

Eagles riding huge wave of momentum into regional meet

By Joey Falkoff

Free Press Reporter
jfalkoff@nwkans.com

Cross country coaches around the state who didn't think the Colby Eagles would be a factor this post-season, after a tough start to the year, may be in for a rude awakening Saturday at the 4A Cross Country Regional Meet in Marysville.

The Eagles may have started the year slow, but come into regional action having won their seventh Northwest Kansas League Championship in eight years on the boys side and their 12th in 13 years on the girls side.

It's not just the Eagles winning the league title that should have opposing coaches worried, it's how dominate they were in doing so. The girls placed six of their seven runners in the top 10, including four of the top five, while the boys had four of their seven runners in the top 10 and Senior Josh Baden broke the Oberlin course record for the second time this year.

There's no better time to be running your best, and the Eagles appear to be doing just that.

"We're right where we want to be," said Eagle head coach Bob Mannebach. "Our times at league are probably going to scare any coach who saw them. We're running the best we have all year, and hopefully that's good enough. If we went two or three weeks longer, I don't know if we could get any better."

The Eagles will look to continue to build on their recent success Saturday against 15 other teams, 13 of which hail from the eastern side of the state. The top three teams in both the girls and boys meet and the next 10 best individuals will advance to the state meet Oct. 27 in Wamego.

Although the competition will undoubtedly be tougher, Mannebach expects both of his teams to be heading back east next weekend.

"If we run like we're capable of, both teams have should make it to state," said Mannebach. "It's not going to be easy. Clay Center and Wamego (who will both be in Marysville) are two very tough teams. If we run like we did in Oberlin, we should be in good shape, and if we don't, it will be tough."

Another big reason for Mannebach's confidence is that, for the most part, the Eagles are finally healthy after an injury-plagued season that affected both the boys and girls teams.

Ryan Baalman, Katherine Kaus and Aubrette Stephens were all held out of at least one meet at the beginning of the year because of various ailments. Consequently, the boys finished fourth at the team's opening meet in Goodland and ninth at their second meet at Wamego.

The girls had their struggles as well. They were able to finish



COURTESY PHOTO

Lady Eagle freshman runner Katherine Kaus stayed ahead of her competitors Saturday in Oberlin and won Northwest Kansas League championship girls meet. Kaus has won two meets this year and has finished in the top five during the season. Kaus will look to continue her success 11 a.m. Saturday, as the Eagles travel to Marysville for their 4A Regional Meet.

second in Goodland, but faltered in Wamego and finished 11th.

The return of all three runners led to a surge in the team's performance at the end of the year, that included not only a league championship, but first place finishes for the girls in Hays and Oberlin and a combined team championship at their final regular season meet in Lakin.

"The girls still aren't completely healthy, but for a while it seemed like a different girl was getting hurt every week," said Mannebach. "Just like in any sport, you have to have everyone healthy. An injury can really mess you up. We're as close to 100 percent as we've been all year."

One runner who has steered clear of the injury bug and has maintained a torrid pace all year long is senior Josh Baden.

Baden, who qualified for state last year, finished third in his first two regular season meets, but has won of five of his last six meets, including two record-breaking performances in Oberlin. The only meet Baden didn't win was Lakin, but he still managed to finish second.

After starting the year with a time of 18:01 in Goodland, Baden cut that by nearly two minutes, finishing in 16:05 at league.

"I'm running pretty good right now," said Baden. "It's better than I was doing earlier in the year. I've been running my whole life, so I want to do well this weekend."

Mannebach wasn't shy in his praise for Baden calling him "the best runner he's ever had at Colby,"

and he expects Baden to once again perform at a very high level this weekend.

"I don't want to put any more pressure on him, but I expect him to win this meet. He's that good," said Mannebach. "When we went to Wamego, he took third out of 128 runners. He's even better right now."

Baden was slowed by the amount of hills at the Wamego course, and Marysville's course, while not as hilly, should present a similar challenge. But Mannebach believes Baden's time on the hills in practice will serve him well at Regionals.

"Josh had some problems with the hills in Wamego, and it was strange for our whole team," said Mannebach. "He's been working hard on the hills lately, so he should

be ready for it."

Baden has been the top boys runner in every meet this year, but he will need help if the Eagle boys are to advance to state.

Baalman, Adam Schroeder and Matt Kaus all finished in the top 10 at league and all ran their best times of the year. Mannebach says he will need a similar performance from them, and his other three runners, if the boys want to be successful.

"It's gotta be a team effort," said Mannebach. "They've shown improvement. I just need them to be a little more consistent. After the Lakin meet, I was concerned. I didn't feel they ran well. But their league times were good. Baalman and Kaus, along with Josh, went to state last year, so they have the experience."

New Cornhusker athletic director already has controversy

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska interim athletic director Tom Osborne responded Thursday to reports that football coach Bill Callahan said the former coach was "trying to run things from Washington" while he was a U.S. congressman.

Callahan allegedly called Osborne a "crusty old (expletive)," according to former Nebraska football trainer Doak Ostergard, who is quoted in a book to be self-published by a student at the University of Nebraska.

Osborne became interim athletic director this week when Steve Pederson was fired after several dismal performances by the football team.

