

TRACK AND FIELD

# Osakis sends 10 to state Championships

## Wales and Bright qualify

**By Sam Stuve**  
Alexandria Echo Press

**PELICAN RAPIDS** — The Osakis track and field program is sending 10 athletes to the Class A MSHSL Track and Field State Championships on June 9-11 at St. Michael-Albertville.

Three Osakis relay teams, the 4x100, 4x200 and 4x400 teams on the girls' side, have qualified with top-two finishes at the Section 6A track and field meet from Thursday. The Silverstreaks finished with 75 meet points and earned second place behind Perham (105.5).

The top two individuals and top two relays from the section meet qualify for state.

"We are excited about getting a bunch of kids down to state. This is one of the biggest groups that we've had in a while," Osakis head coach Lee VanNyhuis said.

In the 4x100, sophomore **Hailey Walker**, sophomore **Kiana Kendall**, senior **Mara VanNyhuis** and **Tessa Stanek** won the Section 6A title (51.95).

"We have always put a lot of emphasis on



Jared Rubado / Forum News Service

Osakis' Hailey Walker, left, grabs the baton from teammate Kiana Kendall during the 4x200 relay at the Section 6A meet in Pelican Rapids on June 2. They joined Tessa Stanek and Kaelyn Walker in taking second in that event to qualify for the state meet

relays," VanNyhuis said. "It shows. We've had a lot of success with that focus in the past. When you can get groups of kids down to state together, it's more fun and helps build the team atmosphere, which is one of our program goals."

The Silverstreaks had runner-up finishes in the 4x200 and 4x400, with the team of Stanek, Walker, Kendall and 8th-grader **Kaelyn Walker** running a 1:50.51 in the 4x200, and the team of Kaelyn Walker, fellow 8th-grader **Bella Weisser** and 7th-graders

**Ally Boyer** and **Kaia Fiskness** running a 4:13.04 in the 4x400.

Junior **Kiley Kranz** punched her ticket to the state championships by winning the shot put (39-02.00) and finishing second in the discus throw (113-11.00).

"Kiley puts a lot of work in," Lee VanNyhuis said. "It's great to see that hard work pay off."

On the boys side, junior **McCarter Kirksey** punched his ticket to the state championships with a second place finish in the shot put (43-11.50).

"There were about four or five guys coming in around the second spot in the shot put," VanNyhuis said. "McCarter was seeded a little bit behind a couple of those guys. It was good to see him get ahead of those guys. He had a PR in both the shot and discus. Coach (Alex) Mess and (volunteer) Ellie (Pahl) have done a great job getting things figured out with him."

The Osakis boys team scored 24.5 meet points and finished 12th, while Perham won the event (111).

## A-B-E's Lucea Wales qualifies in three events

Prior to Thursday's Section 6A track and field meet, no athlete from the Ashby-Brandon Evansville co-op had qualified for the state championships since 2018.

But sophomore **Lucea Wales** changed that in a big way by qualifying for the state championships in three events.

"It's really special for her to not only qualify but to do it in three different events," A-B-E head coach Zach Traphagen said.

Wales won the section title in the 200m dash (26.77), took second in the 300m hurdles (49.58)

and second in the long jump (16-05.00).

She nearly qualified for state in a fourth event, the triple jump, but finished in third place (34-10.00) behind Ottertail Central's Grace VanErp (35-10.00).

"We knew she would have a real shot at qualifying in all four events, but that is extremely hard to do for any athlete," Traphagen said.

Read more about Wales' breakout season for A-B-E in this Friday's issue of the *Echo Press*.

A-B-E nearly had another qualifier on the girls' side in sophomore **Skylar Bitzan** who finished fourth in the 100m dash (13.53).

"Today only helps the direction of the A-B-E track and field program moving forward," Traphagen said. "Lots of kids got their first taste of section competition and we hope this will motivate all the athletes to keep working hard and believing in themselves for next year and beyond."

## Bright qualifies in the 1600

The girls 1600m run at the Section 6A meet came down to a photo finish that saw West Central Area senior **Lexi**

**Bright** finish in second place with a time of 5:19.79. Bright finished two-tenths of a second behind Long Prairie sophomore **Caroline Kuehne** (5:19.77).

"Lexi ran one of the hardest mile races I've seen in a long time to take second and a trip to state," WCA head coach **Dave Schleicher** said. "I believe her 800m suffered a bit from that but going to the state meet was the ultimate goal for her."

The Knights had top-five finishes from junior **Roman Mihailovschi** in the boys high jump (T5th - 5-11.00) and junior **Tyler Stone** in the discus throw (133-00.00, 4th). Junior **Anthony Sykora** had four top-seven finishes.

