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last week. When you can come into this meet and comfortably make it out to semi-state on both sides, [it’s a success.] I’m very proud of the kids.”

Sol O’Blenis (7th place – 16:25.0) and Jacob Winger (12th place – 16:41.3) ran as well as they have all season, but it was sophomore Landon Biegel who stole the show for Oak Hill.

Biegel, who usually starts off slow before working his speed up later in the race, was aggressive from the start, and the result was a career best time of 16:28.7 and a 10th place finish.

“Landon had, by far, his best day he’s ever had for us,” Brunner said. “He normally starts off pretty controlled, but today, he got up in the mix right away and stayed there. He ran a lifetime best today by quite a bit. Great day out of him.”

Despite injuries to top runners and several obstacles along the way, the Golden Eagles’ have put together another outstanding season, and look to keep it going next weekend.

“At this point, we are happy to keep moving on and fighting for another day,” Brunner said. “Last year, we went up there in both races and ran really well and walked away feeling like we belonged. We plan to, hopefully, do the same next week.”

While Oak Hill advanced as a team, Eastbrook’s Thane Syswerda and Mississinewa’s Jon Alsup advanced as individuals.

Syswerda placed 27th in a time of 17:33.7, finishing with the third-best time of the top-10 individual qualifiers.

“It’s such a privilege and such an honor,” Syswerda said. “It’s so much fun to be able to have that and finish my senior year being able to make it to semi-state singlehandedly. I think that’s such an honor and a privilege.”

Alsup finished with the seventh best time among the individual advancers, crossing the finish line in 17:38. In the process, he became the fifth Indiana in the last six seasons to advance.

“We got a huge, strong race from him,” Mississinewa Head Coach Dustin Jones said. “This is the best he’s run all season. He PR’ed by five seconds. This is what we’ve been working for the whole season. He shows up when the pressure is on, and that is what you want from a runner. I’m proud of him. He’s

worked hard and he deserves it.”

In the girls’ race, Kinzie Robey, who has been Oak Hill’s most consistent runner throughout the course of the season, hung tough after a slow start, finding her groove midway through the race to finish in 10th place (19:39.6). Selah Jackson, after a tough performance in the sectional, bounced back in a big way, placing 16th with a time of 20:04.9.

Oak Hill’s remaining pack, including freshmen Leah Highley and Sadie Wisner and senior Kate Hornocker, also ran well, establishing multiple personal records. Highly placed 23rd (20:29.8) Wisner 24th (20:30.2), and Hornocker 26th (20:33.4)

“Kinzie’s first half was not real solid, but I’m glad that she bounced back in the second half and got into it,” Brunner said. “I think Selah coming up on her really woke her up a little bit. Selah had a great bounce-back meet from last weekend, so I’m proud of her. And you had PR’s from Sadie, Leah, and Kate, all coming in right behind. We had a great pack.”

While Oak Hill advances to another semi-state as a team, Eastbrook freshman Olivia Howell will join them next weekend, continuing a stellar freshman campaign with a semi-state berth. Running against Oak Hill, as well as tremendous runners from Huntington North and Fort Wayne South Side, Howell finished in 21st place with a time of 20:22.

“They did really well today,” Eastbrook Girls Cross Country Head Coach Lexi Eckleberry said. “Our goal coming into the season was to make it to regionals, and we did that. I am very proud of these girls, and I’m proud of Olivia and the fact she was able to make it semi-state.”

While the Panther’s team portion of the season comes to a close, Eckleberry is proud of how her young spaud performed throughout the 2020 campaign.

“It’s been an amazing season,” Eckleberry said. “All of these girls worked super hard. They’ve all dropped time, consistently, meet after meet, which has been huge. The fact that we even had a shot to make it to semi-state just makes me proud.

The semi-state meet will be held at Huntington University. The girls race begins at 10, while the boys will follow at 11:30 am.

Oak Hill’s historic campaign ends in regional final

By Sean Douglas

Despite a pair of well-fought contests on Saturday, Oak Hill’s quest for their first regional championship in school history fell short by just one goal. The Golden Eagles won a thriller over Yorktown in the opener, defeating the Tigers 4-2 on penalty kicks to advance, before falling to an always formidable Fort Wayne Canterbury squad 2-1 in the regional final later in the evening.

Against Yorktown, despite a flurry of tremendous chances on both sides, neither team could find the back of the net during regulation. Oak Hill finished with 13 shots and Yorktown collected six, but both goalkeepers were up to the task. Hudson Bouw made four saves in regulation, including a pair of diving stops with Oak Hill attackers right on his doorstep, while Seth O’Blenis also made four stops, while making several adjustments due to high winds throughout the afternoon.

Oak Hill had a chance to put the game away late in the second half, but they could not capitalize. While Bouw made some big saves, the Golden Eagles just missed on a few high-quality scoring chances, including an Evan Pearce that sailed just high in the final four minutes.

The Golden Eagles also had a chance to secure the victory in the second overtime, but despite three straight corner kicks, they could not solve Bouws, who stood on his head throughout the second half.

Penalty kicks are never an exact science, and most of the time, they come down to blink luck, but Head Coach Joel Garverick and the Golden Eagles were confident in themselves heading into the penalty kick phase.



Oak Hill defender Hank VanBibber cheers as Oak Hill defeats Yorktown in the regional semifinal match on Saturday afternoon. **Photo by Sean Douglas**

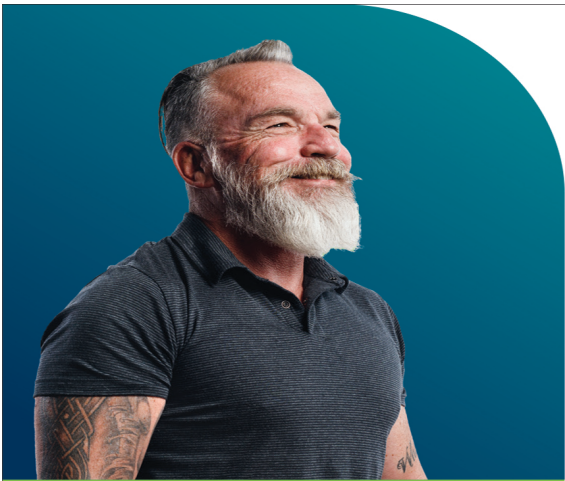
“It’s just a preparation thing,” Oak Hill Head Coach Joel Garverick said. “If you prepare, then you’ll have the peace of mind knowing that you know where you are going to kick and you know where to place the ball. Obviously, while a game situation is really different, having that in the back of your mind...is a huge benefit to have.”

Clayton Macy, Hank VanBibber, and Dalian Leach each scored on their opportunities, while Seth O’Blenis made a key stop on Yorktown’s Seth Tollet, putting the Golden Eagles fully


in control. Mark Sevier punched the Golden Eagles’ ticket to the regional final, their first since 2012, on Oak Hill’s final kick.

“Seth came up huge. He made a save, and was a big presence in the box,” Garverick said. “All five of our kicks were well placed, even the one that they saved. I can’t ask for much more than that. Penalties are always a bit of a crap shoot and a bit of a guessing game, but I’m proud with how we played over the course of the game, and

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