

Sabo, Newsome, Kiefer and Hesselbart qualify for state



By Kevin Gordon

LEXINGTON — Julia Sabo is returning to the state high school track and field championships. The Eastwood High School junior earned an automatic berth to her sport's showcase event with a fourth-place finish in the pole vault during Saturday's final day of the Division II regional meet at Lexington High School.

Two other Eagles — junior Olivia Newsome and senior Ava Kiefer — received at-large berths to the state meet.

Newsome finished fifth in the discus Saturday and Kiefer was sixth in the shot put Thursday. The top four finishers in each event earned automatic berths to the state championships Friday and Saturday at Ohio State University's Jesse Owens Stadium. The state meet also includes the next two top performances, regardless of time, distance or height, and regardless of regional. The at-large qualifiers were confirmed Saturday night by the Ohio High School Athletic Association, but live results from all four regionals were available online during each day of competition.

The finishes by Sabo, Newsome and Kiefer were part of an impressive day for the Eagles, who had a total of six podium finishes during the regional.

The top eight finishers in each event were recognized on the awards podium.

The Eagles' other podium finishes Saturday came from the 4x400 relay team of senior Maisy Stevenson, freshman Lilly Mullholand, junior Talia Baum and senior Mikayla Hoelter, which finished sixth; and freshman Leah Emch, who was eighth in the 3,200.

Eastwood's 4x800 team of Emch, Stevenson, sophomore Amelia Ward and Baum finished sixth Thursday.

"It was a real good day," Eastwood head coach Nikki Sabo said. "The kids performed well. They went out and competed hard. They ran for each other."

Eastwood finished 14th as a team with 19 points.

“To have three state qualifiers is exciting,” Sabo said. “We had six events on the podium, that’s the most we’ve had in a while, and it was cool to score some points in the regional.”

The Eagle boys had four podium finishes Saturday — junior Noah Smith in the 110 hurdles and the 200, senior Jacob Meyer in the high jump, and the 4x100 relay of junior Bryce Kowproski-Kistner, senior Jake Limes, sophomore Kaiden Sanchez, and Smith.

Eastwood junior Dalton Hesselbart also was an automatic state qualifier, advancing in the boys pole vault with a fourth-place finish Thursday. Also, on Thursday the 4x800 placed eighth. Relay members included seniors Devin Good, Xander Ramsey, Cory Jay, and freshman Hayden Hoelter.



GIRLS RECAP

Sabo finishes fourth in pole vault

Sabo is headed back to state after clearing 11-0 to match her season best.

“It definitely feels good to qualify for state again, even though my vaulting was a little shaky,” said Sabo, who tied for fourth at state last season with a vault of 11-6, her PR. “It’s nice to know I’m going back there, and I get another week of practice to get better.”

“It’s a bit of relief to get back to state,” Julia Sabo added. “My season has been a little bit off, so it feels good to get back to state.”

Sabo cleared 11-0 on her third and final attempt to qualify for state. Had she failed to clear 11-0, she would have finished fifth. After clearing 11-0, she missed all three attempts at 11-4.

“I felt more pressure on that vault,” Julia Sabo said. “I had to find a way to get over it. That was a great feeling to get over the bar.”

Cleveland Heights Beaumont senior Madyson Treharne, who finished seventh in the state last

season, won the event with a height of 11-4.

The next four vaulters, including Sabo, cleared 11-0. The ties were broken by misses.

“She was a competitor today,” said assistant coach Ethan Downey, who works with the team’s vaulters “The competition was the best we’ve seen all year, and she stepped up. That’s all you can ask for. She was there when the challenges were presented to her.”

“It felt good to attempt a season best,” Julia Sabo said of her day. “I wish I would have jumped better because I felt good coming in here. I need to prepare better and practice better this week.”

Sabo cleared 10-0 on her second attempt, 10-4 on her first attempt and 10-8 on her second attempt to reach 11-0.

“She competed hard, and it’s good to have some adversity and work through that,” Nikki Sabo said. “It was good for her to work through that, and work through those heights on second and third attempts. That will definitely help her going into next week.

“She’s cleared 11-0 numerous times, so she knew it was possible,” Nikki Sabo said. “That probably helped her through it, knowing she had cleared 11-0 before.”



Newsome has big day in the discus

Newsome threw a PR of 125-7 to earn fifth place and one of the two at-large berths for the state meet. She extended her PR by three inches.

“I’m really excited. I was hoping I could get out,” said Newsome, who entered the regional as the No. 6 seed, based on the marks from last week’s district meet at Oak Harbor High School. “I knew I had a chance, if I threw well.”

Newsome threw 125-7 on her first of three throws in the preliminaries. The top nine throwers in the field of 16 advanced to the finals where they received three more throws in an attempt to improve their distance.

She also threw 121-8, 120-0 and 105-3, and fouled twice. Norton sophomore Morgan Hallett won the discus with a throw of 157-1, breaking the meet record of 149-8 set in 2012. She also won the shot put and broke the district record twice Thursday.

The regional runner-up was Liberty-Benton senior Izzy Granger, who threw 148-0.

“That was a great way to start the day,” Newsome said of her PR. “It set the tone for the day. Most of my throws were good today. I was more consistent than I have been. I feel good about the way I threw.”

