

## Energy, effort lead to boys to 3<sup>rd</sup> place at Oak Harbor



All photo credits: Danielle DeFalco Athletes: Kevin Lewis to Andre Lewis

### By Kevin Gordon

OAK HARBOR — Eastwood High School's boys track and field team had plenty of great moments Friday night during the Oak Harbor Invitational. Among them:

- Senior Dalton Hesselbart won the pole vault approximately five minutes after landing hard in the box on his previous attempt.
- Classmate Keegan Herr charged to the lead in the 800 and held on for third place in a personal-record time.
- Freshmen Raif Johnson and Austin Miller, and sophomore John Stewart all

ran PRs in their distance races.

- And the team's workhorses — senior Bryce DeFalco; junior Kaiden Sanchez; and sophomores Andre Lewis, Kevin Lewis and Dayquan Oliver — all performed well during increased duty.

Those performances, along with many others, added up to a third-place finish for the Eagles. Eastwood totaled 97 points to finish behind Toledo St. John's with 156 and Oak Harbor with 122 in the 12-team meet.

Eastwood won the combined team championship with 202.5 points, based on the scores of the girls and boys teams added together. Oak Harbor was second with 179.5, while Margaretta was third with 174.

"The team energy was phenomenal once again," DeFalco said. "We pour more into each other, the more the meet goes on, the more we're around each other. Because of that, success follows.

"Everyone continues to give effort, and everyone continues to give a little bit more because of the environment and the culture we've been able to establish around the team," DeFalco added. "The relentless competitiveness is a huge part of our team." Hesselbart was the Eagles' only winner, but the Eagles scored in 16 of the 17 events, and had two scorers in seven of the 13 non-relay events.

Schools could enter up to two athletes in the non-relays, and one team in each of the relays. Points were awarded on a 10-8-6-5-4-3-2-1 basis.

Eastwood totaled 19 PRs in the meet.

"Everyone had a PR mindset, and everyone performed well," Andre Lewis said.

"What stuck out to me was our energy and our attitude," Eastwood head coach Brian Sabo said. "The guys were excited to compete. They were excited to be around each other. That meant a lot because we hadn't discussed it. We expect it and that's what we want. When you see it happen, you really appreciate it."

The meet was held on one of the best weather days of the season, which has been full of rain, chilly and windy conditions.



Athletes: Bryce DeFalco to Kaiden Sanchez

“That’s what you get when you have good weather,” DeFalco said. “Today was a breath of fresh air, literally and figuratively. You know what you’re actually capable of in ideal conditions. It’s a taste of what you’re capable of or what you can expect.”

Next for the Eagles are the Northern Buckeye Conference Championships at Otsego, followed by the district meet the following week back at Oak Harbor.

“This shows us what we’re capable of at NBCs and beyond,” Andre Lewis

said. “The competition was good here, and that pushed us to do our best and improve.”

### Hesselbart bounces back

Hesselbart cleared 14-3 in a jump-off to win the pole vault against Fremont St. Joseph sophomore Sam Paeth. The jump-off is the pole vault’s version of overtime.

Hesselbart and Paeth both cleared 14-0 on their first attempt, but both missed all three tries at 14-6 to create the tie. Both received a fourth attempt at 14-6, and both missed. The bar then was lowered to 14-3. Paeth went first and missed, Hesselbart then cleared the height to finish first. The boys pole vault was the last event to finish in the meet, and the boys and girls from both schools watched the jump-off.

Hesselbart’s winning vault came shortly after he landed in the box in front of the pit on his fourth attempt at 14-6. Even though the box is surrounded by a padded collar, Hesselbart still landed hard.

“At that point, you don’t have anything to lose, so I gave everything I had,” Hesselbart said. “That was a harder vault than usual (at 14-3), but I was happy I got it done.” Hesselbart even put a curve into the bar as he hit it with his stomach on the way down, but the bar remained on the standards.

