

Local Sports

NCAA track and field: Lewiston alumnus Isaiah Harris fourth in 800-meter run

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EUGENE, Ore. — Isaiah Harris used an especially important tactic to finish his 800-meter final Friday at the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships: He got his struggle face on.

“I kind of just closed my eyes, gritted my teeth, got that struggle face on,” Harris said. “Look at the end of any 800 race and you’ll see everyone’s struggle face. You know, the gritted teeth, it’ll be there. The 800 does that for you.”

Harris’ grit powered him to fourth place in 1 minute, 45.76 seconds, a time fast enough to make him an All-American and a new personal best for the true freshman at Penn State.

Donavan Brazier of Texas A&M set a National Collegiate record in the event, 1:43.55 to take the title, and Harris was proud to be a part of history.

“Taking part in probably the best race in NCAA history,” Harris said. “Nothing to be ashamed of.”

Harris, the Big Ten indoor and outdoor champion in the 800, followed his plan and stuck at the back of the front pack, then tried “to pick people off at the end if I could.”

Harris held that fourth position through much of the race, but solidified the spot with about 150 meters through the end of the race.

“I knew we were going to get out fast -- the leaders were out in like 50.3,” Harris said. “That’s right where I wanted to be.”

In the final stretch, Harris kicked in attempt for the third position, but it wasn’t enough.

“You just gotta hold on for the last hundred and go for time,” Harris said.

After a successful freshman season, Harris plans to return to Eugene for the Olympic Trials in July. And having competed here twice already this season, in April at the Pepsi Team Invitational and now at NCAAs, he feels at home.

“I know the area now, I know good places to warm up and all that good stuff,” Harris said. “It definitely helps.”