

Sabo qualifies for state in pole vault



By Kevin Gordon

OAK HARBOR — Julia Sabo is headed to her sport's showcase event.

The Eastwood High School sophomore qualified for the Division II state track and field championships in the pole vault with a third-place finish during Saturday's regional at Lexington High School.

Sabo cleared 10-8 to earn one of the four automatic state berths.

The top four finishers in each event at each of the four regionals qualified for state. Each event also has two at-large qualifiers, regardless of regional, based on times, heights and distances from the regionals.

The state championships are Friday and Saturday at Pickerington North High School. Sabo's event is Saturday morning at 10.

The Eagles were on the awards podium three times during Saturday's final day of the regional.

Joining Sabo on the podium were junior Aubrey Haas, who finished sixth in the 300 hurdles; and the 4x200 relay team of freshman Saylor King, sophomore Emma Downs, and juniors Mikayla Hoelter and Maisy Stevenson, which finished eighth.

The top eight finishers in each event received medals and were recognized on the podium after their event was completed.

Sabo qualifies for state

Sabo advanced to state by clearing 10-8, just shy of her school record of 11-0 set May 15 when she won the Northern Buckeye Conference championship. She then missed all three of her attempts at 11-0 to finish third.

"I'm really happy to be going to state. It's been my goal all season," Sabo said. "To achieve that goal is really nice, but it's also a bit of a relief."

The event quickly became a four-way competition between Sabo, Liberty-Benton senior Alexis Rickenbacher, Cleveland Heights Beaumont junior Madyson Treharne and Heath sophomore Allie Dunlap. They were the only vaulters to clear at least 10-0, and the next three best jumps were 9-6.

The University of Alabama bound Rickenbacher won at 12-0, while Treharne also went 10-8 and was second on fewer misses, and Dunlap was fourth at 10-4.

The starting height was 8-6, and Sabo entered the competition at 9-6. She cleared 9-6 and 10-0 on her first attempt, missed her first attempt at 10-4 and then passed to 10-8 where she made her first attempt.

Eastwood boys head coach Brian Sabo said his daughter was in fourth place after missing her first attempt at 10-4 and they then decided to pass to 10-8 in an attempt to move up at least one more place.

"I couldn't be happier," said Eagle assistant coach Ethan Downey, who works with the team's vaulters. "She really stepped it up. She's a competitor. She had good jumps. She progressed through the heights very nicely. There's still height to be had there."

"She was dialed in and focused, and I appreciate that," Brian Sabo said. "She gritted it out on a crappy weather day, but it was crappy for everyone. I'm very proud of her."



Sabo knew she had qualified for state after clearing 10-0.

"That was a relief for her to know she qualified," Downey said. "You can go for PRs then. I really liked the way she competed. She competed and put herself where she needed to be."

The vaulters had to contend with chilly and windy conditions, and a mist during portions of the meet.

"It didn't seem to faze her at all," Eastwood girls head coach Nikki Sabo said. "We knew during the week the weather wouldn't be great, so you have to be mentally prepared for that, and she was. She went after it."

Julia Sabo treated her mom to an excellent performance, resulting in her second-best vault of the season.

Nikki Sabo was able to watch her daughter qualify for state. At most meets, Nikki Sabo doesn't see much of the pole vault because she's checking on the other events as a head coach and because she coaches the Eagles' girls and boys long jumpers.

"From a parent perspective and a coach perspective, today is the most I've ever watched her," Nikki Sabo said. "I'm glad I got the opportunity to watch her entire competition."

Julia Sabo entered the regional ranked third, based on heights jumped during the district meet. Rickenbacher had the best district vault at 12-5, which is the best jump in Division II this season. Treharne was second in the districts at 11-1, followed by Sabo at 10-7 and Dunlap at 10-6. Sabo has broken Eastwood's school record three times this season. The record to start the season was 10-6.

"We just missed trying a PR today," Brian Sabo said. "The 10-8 jump was a really good jump. We think there's a lot more there. She jumped really well. She put things together."



Haas finishes sixth

Haas completed an impressive season with her sixth-place finish in 48.96. She qualified for the finals during Thursday's semifinals by finishing second in her heat with a time of 48.14 — a personal record by .25.

