

Newsome, 4x800 relay win girls district championships

By Kevin Gordon

OAK HARBOR — Eastwood High School's girls 4x800 relay team of Talia Baum, Leah Emch, Kayden Firsdon and Haley Sponaugle crossed three items off its goal list Thursday night.

And Olivia Newsome achieved two of her goals in the discus.

The 4x800 relay and Newsome both won district championships to qualify for the Division II track and field meet. Newsome's first-place finish in the discus gave her back-to-back district championships in the event, while the 4x800 team won with the eighth-fastest time in school history.

The top four finishers in each event at the district meet advance to the regional at Lexington High School, located near Mansfield. The regional is May 25 and 27.

The finals of the discus, high jump and the 4x800 relay and the running semifinals of the 100, 200, 400, 100 hurdles, 300 hurdles, and the 4x100, 4x200 and 4x400 relays were held Thursday.

The district concludes Saturday with the remaining field events at 10:30 a.m. and the remaining running finals at noon.

4x800 wins easily

The 4x800 team won easily in 10:00.98, beating its previous best of 10:08.69 last Saturday when they were second in the Northern Buckeye Conference championship. The Eagles won the district race by almost 18 seconds after Baum opened a comfortable lead during the first leg.

The NBC time made the Eagles the No. 1 seed among the eight teams to run the 4x800 at Oak Harbor, almost 21 seconds better than the second-seeded team.

Baum and Firsdon are seniors, while Sponaugle is a junior and Emch is a sophomore.

"We ran very well," Firsdon said. "It's a really good mindset going into the regionals."

"We had a lot of energy and showed what we can do," Baum said. "Everything came together for us."

Baum built the Eagles big lead with a season best split,

"I want to see how far ahead I can get," Baum said. "If there's not a lot of competition, it's how far I can get ahead. If runners are ahead of me, I try to get as close to the leaders as I can to help out our other runners. I try to go out hard."

Emch, Firsdon and Sponaugle then didn't let up and maintained the lead.

"You have to stay engaged mentally," Sponaugle said. "If you have girls in front of you, you lap them and then try to move in front of the next girl. It's only a 2½-minute race for each of us individually, and you know you're going to hurt, so you just keep going."

"We keep attacking," Emch said. "We try to run the same every race. We try to control what we can control, and that's ourselves. We can't control how anyone else runs. You keep pressing, running your best.

You have to be comfortable being uncomfortable."

The Eagles' NBC time was just over five seconds from cracking the Top 10 list until they made the list with their district run.

"It's exciting," Emch said of the Top 10. "We've worked really hard this season, so it's well deserved. I knew all of us would go out hard today and run well, but I wasn't sure we'd run that time."

Thursday's time by the Eagles was the fifth-fastest by schools feeding into the Lexington regional. Huron is first at 9:28.53, followed by Shelby 9:57.63, Shaker Heights Hathaway Brown 9:58.48, Columbus School for Girls 9:59.19 and Eastwood.

"We're determined to run in the 9:50s and really compete," Firsdon said of the regional. "We can get there, especially with the competition we'll be facing because good competition helps you run faster."

The Eagles have fared well during the outdoor season this spring after they ran well during the winter indoor season. Emch and Sponaugle helped Eastwood qualify for the Division II-III state indoor meet in the 4x800 relay, and both ran with Baum on the cross country team which qualified for the Division II state meet last fall.

"Being on the all-time Top 10 list in the 4x8 is great," Sponaugle said. "I never expected to be on the 4x8 team, let alone be on the 4x8 Top 10 list. My attitude had a 180-degree change this season. My first two years, going into track season, I was running track to stay in shape for cross country. But this winter, I was ready for track. I was ready to go fast. Something just clicked during our indoor season and here we are."

Sponaugle ran the eighth-fastest time in school history in the 1,600 earlier this season with a time of 5:31.24

"My cross seasons have always been getting better every year, but my track seasons pretty much just stayed the same. I didn't PR at all," Sponaugle said. "This year, I've already PR'd by 17 seconds. Even during indoors, I ran faster than I ever thought I would. It's been a nice confidence boost."

Newsome wins another district championship

Newsome threw 121-10 to win the district championship and edge Perkins junior Olivia Mason by two inches.

"I'm really happy with how it went, but I'm still not happy with the distances I threw," Newsome said. "But I finished first, so I'm happy with that, and I'm excited to be going to regionals. Winning the district again and is great, and winning last year gave me a lot of confidence coming into today."

Newsome is a returning state qualifier in the discus, and she's striving to break the Eastwood of 141-2 set by Eagle assistant coach Whitney Recker in 2004. Newsome ranks second-time at Eastwood with a throw of 134-11.

"A good distance is always nice, but as long as I finished in the top four, I was going to be happy," Newsome said.

Eastwood freshman Kennedy Ameling finished ninth in the discus with a throw of 94-7. She also finished seventh in the NBC meet.

"I was so excited for her, and I'm very proud of her," Newsome said. "She's done well all season. The more meets I went to as a freshman, the more confident I got, and it'll be the same for her. You see the competition going into the next year and you know the atmosphere, so this will be good for next year. She'll know what it's like, and she can calm down and relax."

High jump results

Eastwood sophomore Addie Hartman cleared 4-8 to tie for eighth place in the high jump, and classmate Lilly Mullholand was 10th, also clearing 4-8. Hartman matched her PR of 4-8.

EAGLES ADVANCING TO SATURDAY'S FINALS

(The eight fastest times advanced from the semifinals)

400: 5) Mullholand, 1:02.14 (pr, beating her time of 1:03.00); and 6) sophomore Emerson Sheets, 1:05.63 (pr, beating her time of 1:08.61).

100 hurdles: 6) sophomore Mallory Sandberg, 17.24.

4x100 relay: 4) team of junior Saylor King, senior Emma Downs, sophomore Kyrie Henline and senior Julia Sabo, 51.18 (the 10th-fastest time in Eastwood history. The Eagles' previous best this season was 51.47. Eastwood has run a season-best time in the 4x100 in three straight races).

4x200 relay: 4) team of Sabo, King, Henline and Downs, 1:49.26 (season best, betting their time of 1:51.95). The Eagles ran a season-best time in the 4x200 for the sixth straight race).

4x400 relay: 3) team of Baum, Mullholand, Henline and junior Amelia Ward, 4:17.11 (season best, beating its time of 4:19.52. Baum and Henline both ran PR splits).

EAGLES ALSO COMPETING THURSDAY

100: junior Joelle Jared, 14.27 (pr, beating her time of 14.60; and sophomore Bella Provo, 14.70).

200: King, 28.65; and junior Lila Kiefer, 29.16 (season best, beating her time of 29.84).

110 hurdles: freshman Makenna Nelson, 19.29.

300 hurdles: Sandberg, 53.14 (pr, beating her time of 53.16); and Provo, 54.91.

OAK HARBOR DISTRICT RESULTS AND INFORMATION

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

LEXINGTON REGIONAL INFORMATION

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

TRACK AND FIELD MEET PHOTOS

We appreciate Danielle DeFalco and thank her for sharing her photo talents with us. Visit her page to check out photos from previous meets. She does her best to get to as many events as she can, as she is just one person, and is a mom too. Thank you, Dani!!

<https://www.facebook.com/danielle.koprowski.1>