

Girls 4x800 relay wins district championship

By Kevin Gordon

OAK HARBOR — Eastwood High School's girls 4x800 relay team fashioned another impressive run Thursday.

The team of Talia Baum, Amelia Ward, Maisy Stevenson and Avery Bowman earned a Division II district championship at Oak Harbor High School and advanced to next week's regional meet at Lexington High School.

The team had a winning time of 10:05.26, Eastwood's second-best of the season.

The run by the 4x800 team was part of a solid day for the Eagles, who had 13 personal records. The top four finishers in each event qualified for the regional, with the fifth- through eighth-place finishers scoring team points.

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

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

Thursday's field events saw Olivia Newsome and Hannah Friend place in the discus, and Stevenson place in the high jump.

Also for the Eagles, Aubrey Haas qualified for the finals of the 100 hurdles and 300 hurdles, Reilly Might advanced to the finals of the 100 hurdles, and the 4x100, 4x200 and 4x400 relay teams all qualified for the finals.

"It was a solid night, that's for sure," said Eastwood head coach Nikki Sabo, whose team has performed consistently well all season. "That's setting us up for a good Saturday."

Eastwood is third in the team standings with 20 points, trailing Oak Harbor with 26 and Perkins with 24.

The Eagles have a young team, and Thursday's district competition provided their athletes with some valuable experience.

"For so many of them, this is their first district competition," Sabo said. "They got to see what that was like. Now, they understand why we go to some of the bigger meets that we go to, to prepare them for meets like today. They came and competed."

District champs

The Eagles' 4x800 team won comfortably, building a margin of 6.25 seconds over runner-up Perkins and 9.15 seconds over third place Oak Harbor. Ward and Stevenson ran PR splits.

Stevenson is a junior, while Baum is a sophomore, and Ward and Bowman are freshmen.

"To win a district championship is pretty impressive," Sabo said. "They were a little disappointed with their time, but they're moving on, and they competed hard. That's all you can ask."

The Eagles' best time this season is 9:57.40, the fastest of the seven teams in the district. The time also ranked second in the region and 14th in the state going into the district meets. The top four finishers in each event at the regional qualify for state.

"Winning is really nice. Being district champs is a really good feeling," Baum said.

“Our team did a really good job,” Bowman said.

The time was even more impressive because it was run on what was easily the hottest day of the season.

“We tried to stay relaxed and not let the heat get to us,” Bowman said. “You could tell the heat was affecting the other runners during the race. The biggest thing was staying calm and taking care of our breathing. We did a really good job of not letting the heat get to us. We tried to stay out of the sun as much as possible, and we made sure we stayed hydrated.”

“To get our second-best time is nice,” Baum said. “We were expecting to run about 10 minutes. I’m proud of the time we ran. With the circumstances, we did really well.”

Eastwood hadn’t broken the 11-minute mark in several years until it ran a time of 10:17.25 in the Napoleon Invitational April 17. The Eagles have been under the 11-minute mark in their last five races, including the 9:57.40 clocking at the Northern Buckeye Conference Championships Saturday.

The sub-10-minute time was Eastwood’s first since 2014 and was the seventh fastest in school history.

“We can still run even faster,” Bowman said. “We’ll have even better competition next week to really push us as individual runners. I’m excited about the regional.”

“We thrive on good competition,” Baum said. “We can definitely come close to or even beat our season best with the good competition we’ll see next week.”

Field event finals

Newsome, a sophomore, was fifth in the discus with a throw of 108-10, and Friend, a senior, was sixth with a distance of 107-7.

Stevenson finished sixth in the high jump, clearing 4-10.

Relay results

The 4x400 team of Mikayla Hoelter, Haas, Stevenson and Ward qualified for the finals with a season-best time of 4:13.42, the third fastest of the eight finalists Eastwood’s previous best was 4:15.75 at the NBC meet.

All four ran PR splits. Hoelter and Haas are juniors.

“Their times just keep dropping,” Sabo said. “They’re learning how to compete in their race because it’s a different animal. You have to put yourself out there and give it everything you have.”

Eastwood’s 4x400 team is closing in on a spot on the school’s all-time Top 10. A time of 4:09.58 or better is needed to qualify.

The 4x200 team of sophomores Julia Sabo and Emma Downs, Hoelter and Haas ran its fastest time of the season, 1:48.48, to advance to the finals. The Eagles’ previous best was 1:52.41, giving the team a season best by just over three seconds.

The time also was the sixth fastest of the finalists, and just missed being the 10th-fastest time in school history. A time of 1:48.06 or better is needed to make the Top 10.

The 4x100 team of Hoelter, Julia Sabo, Downs and freshman Saylor King had a time of 52.09 to advance to the finals. The time was the fifth fastest of the finalists and just off Eastwood’s season best of 52.03.

Advancing to the finals

Individuals qualifying for the finals for the Eagles were:

- 100 hurdles, Haas, 16.38, third fastest of the finalists; and Might, a freshman, 17.58, eighth fastest. Haas' time was a PR, improving her previous best of 16.54. Haas' time also was the seventh-fastest in school history, and her time of 16.54 already had ranked 10th on Eastwood's all-time list.
- 300 hurdles, Haas, 49.04, third fastest of the finalists.

PR performances

Posting PRs for the Eagles were:

- 100, freshmen Lila Kiefer, 13.95, and Kayla Buehler, 14.07. Kiefer's previous best was 14.41, while Buehler's was 14.33.
- 400, junior Addie Young, 68.38, and sophomore Kayden Firsdon, 68.68. Young's previous best was 68.89, while Firsdon's was 69.97.

Complete results of the meet are available at:

<https://www.baumspage.com/track/trevent.php?peventid=1095&table=C>