"I understand that head football coaches, like everyone else, have emotions," Osborne said Thursday. "I'm not surprised that my long-term influence on the program could sometimes be felt as a controlling force even while I was away, but that was never the intent."

In a statement Thursday, Callahan didn't deny the reported comments, but said he's had a great deal of respect for Osborne since he started coaching.

"We embrace Coach Osborne and everything he stands for," Callahan said.

"The Nebraska Way," by Jonathan Crowl, is expected to be available in some bookstores by early November. It's being published by

Universe Inc., which lets authors pay to publish their work, according to its Web site.

Crowl provided an early copy to the Daily Nebraskan, the university's student newspaper, where Crowl is a sports reporter covering the football team.

Ostergard didn't immediately return a message left by The Associated Press on Thursday. He told the Omaha World-Herald Wednesday that the book was accurate.

Ostergard, a 1984 Nebraska graduate from Gothenburg, was on the athletic training staff for 18 years and head football trainer for nine. He was hired by Osborne and retained by Frank Solich and Callahan.

Ostergard said in February he wasn't given a reason for his dismissal, and Callahan and Pederson wouldn't discuss Ostergard's departure at the time.

The book also quotes former players — including Mike Minter — on accounts of animosity in the athletic department during Pederson's tenure.

Minter, who spent 10 years with the Carolina Panthers, told the Daily Nebraskan that when he played under Osborne, "It felt like a family atmosphere."

"Now it's like Fort Knox," Minter said.

Osborne already has apparently relaxed the atmosphere by e-mailing former players Wednesday.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

To have your ad placed in the Business Directory call Kristi or Crystal today at 462-3963.

Get On-Line for Value!
nwkans.com
Call 462-3963 or stop by 155 W. 5th St.

FAMILY DENTAL CARE
The Latest Technology and Most Complete Care Available!
• Root Canals • Orthodontics
• Implants • Wisdom Tooth Surgery
New Patients Welcome
No Referral Necessary ~ Financing Avail.
1690 W. 4th St., Colby ~ 785-460-3999
Toll Free: 1-866-305-3999
SHAWN D. JENSEN, D.D.S.

WORLDWIDE • Vacation Packages • Cruises • Tours • Groups • Flights • Hotels • Trains • Cars
155 W. 4th, Colby, KS 67701
Phone: 785.462.6999
Fax: 785-460-0852
Toll Free: 1.888.690.7077
CALL IN OR FAX YOUR INTERNET QUOTES AND OTHER ADS! WE CAN BOOK THEM FOR YOU WITH LOCAL, CARING SERVICE!!
VACATION SPECIALS
LAS VEGAS Air & Hotel \$250 4
DISNEY WORLD Park Passes, Air & Hotel \$505 3
MEXICO Air & Hotel \$800 3
CARIBBEAN CRUISE Cruise & Air \$1,050 5
ALASKAN CRUISE Cruise & Air \$1,500 7
HAWAII Air & Hotel \$740 3
LONDON, ENGLAND Air & Hotel \$700 3
AMTRAK EXPLORE AMERICA \$359 Max 45
Round Trip Travel
BOOK EARLY!
SAVE \$'s
Call for Bus Tours Schedules.
All specials may be for specific dates and are subject to availability

ROOFMASTERS
Your Local Roofing Contractor
425 East Hill, Colby, KS
Licensed - Bonded - Insured
RESIDENTIAL 1-800-536-6642
Tamko Shingles
GAF Shingles
Wood Shingles
Metal Roofs
COMMERCIAL Rubber Single Ply
White TPO Single Ply
Built Up Systems
Modified Systems
FREE ESTIMATES
Elastomeric Rubber Coating For Metal Roofs

Need a new insurance partner?
Auto | Home | Business | Farm/Ranch | Life
College | Retirement
David L. Browne III
550 N Franklin Ave
Colby
(785) 462-3388
FARM BUREAU FINANCIAL SERVICES
Insurance • Investments
www.fbfs.com
Farm Bureau Life Insurance Company/West Des Moines, IA, Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company/West Des Moines, IA, Companies of Farm Bureau Financial Services © 2007 FBL Financial Group, Inc. 327

Murray Roofing & Construction
Residential & Commercial
(785) 462-6908
Residential roofs
Flat & Low-Sloped Roofs
Metal Retro-Fit
Energy Efficient Roofing Solutions
Vinyl & Steel Siding
Decks & Patios
Wood & Vinyl Fencing
Soffit & Fascia
FREE ESTIMATES
Jeff Dreiling - Sales
(785) 443-0819
THE WORLD'S BEST ROOF
FREE ESTIMATES
Jim Murray - Owner
(785) 443-1339

H & H AUTO SALES
AUTO RENTALS
Hours:
M-F: 8-5:50;
Sat: 8-4:30
Phone: 785-460-0828
Fax: 785-460-0829
Cell: 785-443-1082
930 S. Range
Colby, Kansas 67701

NEW SYSTEM PROFESSIONAL WINDOW CLEANING
785-462-6995
www.MyWindowCleaner.net
Serving Colby since 1992!
Chris and Beth Lewon 650 N Grant/Colby, KS - FREE ESTIMATES