“I had no idea if it was going to stay on,” Hesselbart said. “Sometimes, you brush the bar and it falls. Sometimes, you hit it pretty good, and it stays on. That was a huge relief when I saw it was staying on. I was very happy, very pleased.”

Hesselbart’s PR of 14-6 came earlier this season, and he cleared 14-3 for the second time, the first coming last season.

“To come back and nail (14-3) says a lot about him,” Sabo said. “He’s a tough kid, but that was real quality. It was a fun environment and a good way to finish the meet for us.”





### **Herr runs well in 800**

Herr surged from fourth place to the lead with 300 meters to go in the 800, and then held on to finish third in 2:09.19, a PR. His previous best was 2:12.85. Herr ran the first lap in 60.0.

Lake junior Connor McClellan won the race in 2:06.03, 1.1 seconds ahead of runner-up and Oak Harbor freshman Bodee Miller and 3.16 seconds ahead of Herr.

“He just went,” Sabo said. “He said he had to be in first place sometime. He said, ‘I’m either going to win it or I’m going to make those other guys better.’ He was coachable. We asked him to go out in 60 something, and he went out in 60.

“The next time he’s in that position, his body is going to remember that,” Sabo added. “This will help him.”

Miller had a PR in the 800, running a time of 2:14.82 for eighth place. His previous best was 2:18.35.

In the 3,200, Johnson had a monster 35-second PR of 11:01.51 for seventh place. His previous best was 11:36.77. Stewart was seventh in the 3,200 with a PR of 11:13.75, lowering his previous best of 11:17.62

“Those guys all went after it and stayed in it,” Sabo said. “They kept fighting, and I appreciate that.”

### **Seconds, thirds and fourths**

Oliver cleared 5-8 to finish second in the high jump. The 4x100 relay team of senior Anthony Molina, junior Kaiden Sanchez, DeFalco and Oliver was second in 44.95, beating the team’s previous season best of 45.35.

Junior Braden Bowdle finished third in the discus with a PR distance of 139-10. His previous best was 138-8.

Sophomore Jesse Poiry had a PR of 16.05 in the 110 hurdles for fourth place. His previous best was 16.09. DeFalco was fourth in the long jump, 19-8.

The 4x200 team of Sanchez, Kevin Lewis, Andre Lewis and Oliver was fourth in 1:32.85, a season best over its previous time of 1:38.

“We asked some guys to do multiple events,” Sabo said of the workhorses. “They’ve earned it, doing three, four events. You’re always bouncing around, going back and forth between events. It’s really tough to do. The point to doing it sometimes is you might have to do it in the league meet or maybe the district meet. “

The 4x800 team of freshman Henry Howard, Kerr, and sophomores Connor Schramm and A.J. O’Brien was fourth in 8:55.76, a season best over its previous time of 9:07.

### **Even more scorers**

Placing fifth for the Eagles were:

- Sanchez, 100, 11.50 (pr).
- Oliver, 200, 23.39 (pr).
- Poiry, 300 hurdles, 41.79 (pr).
- Kevin Lewis, long jump, 19-7½.
- Freshman Hunter Lauer, shot put, 44-9.

Placing sixth for the Eagles were:

- Andre Lewis, high jump 5-6.
- Junior Ian Sibberson, shot put, 44-7½.

Placing seventh for the Eagles were:

- Sanchez, 200, 23.57 (pr).
- Andre Lewis, 110 hurdles, 16.54; 300 hurdles, 41.88 (pr).

## **NEXT**

The Eagles host their annual junior varsity invitational Tuesday and compete in the Northern Buckeye Conference Championships Saturday at Otsego.

## **OAK HARBOR INVITATIONAL RESULTS**

<https://www.baumspage.com/track/trevent.php?peventid=251&table=C>

## **EASTWOOD JUNIOR VARSITY INVITATIONAL INFORMATION**

<https://www.baumspage.com/track/trevent.php?peventid=889&table=C>

## **NORTHERN BUCKEYE CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIPS INFORMATION**

<https://www.baumspage.com/track/trevent.php?peventid=149&table=C>