

Smith, Andre Lewis, Poiry qualify for boys regionals



All Photo credits: Danielle DeFalco, Athlete: Noah Smith

By Kevin Gordon

OAK HARBOR — Even a week ago, Noah Smith wasn't even sure he'd be healthy enough to compete in the district high school track and field meet.

Once the Eastwood senior was cleared to run, he capitalized on his opportunity.

Smith — who pulled his left hamstring earlier this season — finished third in the 400 to qualify for the regional during Saturday's final day of the Division II district meet at Oak Harbor.

He ran a personal-record time of 51.49 to earn one of the four automatic berths to the regional at Lexington High School May 25 and 27. The top four finishers in each event at the district meet qualified for Lexington, located near Mansfield.

Smith was one of three regional qualifiers for the Eagles Saturday, joining sophomores Andre Lewis and Jesse Poiry, who finished third and fourth, respectively, in the 300

hurdles.

Four other Eagles — senior Bryce DeFalco and sophomore Kevin Lewis in the long jump; senior Dalton Hesselbart and freshman Cullen Shank in the pole vault — qualified for the regional during Thursday's first day of the district.

The Eagles finished third as a team, totaling 77 points to finish behind Oak Harbor with 115 and Perkins with 110.

Smith advances in the 400

Smith ran a terrific race with his 51.49 clocking, beating his PR of 53.29 during the Napoleon Invitational April 15.

He originally injured his hamstring March 6 during outdoor practice, and then tweaked it three times during the season and ran only three races.

He reinjured the hamstring running the 100 during a dual meet March 28 and then injured it again during the 400 at Napoleon, a race he didn't run at full speed in an attempt to remain healthy. He then injured it again six days later at the Eastwood Relays during the 4x100 relay.

"This has been the most satisfied I've ever felt after a race, even after last year's district when I qualified for regionals in three events," Smith said.

Smith was a regional qualifier last year in the 110 hurdles, the 200 and the 4x100 relay. He didn't run in the Northern Buckeye Conference Championships May 13, but was cleared to run in the district meet. He ran three 60-meter dashes and a 150-meter dash

at full strength in one practice early last week, and knew he was ready to run in the district meet.

“This race is the most meaningful of them all because of the journey I’ve been on the whole year,” Smith said. “All of the support, everywhere I’ve walked, has been great. The whole community has been great. My teammates have been great. My coaches have been great. Everyone has been so very supportive. It’s awesome. I’m very blessed. I am so happy right now.”

Smith qualified for the finals with a time of 53.47 during Thursday’s preliminaries. The time was the sixth-fastest of the eight finalists.

“I’m surprised I ran this well,” Smith said. “I went out and said I’m either going to go out and get hurt, or I’m going to win, and I almost won the thing,” Smith said. “My goal today was 52.3, which would have been phenomenal, and I’m happy with 52.5. To run a whole second faster than (53.47), I surprised myself.”

Smith thought he had a chance to win going into the final curve, but Clyde sophomore Damarius Chrisman held off Smith to win in 50.01 and Oak Harbor senior Owen Miller also held off Smith to finish second in 50.34.

“For a second, until I saw (Chrisman and Miller) after the last curve, I thought I was going to win it,” Smith said. “I’m happy to qualify for regionals. That’s all I really cared about, and finishing a race healthy, I really pushed it. I’m so happy. I’m so relieved.”



Andre Lewis

Andre Lewis, Poiry qualify in 300 hurdles

Andre Lewis and Poiry are headed to Lexington after running PR times in the finals.

Both ran well and finished strong with Lewis finish third in 41.40, and Poiry placing fourth in 41.65. Lewis’ previous best was 41.88, and Poiry’s was 41.79.

Oak Harbor freshman Wyatt Augsburger won in 40.60, while Perkins sophomore Owen Stewart was second in 40.66.

“I’m glad both of us advanced. Both of us fought hard,” Poiry said.

“It’s been my main focus to place at districts and get to regionals after I got fifth place last year,” Andre Lewis said. “That’s been in my head a lot this year. (Poiry’s) pushed me all year, and we fought hard to the end. It’s great we both made it to regionals.”

During the preliminaries, Andre Lewis had the third-fastest time at 42.06, and Poiry was sixth at 42.70.

“I was really happy with the way I ran,” Poiry said. “I was hungry for that race. The prelims didn’t go as well as I hoped they would, but I came in with a better attitude today, and



Jesse Poiry

everything worked out. I came into the finals really hungry after the way the prelims went, and I fought hard for my spot.

“I came out faster than I thought I would, so I was more tired at the end, but it worked out,” Poiry added. “You’re looking to finish in the top four to move on to regionals.” “I felt good. I gave my all the first 200,” Andre Lewis said. “The last 100, it comes to down to who wants it more, and Jesse and I fought hard to the finish.”

Poiry and Andre Lewis both placed in the 110 hurdles by finishing in the top eight, but didn’t qualify for the regional. Poiry was sixth in 16.06, one place ahead of Lewis at 16.69.

The finals of the 110 hurdles and the 300 hurdles were approximately 70 minutes apart.

“It’s not what I wanted, but sometimes you have to fail to succeed,” Poiry said of the 110 race. “You need to have a short memory and clear your mind after an event

doesn’t go well. You have to forget about what just happened and focus on your next event.”

“You have to put your previous events behind you and concentrate on the next one,” Andre Lewis said.

The two have been teammates since the seventh grade when they started hurdling.

“It’s amazing running against him,” Poiry said. “We’ve always pushing each other to improve, whether it’s in practice or a meet. That helps both of us improve.”



Kaiden Sanchez

EAGLES ALSO SCORING IN THE DISTRICT/TOP 8

100: 6) junior Kaiden Sanchez, 11.56.

200: 5) junior Dayquan Oliver, 23.21 (pr, beating his time of 23.39); 6) Sanchez, 23.68.

1,600: 6) sophomore Connor Schramm, 4:59.30 (pr, beating his time of 5:01.00).

3,200: 7) freshman Raif Johnson, 11:03.84.

4x100 RELAY: 5) team of Sanchez, Oliver, Andre Lewis and senior Bryce DeFalco, 44.35 (season best, beating its time of 44.95).

DISCUS: 8) Braden Bowdle, 137-0.

HIGH JUMP: 6) tie, Oliver, Andre Lewis, 5-8.

EAGLES ALSO COMPETING SATURDAY

800: senior Keagan Herr, 2:10.69; and freshman Austin Miller, 2:14.05.

1,600: freshman Henry Howard, 5:13.58.

3,200: sophomore John Stewart, 11:07.87 (pr, beating his time of 11:10.48).

DISCUS: junior Ian Sibbersen, 110-6.

OAK HARBOR DISTRICT RESULTS

<https://www.baumspage.com/tf/nw/2012/oakharbor/2023/Saturday%20Results.htm>

LEXINGTON REGIONAL INFORMATION

<https://oh.milesplit.com/meets/550111-ohsaa-division-2-region-6-lexington-2023>