

Girls qualify for regionals in nine events



All Photo Credits: Danielle DeFalco, Athlete: Aubrey Haas

By Kevin Gordon

OAK HARBOR — Eastwood High School's girls track and field team won't have to look very far or very hard to find a familiar face at next week's regional meet.

The Eagles will be well represented at Lexington High School.

They qualified five individuals in six events and three relay teams to the regional, including the five individuals and two relay teams who advanced during Saturday's final day of the Division II district meet at Oak Harbor High School.

Julie Sabo won the pole vault, Avery Bowman was second in the 1,600, Ava Kiefer was second in the shot put, Aubrey Haas was third in the 100 hurdles and fourth in the 300 hurdles, and Talia Baum was fourth in the 800 as individual qualifiers.

Also advancing were the 4x400 relay team which

finished third, and the 4x200 relay team which was fourth.

The 4x400 team consisted of Mikayla Hoelter, Haas, Maisy Stevenson and Amelia Ward. The 4x200 team consisted of Sabo, Emma Downs, Hoelter and Haas.

The top four finishers in each event at the district qualified for the regional.

On Thursday, the Eagles' 4x800 team of Baum, Ward, Stevenson and Bowman won to qualify for the regional.

The Eagles totaled 94 points to finish behind Oak Harbor with 154½ and Perkins with 128 in the 12-team district. Eastwood scored in 13 of the 17 events, including four of the five field events and all four relays. Team points went to the top eight finishers in every event.

During the district meet, Eastwood had 15 personal records and five season bests.

"We accomplished two of our team goals today," Eastwood head coach Nikki Sabo said, adding those goals were to finish in the top five at the district meet and to qualify for the regional in at least five events.

The district was a battle of conference champions — Eastwood won its 20th straight Northern Buckeye Conference championship, Oak Harbor won the Bay Division of the Sandusky Bay Conference for the fourth straight season, and Perkins tied for first in the SBC's Lake Division. Oak Harbor also won the final seven SBC championships before the conference split into three divisions for the 2017 season.

"It's always great competition here," Nikki Sabo said. "It's a tough district, so to place third is a great accomplishment. They competed well today."

The regional is Thursday and next Saturday.

The finals of the 4x800 relay, high jump and shot put, and the semifinals of the 100, 200, 400, 100 hurdles, 300 hurdles, and the 4x100, 4x200 and 4x400 relays are Thursday. The remainder of the events will be held next Saturday.

"I'm very excited about the regional," Nikki Sabo said. "I'm very proud of the effort they gave today. They're excited to compete. They're not scared. They're excited. They want to do well, and it's showing in their performances."



District champ

Julia Sabo jumped 10-7 to easily win the pole vault. The sophomore, after clearing 10-7, moved the bar to 11-1 in an attempt to break her school record of 11-0 set last week when the Eagles hosted the conference meet. But she missed all three of her tries at 11-1.

"It was a good day," Julia Sabo said. "I felt really good. I knew I was seeded first coming in, but I knew I had to keep pushing to make sure I qualified for the regionals. Regionals was the main goal. I'd rather make regionals with this height than PR and not make it."

Sabo was the No. 1 seed for the district with her 11-0 vault last week. Two other vaulters had cleared 9-0 and 9-6, and the rest of the field had a height of 8-6 or lower.

Sabo entered the competition at 9-6 and then cleared

10-0 before going to 10-7. No other jumper vaulted higher than 9-0.

Eastwood sophomore Hannah Montag finished fifth with a vault of 7-6.

"I knew coming in my starting height would probably get me to the regionals, but I still had to make sure I kept going just to make sure I made regionals," said Julia Sabo, who finished vaulting just before running the 4x200 and 4x100 relays. "It's just a matter of time until I get another PR," Sabo said of breaking the Eastwood record for a fourth time. "I know the PRs will come if I keep working hard and trying to improve."

Bowman advances with a big PR

Bowman qualified for the regional in the 1,600 with a second-place time of 5:36.69, a PR of 18 seconds over her previous best of 5:54.55.

"I'm very excited to be going to the regional," Bowman said. "I felt strong going into the race. With it being so hot and being district competition, I was a little nervous. But once I got started, I felt strong and just wanted to go hard."



Her time fell less than a second off Eastwood's all-time Top 10 list in the event. A time of 5:35.93 or better is needed to make the Top 10.

"My goal was to run 5:40, but I didn't know if I'd be able to hit that," Bowman said. "My time was a surprise. I wasn't expecting to be that fast. When I finished second, I thought I had a PR. I'm really happy with my time."