“I felt good coming in, and I threw well all week in practice,” Newsome added. “I was hoping the adrenalin and the great competition would get me up there, and it did.”

Newsome’s previous PR of 125-4 moved her into third place on Eastwood’s all-time list, and her throw Saturday moved her even closer to Jena Jacoby, who is second with a throw of 128-6 in 2012.

The school-record holder is Eagle assistant coach Whitney Recker, who threw 141-2 as Whitney Hartman in 2004.

“She’s so relaxed and so confident right now,” Recker said. “She’s matured so much from last year to this year. She had a big smile on her face the whole morning. She’s having fun. She’s confident. She hit that mark (125-4), and that told her she can do it. She’s doing it in practice and she’s doing it over and over in meets. It’s really fun to watch.”

Newsome’s PR entering the season was 115-1, and she’s extended that mark four times this season. Her throw of 125-4 came May 14 during the Northern Buckeye Conference Championships at Memorial Stadium in Fostoria.

“She had a huge day,” Nikki Sabo said. “You get a PR the very first throw, and then you can kind of relax after that. She’s definitely elevated her performance.”

Kiefer advances to state

Kiefer finished sixth in the shot on Thursday with a throw of 38-1½ and advance to state as an



at-large qualifier. Both of the at-large qualifiers came from the Lexington regional. Although the at-large spots weren’t confirmed until Saturday night, Kiefer learned she was in line for one of the at-large berths on the bus ride home Thursday night when she was told of her status by Nikki Sabo.

“I’m really happy to make it to state,” Kiefer said. “I accomplished one of the big goals I set for myself. It was stressful not knowing if I was in or not, but when I found out on the way home, I was overwhelmed with emotion.”

4x400 team, Emch earn podium spots

Eastwood’s 4x400 relay team of Stevenson, Mullholand, Baum and Hoelter finished sixth in a season-best time of 4:10.99, eclipsing its previous best of 4:11.42.

Emch finished eighth in the 3,200 with a time of 12:13.28, and was 11th in the 1,600 in 5:39.92.

Also competing for the Eagles were:

- Senior Aubrey Haas, who was 12th in the 300 hurdles, 49.31.
- Junior Kayden Firsdon, who was 13th in the 800, 2:35.19.
- Junior Emma Downs, who was 14th in the 200, 27.40.
- Sophomore Haley Sponaugle, who was 12th in the 3,200, 12:52.00.

“Everyone had a good day,” Nikki Sabo said. “They realized this is the regional. It’s a whole new ballgame, to see how fast some people take it out in the 1,600, the 800 or the 3,200, and to see that and experience that is good, to see what’s like to race against that kind of competition at the regional level. They went out and competed. They gave it their all, and went for it.”



BOYS RECAP

Smith, Meyer, 4x100 have podium performances

Smith was fifth in the 200 and eighth in the 110 hurdles, and Meyer finished eighth in the high jump

Smith had a time of 22.58 in the 200, easily lowering his previous best of 22.84.

His time in the 110 hurdles was 15.76.

Meyer cleared 6-2 in the high jump.

The 4x100 relay team of junior Bryce Koprowski-Kistner, senior Jake Limes, sophomore Kaiden Sanchez and Smith had a season-best time finishing in sixth place.

The 4x100 relay had a season-best time of 43.67, beating its previous best of 43.68.

Also, for the Eagles, senior Devin Good ran a PR in the 800 and classmate Cory Jay ran a season-best time in the 1,600.

Good was 10th in the 800 in 2:02:09,

beating his previous best of 2:02.78.

Jay was 10th in the 1,600 in 4:42.73, easily beating his previous season best of 4:49 and almost beating his PR of 4:42.62.

“The guys went out and competed hard in a tough regional,” Eagle head coach Brian Sabo said. “They definitely wanted it, that’s important, and I appreciate that. We had some guys who were close to (qualifying for state).”

“Today was exciting,” Sabo added. “We talk about pouring in effort, and that’s what they did. This group competed. Any of the seniors who competed showed them how to compete, and I’m excited there were a lot of young guys who were here. Hopefully, they learned this is what you do, this is what it takes. That’s what I appreciate about this group.”

The Eagles competed in six running events and three field events in the regional after qualifying in only four events last season. All four of those were field events.

“We were so close to getting a couple of events (to state) and they would have gotten out of a couple of other regionals,” Sabo said. “We accomplished a lot of things — how they treated the girls, how they treated other people. When we go out to eat, we don’t worry about them. They do things the right way, that’s what we appreciate as coaches. That’s that makes it an honor to coach them. The physical part of it and the places (in meets), those are bonuses.”

Regional results

<https://oh.milesplit.com/meets/485420-ohsaa-division-2-region-6-lexington-2022/info#.YpLatmDMK3l>

State meet time schedule

<https://www.ohsaa.org/Sports-Tournaments/Track-Field/2022-State-Tournament-Coverage>

State meet performance lists/flight assignments/lane assignments

<https://oh.milesplit.com/meets/485680-ohsaa-div-2-state-track-and-field-championship-2022#.YpLfwWDMK3k>

State meet live results

<https://oh.milesplit.com/meets/485680-ohsaa-div-2-state-track-and-field-championship-2022#.YpLfwWDMK3k>

State meet live streaming (running events)

<https://www.ohsaa.org/Sports-Tournaments/Track-Field/2022-State-Tournament-Coverage>