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Hermiston's golden girl



Hermiston's Jazlyn Romero throws the javelin Saturday at the 3A State Track and Field Championships in Tacoma. Romero won the state title with a throw of 144 feet, 11 inches.

Photo courtesy of Michael Nejara

By ANNIE FOWLER
STAFF WRITER

Jazlyn Romero knew from her first throw that Saturday would be a good day at the 3A State Track and Field Championships.

The Hermiston junior opened the javelin competition with a throw of 135 feet, 3 inches, and finished the event with a toss of 144-11 to win the state title by more than 15 feet at Mt. Tahoma High School in Tacoma.

"My body felt really good, and once I got warmed up, I was fine," Romero said. "I was really excited. Madi (Wilson) was like, 'It's go time. Are you ready?'"

Romero is the first Hermiston athlete to win an individual state title since the Bulldogs moved into the WIAA at the start of the school year.

The Hermiston dance team won a state title in Show in March.

"It's a big day for her," Hermiston coach Emilee Strot said. "When she got her award, they announced she was from Hermiston, Oregon. People were excited, and others had no idea why we were there."

Romero scratched her second throw in the finals, but any one of her other five throws would have won her the title.

"She had a great series," Strot said. "Her best of the year."

Kennewick's Madeline Gebers finished second with a toss of 128-8.

"I actually didn't pay too much attention to the other throwers," Romero said. "I just made sure my mark was at the top. The medal is pretty cool. At Hayward (Field), they let us bring our javelins on the podium, so I brought mine up."

Romero, who finished third at the Oregon 5A state championships last year as a sophomore with a throw of 134-3, has put in the work to be competitive in Washington.

She threw her PR of 151-9 at the Mid-Columbia Conference district meet in Hermiston, then threw 143 feet at the District 8 meet in Richland to earn the top seed to state.

Also competing Saturday was Kaylee Young in the long jump.

Young, who has jumped more than 17 feet this season, finished 13th with a mark of 16-0½ in the prelims. She did not make the finals.



Hermiston's Kaylee Young competes in the long jump Saturday at the 3A State Track and Field Championships in Tacoma. Young jumped 16-0½, but did not place.

Photo courtesy of Michael Nejara

Camille Duckett of Roosevelt won the event with a leap of 18-0½.

The competitors jumped in the pouring rain, but Young said she didn't mind. "It was very cold and rainy, but I enjoyed every second of it," Young said. "The environment was very positive. I got so many questions about where

Hermiston was. The officials wondered if they were going to take my marks and report them to Oregon."

Just a sophomore, Young hopes to make a return visit next year.

"I hope next year to get a spot on the podium," she said. "I'm ready to step back on the track now."

TRACK

Romero, Palzinski earn all-conference honors



Staff photo by Annie Fowler

Hermiston's Paige Palzinski (left) and Jazlyn Romero were named to the Mid-Columbia Conference all-conference track and field team.

By ANNIE FOWLER
STAFF WRITER

Hermiston's Jazlyn Romero and Paige Palzinski earned Mid-Columbia Conference all-conference honors for track.

Romero, a junior, was named to the first team for javelin, while Palzinski, a sophomore, was an honorable mention pick in the shot put.

The selections were based on regular-season times and distances.

Katherine Petsch of Kamiakin was named the Track Athlete of the Year, while Noelani Helm was voted the Field Athlete of the Year.

Both Romero and Palzinski qualified for the 3A state track meet in their respective events.

Hermiston did not have any boys selected to the team.

Walla Walla's Jared McAlvey (sprints/hurdles) and Patrick Utschinski (shot put/discus) were named the Athletes of the Year.

Hermiston's Palzinski takes 9th in the shot put



Photo courtesy of Michael Nejara

Hermiston sophomore Paige Palzinski prepares to throw the shot put.

By ANNIE FOWLER
STAFF WRITER

Hermiston sophomore Paige Palzinski finished ninth in the shot put Friday at the 3A State Track and Field Championships at Mt. Tahoma High School in Tacoma, missing the podium by a half-inch.

Palzinski's top mark of 40 feet, 7½ inches came on her final throw in the finals. Her first throw of 39-8¼ in the prelims put her into the finals.

Kiana Lino of Shorecrest won the event with a throw of 44-10.

"I am so proud of her," Hermiston coach Emilee Strot said of Palzinski. "It was her best series ever; she has to be happy with that. It's unfortunate that she missed the podium, but there was good competition. There were really good marks and a lot of the girls were excited, which sparks the competition."

The Hermiston boys 4x100 relay team of Broc Remmer, Thomas Reagan, DJ Wilson and Garrett Walchli finished 11th in Friday's prelims and did not make the finals.

The Bulldogs turned in a time of 44.65 seconds and finished seventh in the first heat. Gig Harbor had the top time in the prelims at 42.52.

Walchli finished 14th in the 200 prelims with a time of 23.14 seconds. Dorian Simon of Lakes had the fastest qualifying time of 21.54.

"It's exciting," Strot said. "Every kid we have with us here has the possibility of coming back next year. I think they are thankful for the experience."