

Sports

WEEK AHEAD IN
HIGH SCHOOL
SPORTS

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22

■ **Baseball:** Class 4A playoffs: Philomath at Baker, 4 p.m., Baker Sports Complex.

FRIDAY, MAY 24

■ **Baseball:** Class 4A playoffs, tbd

AT A GLANCE

Siddoway wins state cutting title

HERMISTON — Eastern Oregon Rodeo Club rider Kylie Siddoway won the state girls cutting championship at the state finals at Hermiston and qualified for the national championships July 12-19 at Rock Springs, Wyo.

Her teammate Michelle Williams placed fourth and also qualified for nationals.

Eastern riders Maggie Mackenzie and Lexie Harrell placed sixth and seventh at the state competition.

Eastern riders place at Prineville

PRINEVILLE — Several Eastern Oregon Rodeo Club riders placed in their events May 3-4 at the Prineville high school rodeos.

In the first rodeo, Lexie Harrell was second in breakaway roping and ninth in team roping headers.

Michelle Williams was third in barrels, eighth in team roping headers and ninth in breakaway roping.

Logan Nedrow was 10th in breakaway roping, and Riggin Nedrow 10th in team roping healers.

In the second rodeo, Williams was first in barrels, fourth in goats and sixth in breakaway roping.

Logan Nedrow as fourth in breakaway roping, Harrell fifth in team roping headers and Maggie Mackenzie sixth in pole bending.

Kerns qualifies for national rodeo

BOZEMAN, Mont. — Former Powder Valley athlete Samantha Kerns has qualified for the national college rodeo.

Kerns, a Montana State University sophomore, qualified by winning the Big Sky Regional women's all-around championship. She also was regional reserve champion in goat tying.

Andersen places at CCC meet

ASHLAND — Annika Andersen, an OIT senior from Baker City, placed seventh in the women's 5,000 May 11 at the Cascade Collegiate Conference track and field meet at Southern Oregon.

Andersen finished the race in 18:58.73.

War of Will wins 144th Preakness

BALTIMORE — War of Will has won the 144th Preakness.

After finishing well out of the money in the Kentucky Derby from the No. 1 post, War of Will charged to victory after again starting from the rail on Saturday.

Everfast finished second and Owendale took third.

CLASS 4A STATE TRACK AND FIELD

Cassidy wins state title, breaks 37-year-old Baker High record

By Jayson Jacoby
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Kale Cassidy had only 100 yards left to run, but he was chasing 37 years of history. Cassidy, a Baker High School junior, was more concerned, however, with the competitor straining right beside him as they neared the finish line of the 3,000-meter race Friday at the Class 4A state meet.

That was La Grande senior Bennett Welch. It was a familiar sight, the two of them shoulder to shoulder in the final stretch. They finished one-two in both the 1,500 and 3,000 events at the district meet, with Cassidy winning the former race and Welch the latter.

"I just knew I could run with Bennett," Cassidy said on Sunday. "It's a friendship and a rivalry." With the finish in sight at Mount Hood Community College in Gresham, Cassidy, 16, knew what was at stake. A state championship.

And, quite possibly, a Baker High School record that had stood since 1982. "I just knew the only way I was going to win the race is if I gave it my all," Cassidy said. "So I just went for it."

And when his final step carried him past the line, Bennett several strides behind, Cassidy had everything he could have hoped for. The championship. And the record.

"It really overwhelmed me," Cassidy said. "At the start of the day that's not where I expected to be."

Cassidy, who finished seventh in the 3,000 at last year's state meet and in doing so set his personal record in the event at 9:10.89, certainly didn't anticipate that he would undercut that mark by almost 20 seconds — and run 30 seconds faster than his previous best this year.

"The moment felt amazing but I couldn't just put words to it," Cassidy said.

His time of 8:51.32 broke the BHS record of 8:55.36, set in 1982 by Dan Nelson.

Cassidy said that although he was aware of Nelson's record, he didn't think about it until he started the final lap and a trackside clock showed that his time with 400 meters to go was 7:50.

Cassidy said he had run the final lap in 64 seconds in an earlier race, so he knew Nelson's record was within range.

"That gave me a lot of inspiration," Cassidy said. "I just knew I had the energy to push myself early and not drop off during that last lap."

He had in fact felt strong from the first lap. "I was feeling pretty good, and that normally signifies how I'm going to feel for the rest of the race," Cassidy said.

When Welch, who finished third in the 3,000 last year, ran out to an early lead, Cassidy was ready to go with him.

Cassidy said he wanted to stay with Welch, but he was also concerned about being stuck in a group of tightly packed runners.

"If you get in the middle of the pack it's hard to maneuver," Cassidy said.

He and Welch set the pace for most of the race. "We work off each other in races," Cassidy said. "It's been me and him against each other all season, really the past two years."

Cassidy's landmark finish in the 3,000 wasn't the end of his busy weekend. On Saturday he returned to the track and finished fourth in the 1,500.

"It was a really tough race for me," Cassidy said.

"It really overwhelmed me. At the start of the day that's not where I expected to be."

— Baker's Kale Cassidy, after winning the 3,000-meter race at the Class 4A meet

Ronald Bond/The (La Grande) Observer

Baker's Kale Cassidy, left, passes La Grande's Bennett Welch in the 1,500-meter race at the district meet earlier this month. The pair also duelled in the 3,000 at the Class 4A meet Friday. Cassidy won the 3,000 and set a school record.



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