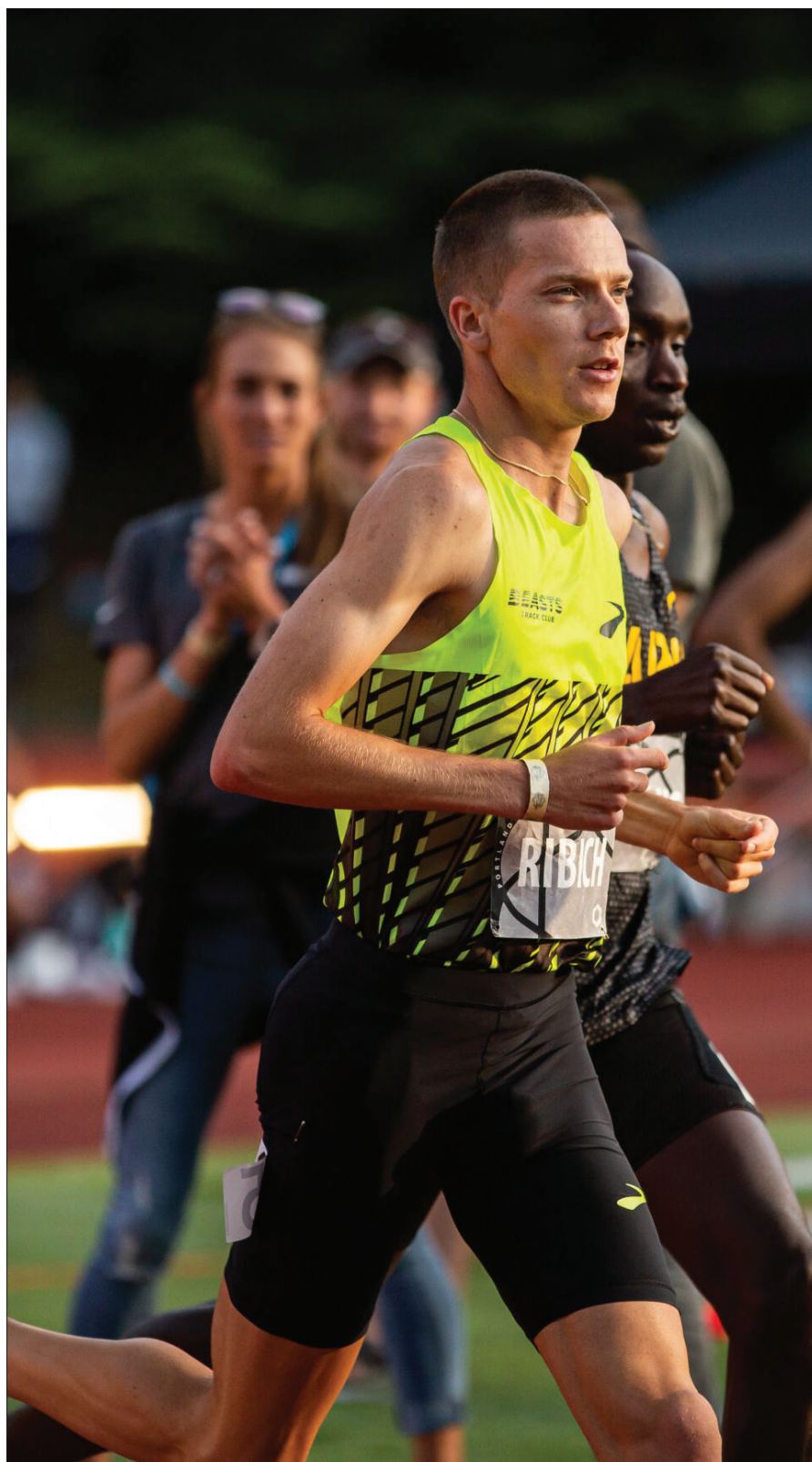
Centrowitz has the top qualifying time at 3:32.81. His winning time in 2016 was 3:50.00.

Competitors will have to make it through two rounds of the race just to reach the 1,500 final. The semifinal race is June 25, and the final is June 27. Of the 30 initial runners, 24 will reach the semifinals, but the field will be cut in half to 12 for the final race.

"First round is pretty much stay clear of contact (with other runners)," he said, calling the semifinal race much more "cutthroat."

He also plans to adopt a game plan that allowed him to run a personal best in the 5,000 at the Portland Track Festival last month and come within about a second of reaching the trials in that race.

"I've had race plans going into races, and more often than not I've failed them," he said. "My race plan (last month) was to run through the race and respond on instinct."



Jenny Reinhardt/Contributed Photo

David Ribich, shown competing at the Portland Track Festival in May, runs his first race in the Olympic Trials at Eugene's Hayward Field Thursday, June 24, 2021.

ON TELEVISION

NBC and NBCSN are televising the Olympic Track and Field Trials. NBCSN has coverage from 6-9 p.m. Thursday, June 24, and 2-5 p.m. June 25. NBC's coverage is 6-8 p.m. June 26 and 4-5:30 June 27. Ribich races at 6:04 p.m. June 24, at 4:05 p.m. June 25 if he reaches the semifinals, and at 5:10 p.m. June 27 if he reaches the finals.

He said he won't be trailing any specific runners, but instead will be looking for a key moment in the race — maybe "an opening or gap that needs to be filled, or a moment where it's time for me to take the lead."

"If I can be on in that moment, I think I could have a pretty deadly maneuver to put myself in position," he said, saying he needs to be hunting for that opportunity.