"We sent 14 to sections and they all competed very well. We will miss our seniors but we have a fantastic crew coming up," Schleicher said. "We improved every week, every competition and we're proud of what they accomplished this season. Some things didn't go as planned and that's part of the game, but it will serve as fuel for the off season until we fire up next season."

Email sports and outdoor editor **Eric Morken** at [emorken@echopress.com](mailto:emorken@echopress.com).

TRACK AND FIELD

# Maeson Tank, Mckenzie Luetmer set school records

Minnewaska's Mckenzie Luetmer runs in a relay event at the West Central Conference championship on May 17. Luetmer set a new school record in the 400-meter dash at the Section 5A meet on June 1, 2022 as she finished second at the meet in a time of 58.62 seconds to qualify for the state meet.

**Eric Morken**  
/ Alexandria Echo Press



## Lakers send big group to state

**By Eric Morken**  
Alexandria Echo Press

The Minnewaska track and field program will send a big contingent of athletes to the state meet after the Section 5A meet at St. John's University on June 1.

The top two individuals and relay teams advance to state from the section meet.

The Lakers had two athletes set new school records in the process of qualifying. **Maeson Tank** did that in the 800-meter

run as he took second in 2:02.54. **McKenzie Luetmer** also took second in the 400-meter dash with a school-record time of 58.62. **Emily Kaiser** qualified for state in the 100-meter dash with a second-place finish in 12.74. **Jada Kolstoe** was first in the discus (106-07), while **Olivia Danielson** was second in the 800-meter run (2:20.28).

Minnewaska will send four relay teams to the state meet — three on the girls' side and one for the boys. **Jacob Lien**, **Gage Rogers**, **Isaac Meyer** and **DeShon Boyd** won the 4x100 in 44.55 seconds.

The foursome of **Alanah Christensen**, **Mya**

**Lindemann**, **Emma Kovarik** and **Kaiser** won the 4x100 in the girls' race as well in a time of 51.77. The 4x400 group of **Lauryn Ankeny**, **Makena Thoen**, **Danielson** and **Luetmer** took second in 4:06.32.

The 4x800 distance relay of **Lauryn Ankeny**, **Makena Thoen**, **Luetmer** and **Danielson** won the 6A title by more than six seconds in a time of 9:45.97.

The Class A state meet will start on June 9 with the prelims at 4 p.m. at St. Michael-Albertville High School. Finals will start at 4 p.m. on June 10.

Email sports and outdoor editor **Eric Morken** at [emorken@echopress.com](mailto:emorken@echopress.com).

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Orgeman said Miller running the 1600m in less than five minutes was one of the high points of the meet.

"There were extreme highs across the board and you look at how hard they've trained this season, how hard they've worked, they deserve it," Orgeman said.

For Kent, her next goal is to improve on her runner-up finish in last year's state tournament.

"Hailie's ready," Orgeman said. "I trust her training and our taper is going to make her pop at the right time. For her, the more competition, the better; the higher the honor, the better she jumps."

Along with **Addison Fettig**, **Elena Fuglestad** and **Elle Heydt**, Kent also qualified in the 4x100 relay by finishing second with a time of 51.26.

"We've been working really hard the last couple of weeks on our handoffs and getting them consistent," Kent said. "We were able to have really fast, clean handoffs, and then we had to battle at the end there a little bit to get that second-place finish."

Alexandria's depth in the triple jump was on display on Saturday as it had three athletes finish

in the top five. Outside of Kent's first place finish, **Ella Steussy** finished third (36-00.50) and **Marisa Rousu** finished fifth (34-02.50).

Steussy, a junior, had been in second place until Kent's 37-05.00 jump.

"We just hugged and cried," Orgeman said of Steussy after the event. "I congratulated her on an impressive season. She's come so far this year. She was just happy for her teammates and hugged her teammates. So we kind of all just had all those emotions come together at once. She had an incredible 36-foot jump."

Melrose Area's **Isabelle Jaenicke** edged out a second place finish over Steussy by posting a jump of 36-01.50.

"She pushes me a lot," Kent said about Steussy. "I love having someone on my team to compete with. That hasn't really been the case for the last few years. But Ella coming up has really been not only exciting for her but exciting for me. I know we'll have a strong jumps team next year. She's been so great and she's always ready to go."

Like Kent did on the girls side, **Will Heydt**, the defending boys triple jump state champion, also qualified for a track event on Saturday after having already qualified for the state tournament in not only the 4x100 relay but also in the 4x400 and 4x800.

**Jackson** and **Gavin Ashmore** finished second in the 4x200 (1:33.17).

"Gavin coming up that last stretch, Daniel in second and Venald starting, gave me a great lead," Heydt said. "I had a slingshot off that curve and got caught by one guy but still finished it out and got second."