Bowman took over second place on the first turn of the final lap. She finished behind Perkins junior Sara Skaff, who won in 5:27.25.

"I was really focused on getting out hard, and you need to have a surge like that if you want to get to the regional," Bowman said. "I knew I had to go hard."



Kiefer finishes second

Kiefer, a junior, threw 38-10 to finish second in the shot. Toledo Rogers sophomore Mikaylah Marshall was first with a distance of 39-9. Kiefer was in first place after the preliminaries with her throw of 38-10, but she was overtaken by Marshall in the finals. Marshall was second after the prelims at 35-9. The 24 athletes each received three throws during the prelims, with the top nine distances qualifying for the finals. The athletes then received three more throws during the finals in an attempt to improve their distance.

"That was a good day," said Kiefer, whose personal record is 39-1½. "Overall, I'm happy. The goal was to get to the regional. You always want to PR, but your main goal today is to get to the regional and score points for the team." Eastwood sophomore Olivia Newsome finished eighth with a distance of 32-4, her second-best throw of the season. Her previous best was 32-8.

"She had a really good day," Kiefer said. "She had a good distance, and she scored points for the team."

Haas advanced in the hurdles

Haas finished third in the 100 hurdles with a time of 16.17, the fourth-fastest time in school history. Her previous best was 16.38, a time she ran during the district prelims on Thursday. She entered the district meet with a PR of 16.54

The sophomore has PRd in the 100 hurdles eight times this season, including her last four races. "Her times in the 100s keep coming down as her technique and speed continue to improve," Nikki Sabo said.

Haas advanced in the 300 hurdles with a time of 48.40.

"Today was really tough for her because she had race after race after race, and not as much time between races as a dual meet," Nikki Sabo said. "She handled it with 2 PRs and 2 races that were real close to PR times."

Haas was a four-event regional qualifier, also advancing in the 4x200 and 4x400 relays.

"She had a great day," Nikki Sabo said.



Talia Baum

Baum qualifies in the 800

Baum advanced in the 800 with a fourth-place time of 2:27.45, edging freshman teammate Ward by only .29 for the final regional spot. The second- through fifth-place finishers were separated by only .82.

Baum moved into third place at the start of the backstretch on the second lap and then held on to advance to the regional. Her time was a PR, lowering her previous best of 2:28.19. Ward was timed in 2:27.24, barely missing her PR of 2:27.23.

"I knew I had to get out then and there or else I wouldn't make it out," Baum said. "I got a little boxed in, but I was able to get out of it and get in the top four. I'm really happy to be going to the regional."

Baum and Ward narrowly missed placing their names on Eastwood's all-time Top 10 in the event. A time of 2:26.28 is needed for the Top 10.

"That's hard to see (Ward) finish fifth, but I'm so proud of her," Baum added. "She ran a great time. We were both right there at the end."

4x400 finishes third

The 4x400 team of Hoelter, Haas, Stevenson and Ward finished third in a season-best time of 4:11.44, beating its previous best of 4:13.42 during the district prelims. Eastwood's best coming into the district was 4:15.75.

Hoelter, Haas and Stevenson all ran PR splits. Hoelter and Stevenson are juniors.

"They're peaking at the right time, and it's fun to watch them compete," Nikki Sabo said.

4x200 takes fourth place

The 4x200 team of Sabo, sophomore Downs, Hoelter and Haas ran the ninth-fastest time in Eastwood history to qualify for the regional. The team had a time of 1:47.35 to better its time of 1:48.48 during the prelims. Eastwood's best time entering the district was 1:52.41.

"We ran really well," Julia Sabo said. "We all had great splits. We wanted to get on the Top 10 list. We all wanted to do well and get to the regionals."

"They got out really well," Nikki Sabo said. "We really haven't gone after the 4x2 the last couple years because each team has different talents. This relay team has four solid 200 runners. They went out hard and ran a top ten time."

More results

The 4x100 team of Hoelter, Sabo, Downs and freshman Saylor King ran a season-best time of 51.93 to finish fifth. Its previous best was 52.03.

Freshman Haley Sponaule finished fifth in the 3,200 with a time of 13:39.05, and classmate Z Ramsey was seventh in 13:58.06.

Freshman Reilly Might was seventh in the 100 hurdles in 17.42, only .01 shy of her PR.

Complete results of the meet are available at:

<https://www.baumspage.com/tf/nw/2012/oakharbor/2021/Results.htm>