Ribich said it is "tough to say" what impact the coronavirus pandemic had on his training. On one hand, he was reaching a spike in his training program where most athletes under his coach take off. On the other hand, the shutdown

enabled him to focus on his health. He had a platelet-rich plasma injection done on his Achilles tendon to help heal some damage from wear and tear. For a while after he wasn't running, and instead spent more time working on an elliptical or swimming. He added the year was "needed."

Now?

"I've never felt more like myself, and never felt more confident," he said.

And while he may be an underdog, he is optimistic of his chances to run for a spot in Tokyo.

"My coaches, myself and my family believe that is a possibility," he said.



Cindy Potter/Eastern Oregon University, File
Megan Bunn competes for the Eastern Oregon University Mountaineers during a 2019 match.

Bunn takes over Hermiston volleyball

Coach was a two-time NAIA All-American at Eastern Oregon University

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian



Bunn

HERMISTON — When it comes to volleyball, Megan Bunn has found success at every level.

Hermiston High School is keen that winning attitude will continue as the Bulldogs' new coach.

"Coach Bunn has been successful in volleyball everywhere she has been," Hermiston Athletic Director Larry Usher said. "We are confident she will bring that competitive spirit to the Dawg House every day."

Bunn, 23, will replace Becky Wadkamper, who recently stepped down after one season.

"Becky had gotten hold of me," Bunn said. "I think she was looking for some knowledgeable coaches to take on and be a part of the staff. I didn't think she was trying to recruit me as a head coach. It was kind of a last-minute decision for her. Life happens. She let me know it was open and she recommended that I apply. I guess she saw some potential in me."

A 6-foot outside hitter, Bunn was standout at Eastern Oregon University, where she was a two-time NAIA All-American, and an assistant coach for the Mountaineers, who are a frequent participant at the NAIA Tournament.

While at Eastern, Bunn compiled 1,331 kills, the second most in program history. She also had 1,011 digs to become the first player in program history with at least 1,000 kills and 1,000 digs. She ranks sixth on the all-time digs list.

Her senior year, she was named to the NAIA Volleyball National All-Tournament team after posting three consecutive matches of 20 or more kills.

At the 2019 NAIA Tournament, she broke the EOU record for most kills in a match with 32 in a loss to Lindsey Wilson. She finished the season with 455 kills and 410 digs, making her a threat no matter where she was on the floor.

"I've definitely had a lot of experience," Bunn said. "I have seen a lot of things, I have been through a lot as a player, and I have grown through that. I have had success, but that has been because of the coaches I have had. Taking over a program, I hope I can do as good a job as my coaches."

A 2016 graduate of Banks High School, Bunn was a four-time first-team all-conference selection in the Cowapa League. She led the Braves to the state title her senior year and was named the Oregon 4A Player of the Year.

"I am young, and it's a big responsibility to take on," said Bunn, who also will teach fifth grade at Desert View Elementary School. "It's more about getting the girls excited about the game and sharing my passion for the game. I'm hoping to bring a fresh mindset to the game. I am very excited to start this program. A big reason I wanted to take the job is I have heard some really good things about the community. They have great support from everyone."

ON THE SLATE

Thursday, June 24
Prep boys basketball

1A state tournament: Nixyaawii

vs. TBD; Lone/Arlington vs. TBD

Prep girls basketball

1A state tournament: Nixyaawii

vs. TBD

Friday, June 25

No events scheduled

Saturday, June 26

Prep wrestling

Riverside at 3A state tournament, Redmond

Heppner, Echo/Stamfield at 2A

state tournament, Sweet Home

SPORTS SHORT

Hammon, D'Antoni, Billups to receive 2nd interviews for Trail Blazers job

By AARON FENTRESS
The Oregonian

PORTLAND — Brooklyn assistant coach Mike D'Antoni is among the finalists to replace Terry Stotts as the Portland Trail Blazers' next coach and is scheduled to interview for a second time, according to a report from ESPN's Adrian Wojnarowski.

San Antonio assistant

Becky Hammon became the first woman to be named a finalist for an NBA head coaching position and, according to Wojnarowski, the former WNBA All-Star held her second interview with the Blazers on Monday.

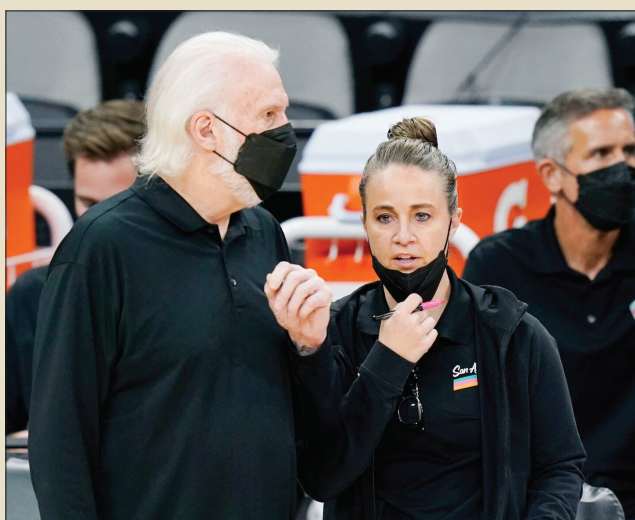
Hammon has spent the past seven seasons with the Spurs.

Also set to receive a second interview is Los Angeles Clippers assistant Chauncey

Billups, who reportedly is also a finalist for the vacant coaching position in Boston.

Other candidates that reportedly have interviewed for the Portland job are South Carolina coach Dawn Staley and Spurs vice president of basketball operations Brent Barry.

The Blazers and coach Terry Stotts agreed to part ways after nine seasons on June 4.



San Antonio head coach Gregg Popovich, left, talks with assistant coach Becky Hammon, right, during the second half of against Orlando on Friday, March 12, 2021.

Eric Gay/
The Associated Press, File