Heydt has his sights set on being a back-to-back triple jump state champion.

"My mindset for state is just to jump hard, run hard and compete," he said.

Emptying said that he could sense the desire from **Will Heydt** to win back-to-back state titles.

"He's pretty hungry to go back there, repeat and hang on to his title as a triple jump state champion," Emptying said. "He's certainly not going to sneak up on anyone this year. He's a known factor out there in the triple jump world across the state."

Kent, **Will Heydt**, as well as **Joey Lanoux** (second place, shot put), **Sophia Vinje** (first place, discus), **Amaria Sowada** (second place, discus), and **Alison Krasky** (second place, long jump) are the Alexandria field athletes who have qualified for the state tournament.

The Cardinals' girls team qualified for the state tournament in not only the 4x100 relay but also in the 4x400 and 4x800.



Sam Stuve / Alexandria Echo Press

Alexandria's **Christian Doumbia** runs across the finish line after winning first place in the 400m run at the Section 8AA Championships on June 4. Doumbia qualified for the state tournament in the 100m, 200m, and 400m en route to helping the Cardinals win the section team title.

In the 4x400, **Jaelyn Miller**, **Aleah Miller**, **Emma Ecker** and **Giselle Jahner** finished second (4:05.83). **Ecker** is also competing in the 3200m run at the state tournament after placing second on day one of the section meet.

The Cardinals 4x800 girls relay team of **Kasey Soderholm**, both **Millers** and **Ecker**, finished second on Saturday (9:39.64).

**Jaelyn Miller** also qualified for the state tournament in the 800m run (2:17.06).

Rounding out the qualifiers for the Alexandria girls team is **Elena**

**Fuglestad**, who finished second in the 400m run (1:01.12).

"Elena was fun to watch in the 400," Orgeman said. "Another girl was coming down the homestretch and she just with her grit ended up finishing second and qualified for state."

**Myles Sansted** qualified for the boys state tournament by placing second on Saturday in the 1600m run (4:29.19). **Sansted**, **Otto Anderson**, **Owen Draper** and **Riley Wagner** qualified for the state tournament by placing second in the 4x400 (3:32.27) on Saturday. Rounding out the state

qualifiers for the boys is **Sam Williams** who earned second in the 110m hurdles.

Along with **Steussy's** third-place finish in the girls triple jump, the Cardinals had eight other third place finishes with **Sophie Korynta** in the girls 300m hurdles, **Izzy Kent** on the pole vault, **Becker** in the boys 100m, **Ashmore** in the boys 300m hurdles, **Dylan Frusciant** in the high jump, as well as the 4x100m boys relay team of **Becker**, **Jackson**, **Heydt** and **Walker Hennen** and the 4x800m team of **Riley Wagner**, **Owen Draper**, **Throck Lehmann** and **Harrison Greathouse**.

The MSHSL Track and Field Class AA State Tournament begins with prelims on June 10 at 9 a.m. at St. Michael-Albertville High School. The Class AA finals start at that same time on June 11.

ALEXANDRIA GIRLS STATE QUALIFIERS: Aleah Miller: 4x800m, 1600m, 4x400m; Emma Ecker: 4x800m, 3200m, 4x400m; Hailie Kent: Long Jump, Triple Jump, 4x100m; Jaelyn Miller: 4x800m, 800m, 4x400m; Kasey Soderholm: 4x800; Giselle Jahner: 4x400; Elena Fuglestad: 400m, 4x100m; Alison Krasky: Long Jump; Sophia Vinje: Discus; Amaria Sowada: Discus; Addison Fettig: 4x100m; Elle Heydt: 4x100m

ALEXANDRIA BOYS STATE QUALIFIERS: Christian Doumbia: 100m dash: 2nd (11.03), 200m Dash: 1st (22.82, Meet Record), 400m Dash: 1st (49.63, personal best and Meet Record); Myles Sansted: 1600m Run: 2nd (4:29.19, personal best); Sam Williams: 110m Hurdles: 2nd (15.87, personal best); Will Heydt: (From Day 1) Triple Jump: 1st (43-5.75, Meet Record); Joey Lanoux: (From Day 1) Shot Put: 2nd (50-4, personal best); 4x200 Relay: 2nd; Venald Becker, Daniel Jackson, Gavin Ashmore, Will Heydt (1:33.17); 4x400 Relay: 2nd; Otto Anderson, Myles Sansted, Owen Draper, Riley Wagner (3:32.27, season best)

Email sports reporter **Sam Stuve** at [sstuve@echopress.com](mailto:ssstuve@echopress.com)