

## Haas, 4x200 relay advance to regional finals

**By Kevin Gordon**

LEXINGTON — Aubrey Haas couldn't stop smiling Thursday night.

And Saylor King, Emma Downs, Mikayla Hoelter and Julia Sabo were flashing huge smiles, too. Haas advanced to the 300 hurdles final, and Eastwood High School's 4x200 relay team qualified for the finals of its event during Thursday's first day of the Division II regional track and field meet at Lexington High School.

They'll compete for a berth in the state meet on Saturday. The top four finishers in each event at the regional qualify for the state meet June 4-5 at Pickerington North High School. The 4x200 final is at 12:45 p.m., followed by the 300 hurdles final at 1:45 p.m.

Haas qualified for the finals of the 300 hurdles with a personal-record time of 48.14, lowering her previous best of 48.39 during the Eastwood Relays April 23. She finished second in the first heat to automatically qualify for the finals.

The top two finishers in each heat and the next four fastest times overall qualified for the finals. "The race was really good. I felt strong the whole time," said Haas, who almost ran a PR in the district final at Oak Harbor High School where she was timed in 48.40.

Haas held off Central Catholic sophomore Jayla Watson, who was third in the heat at 48.18. The winner was Johnstown Northridge senior Olyvia Ashbrook with a time of 45.36.

"The Central Catholic girl stumbled coming over the last hurdle, and I just made sure I got to the finish line the fastest way I could," Haas said.

Haas' time was the fourth fastest of the eight finalists.

"She went out hard and looked fresh," Eastwood head coach Nikki Sabo said. "She attacked and had a season-best time."

Haas, who is in her first season of hurdling, ranked seventh on Eastwood's all-time Top 10 list entering the regional. Thursday's clocking moved her even closer to the sixth-place time of 48.08 run by Jessica Primeau in 2000.

"Coming in, I knew the 300 hurdles would be super, super competitive," Haas said. "We'd all be right there at the finish. I've been struggling with PRing, and it paid off tonight.

"Not making the finals of 100 hurdles to motivated me in the 300 hurdles to really push out and leave it all out there," Haas added. "I knew if I was going to make it out, it would be in the 300 race. Any time I thought about giving up or was going to fall down, I found another gear and kept going."

Now, she's one race from qualifying for her sport's showcase event.

"My goal is to go out and PR and have fun, and enjoy it, give it my best," Haas said of the finals.

"Getting to state is definitely in mind. I know it would be crazy, but it's not that far out there. I know I can do it. I have to believe in myself and use the same energy I had tonight."

Haas had a time of 16.76 in the 100 hurdles, the 12<sup>th</sup> fastest of the semifinalists.

### 4x200 relay advances

The 4x200 team of King, Downs, Hoelter and Sabo advanced to the finals with a time of 1:48.68, the seventh fastest of the eight finalists. The time was Eastwood's third-best of the season, and just off the Eagles' season best of 1:47.35 at the Oak Harbor district.

“They did a nice job. They ran a solid time,” Nikki Sabo said.

Eastwood’s district time was the ninth fastest of the 16 regional qualifiers.

“It’s really exciting,” Downs said. “We were ninth coming in and to know we pushed ourselves to move up two spots is just awesome.”

“The race felt good,” King said. “Making the finals really is big for our confidence.”

Hoelter is a junior, Downs and Sabo are sophomores, and King is a freshman.

“It was cool, a lot of fun to run at the regional and to qualify for the finals makes it even nicer,” Julia Sabo said. “We ran really well. The race felt really good.”

The Eagles took another run at the school’s all-time Top 10 list in the event. A time of 1:48.06 or better is needed to for the Top 10.

“We’d like to be in the Top 10, and we’re getting close to that,” Downs said.

Now, the Eagles are looking for another PR on Saturday.

“Our goal is to finish in the top four or PR,” Hoelter said. “A PR will put us in the mix to get to state.”

### **More results**

Eastwood’s Ava Kiefer made the finals of the shot put and finished ninth with a throw of 38-5¼.

The Eagles’ 4x800 relay team of sophomore Talia Baum, freshman Amelia Ward, junior Maisy Stevenson and freshman Avery Bowman was 10<sup>th</sup> in 10:02.75.

Eastwood’s 4x400 relay team of Hoelter, Haas, Stevenson and Ward was 13<sup>th</sup> in 4:14.93, and didn’t qualify for the finals.

### **Saturday’s lineup**

In addition to Haas in the 300 hurdles and the 4x200 relay team, three Eastwood individuals will compete in the regional Saturday — Julia Sabo in the pole vault, Bowman in the 1,600 and Ward in the 800.

The pole vault is at 11 a.m., with the 1,600 at 1:05 p.m. and the 800 at 1:55 p.m.

### **Day 1 wrapup**

The Eagles performed well during the first day of the regional and gained experience competing in another big meet. Eastwood’s young team has performed well all season.

“A lot of really good things happened today,” Nikki Sabo said. “This was a big learning experience, that’s for sure. Today was a totally different ballgame when you’re at the regional. The level of competition is awesome. They rose to the occasion and learned from it.

“It’s a motivator for next year. They have to set their goals higher because they have the ability to accomplish them. It’s a good experience to come here and see what it’s like. They’re seeing the competition and learning from them. I’m looking forward to next year, but we have work to do on Saturday.”

Complete results of the meet are available at:

<https://www.baumspage.com/track/trevent.php?peventid=1130&table=C>