



Followed by teammates Paesen Timm and Konrad Raum, Jimmy Talley (left) starts his kick in the final lap of the 100.



Erick Giffen clears a height of 5 feet 11 inches in the high jump to win the competition.



Juice Clafin lets out a scream of excitement as he finishes in second in the 110 hurdles.

Boys

continued from B1

definitely what got me my time and when I saw the time after I finished it was mind blowing," Woods said. "It feels amazing. Especially all the support I'm getting from the school, it was great."

In the finals on Saturday, he cruised to a first-place finish and, according to Athletic.net, has the fastest time in 4A heading into the state meet.

"My main goal is to run my own races and stay relaxed. I mean, in total I want to win that state title for the 100 but I mean, it's all about focusing on myself. Getting better. I want a new personal best in the 100 around like a 10.8 is my goal for the end of the year," he said. Woods took fourth place in the event last year at state.

In the 200 it was more of the same for Woods as he won the prelims in comfortable fashion before running nearly a second faster in the finals to finish in a time of 22.49 – the second fastest time in 4A this year. While Woods had his way on the track, things were tense at the long jump pit.

"He makes it look easy. But

what a lot of people didn't see is when he won the long jump on his last attempt," said Knutson.

"It was a nail-biter," said Woods.

Heading into the finals, Woods was behind the first-place jumper, Austin Stevens, by half an inch. After two shorter jumps in the finals that didn't move him up, it was time for the final leap.

"The very last jump, just everything went good and I ended up jumping 21 feet 6 inches. And then his last jump (Stevens) accidentally put his hand back a little bit and it cost him a few inches and I won by two inches," said Woods. Heading into state, Woods has the third farthest jump of the year in 4A.

While Woods is in a position to succeed at state, he is still looking to the success of the team.

"Our guys' team is doing really well this year. There's a lot of young guys that came out and showed up. And we're looking at a chance of maybe getting a trophy or scoring high in the state meet at least. That's our goal this year. Just doing everything to score for our team and see where it goes," he said.

Krokus jumps to state

At the beginning of the season, Cottage Grove's Mitchell Krokus had no intention of going to state in the triple jump. With a wealth of long jumpers on the team, the coaches encouraged the sophomore Krokus to try out the event.

"When I tried it I did really good in my first jump and after the Ciochetti meet I was asking, 'Hey, am I going to go to districts?' And they looked at me and they were like, 'Dude, you could win districts,'" said Krokus.

On Saturday, he did just that as he jumped 40 feet eight and a half inches, almost a foot ahead of the second-place finisher, to lock in a spot for the state meet.

"Going to Hayward sounds like a dream," he said.

Two weeks before the district meet, Krokus' best jump was 37-3.5. But a personal best at Cottage Grove's Wally Ciochetti Invitational and districts has brought his own mark up over three and a half feet.

"I don't do it just to try and get first which is obviously the goal, but, like, just jumping is fun. I've always loved doing it, being active," said Krokus.

Distance trio dominates

Cottage Grove's Jimmy Tal-

ley, Paesen Timm and Konrad Raum left their mark on the district meet.

In the first day of competition, the trio ran the 3,000 where Talley took first, Timm second and Raum fourth. Talley, who was instructed to hold back and not take the lead, took the advice quite literally.

"So I got pushed into the lead but it was super windy so I didn't want to take the lead so I started walking basically and everyone stopped behind me," he said. "And then it happened a few times, three or four times, throughout the race. So in the last 500 meters everyone kicked it."

Talley ended up taking first in a time of 9:40.66.

In the 1,500 – a race that features Sister's 4A state leader Jordan Pollard who ran a time of 4:01 this season – it was a race for second place between the three Cottage Grove runners.

"Just try to get the second place. Don't go with Pollard, make sure we get the two, three and four spot which we managed to do successfully so that was pretty cool," said Talley.

Talley finished second, Raum third and Timm fourth. The race marked that Talley had qualified for both the 3,000 and the 1,500 but he quickly gave up his spot in the 1,500 to his teammate Raum.

"As soon as Jimmy crossed the finish line in the 1,500 he marched up to me with a grin on his face and said 'Konrad is going to state now too! The three of us (Jimmy, Konrad and Paesen) are going together!'" said Knutson in an email clarifying the state qualifiers. "Those guys love each other and Jimmy didn't even have to think twice

about giving his spot to Konrad. It's one of the main reasons this distance squad has been so great, they don't want to let each other down."

Hall takes field athlete of the meet

In the field events, the dominant face of districts was Hunter Hall. Cottage Grove's Hall finished first in shot put, second in javelin and fourth in discus racking up 23 points for the team. This high total led the coaches to vote Hall the field athlete of the year for the Sky-Em league.

"Hunter's fought some injuries and he's such a great kid. And I think sometimes he flies under the radar in the field events because it's not always out in front of everyone," said Knutson. "What a great kid and what a neat honor for him. He's worked pretty hard over the last few years so to go out with that is a special thing for him. I'm happy for him."

Giffen fights injuries to take first

Battling a nagging ankle, it was Cottage Grove's Erick Giffen winning the high jump title for the second year in a row.

"My goal was just to win. Obviously make it to the state meet but I wanted to go back-to-back winning our league," he said. "It's nice. I didn't jump well, obviously, but it just gives me another week to recover from my injury."

Giffen, who took fourth at state last year with a jump of 6-2, was one of three jumpers to clear 5-11 but because he had not missed at any other height, he took the title. His best jump

of the year this season is 6-1 but he has higher goals heading to state.

"I want to jump 6-4. Really bad. So that would be nice. But if I can't jump 6-4, I just want to place higher than I did last year," he said.

Clafin and Glenn qualify in hurdles

A pair of second place finishes from Juice Clafin (110 hurdles) and Hayden Glenn (300 hurdles) qualified them for state. Both individuals had already qualified as part of the winning 4x100 team and Clafin will also be competing in shot put.

As Clafin crossed the finish line behind Junction City's Tanner Barth, he let out a scream of excitement.

"Me and Barth have been talking like this almost the whole hurdle season. You know just to push. And we had this huge PR, both of us, finally getting into the 15s, it's amazing," he said.

After the race, Clafin now has the third fastest time in 4A.

In the 300, Glenn felt comfortable going into the race.

"I already knew that the third-place person was two seconds behind me. So I was really just fighting for first and second place. I got second but I'm really happy because I PR'd by almost half a second," he said.

With the eighth fastest time in 4A, he just has one goal heading into state.

"Just PR. What you have is the time you've ran so far and you can really only ask for a PR for yourself. Just going ahead and forward in each and every track meet you just kind of ask yourself to be better," said Glenn.



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GIRLS

continued from B1

best," Florez said about her race. "The first lap was really fast, at least for me. I don't start out super fast. So the second lap was just kind of hanging on."

Florez, in her first year of running track, is excited for the state meet.

"It's a really big honor. I'm a freshman and I wasn't expecting it at the beginning of this year," she said.

"I'm going to try and do my best. There's a lot of girls better than me, though so I mean it will be nerve wracking but an experience."

The 800 prelims will begin at 1:01 p.m. on Friday.

While Ladd, Boxberger and Florez were the only three Lions to qualify for the state meet, the team used depth to get enough points to finish third as a team.

"We qualified three girls for the state meet, which that's not a big number for us typically so the fact that the girls scored that many points with three through eight spots says a lot for how well they came in and competed," said head coach Ricky Knutson.

In the 100, 800 and pole vault the team was able to get three competitors to score to help get them to 110 points for the two-days of competition.



Sydney Boxberger competes in the triple jump on Saturday.

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