"She went out hard and put herself in it," Nikki Sabo said.

Haas competed in the 300 hurdles for the first time this season after running the 100 hurdles a handful of times as a freshman. She also ran the 800 two years ago. The 2020 season was canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"This was a huge learning experience, being my first time competing in a hurdles race this season," said Haas, who was a regional qualifier in four events. She also advanced in the 100 hurdles, and the 4x200 and 4x400 relays.

"I don't think I've realized how big of an accomplishment it is to qualify for the regional in four events," Haas added. "I'll use this as a learning experience for next year and to set higher goals. I'm proud of myself. I know what I'm capable of next year, and I'll use it as motivation."

The top three finishers all ran 47.91 or faster, including winner and Johnstown Northridge senior Olyvia Ashbrook, who won in 46.49.

"To see where I was two years ago and then to have this great experience of competing against some of the best girls in the region and some of the best girls in the state is really cool," Haas said.

Haas PRd eight times in the 100 hurdles this season, and three times in the 300 hurdles. She ranks fourth all-time at Eastwood in the 100 hurdles and seventh in the 300 hurdles.

"She got a ton of experience this season, not too shabby for her first year of hurdling, being a regional finalist. That's a pretty big accomplishment," Nikki Sabo said. "Even as the season went on, her times kept dropping and dropping. Her form kept improving. It was clicking for her."

Relay makes the podium

The 4x200 team of King, Downs, Hoelter and Stevenson had a time of 1:50.62 for eighth place. The top four teams all ran 1:46 or faster. The winner was Beaumont in 1:45.03.

"It was really fun to compete at this level," Hoelter said. "There's such great competition and to go against them to see if we could get a PR was a lot of fun."



“They stepped up and performed,” Nikki Sabo. “They ran well and got a regional medal; that’s pretty cool.”

Eastwood’s time was its fourth fastest of the season.

“We’re excited for next year, but we know we have to room to grow,” Hoelter said.

“We can work on our handoffs and starts, and keep getting better as a group. We’re comfortable running with each other, and we’re all good friends.”

Bowman, Baum compete

Bowman finished ninth in the 1,600 in 5:46.96, the freshman’s second-fastest time

of the season in a race she ran only four times this season. The top five finishers all ran 5:18 or faster, including Gates Mills Gilmour Academy freshman Amy Weybrecht, who won 5:13.57.

“I tried to give it my all,” Bowman said. “Ninth in the regional isn’t bad, so I’m not complaining.”

Bowman first ran the 1,600 April 6 against Genoa and Swanton and posted a time of 6:10.94.

She then had a PR of 5:54.55 against Fostoria and Lake April 21, and qualified for Lexington with an 18-second PR (5:36.69) during the district meet at Oak Harbor May 22.

“I’ve learned so much this season,” Bowman said. “I feel like I’ve improved so much, and I’m really excited about next season.”

Baum, a sophomore, was 13th in the 800 in 2:28.76. The top five finishers all broke 2:20, with Willard sophomore Destiney Rose winning in 2:13.13.



“The race was really nerve wracking, but it was exciting,” Baum said. “I’m glad I had this opportunity to have this experience. It was a fast race. It was a different race than I’ve experienced so far. It was a big group of girls running 2:20, but it was exciting to be in it. I’m at a consistent 2:27, so I’m really excited for next year. I want to do even better.”

Baum narrowly missed improving her PR of 2:27.45 at the Oak Harbor district. She ran the 800 three times this season, and PRd each time.

“Today was a huge day of experience for Avery and Talia,” Nikki Sabo said. “They gained so much valuable experience competing in those two races. Hopefully, that helps them set their goals a little bit

higher for next year, and they know what to expect coming in, if they make the regional meet again, and I expect them to do that.

“They have a ton of potential, and there’s still so much growth for them,” Nikki Sabo added.

“It’ll be exciting to see how they take everything into next season.”

BOYS RECAP



Might throws shot put

Eastwood senior Gage Might finished 14th in the shot put with a distance of 43-2¼.

Complete results of the meet are available at:

<https://www.baumspage.com/rtrack/2012/6/2021/Final%20Results.htm>