SPORTS By ROD GEIER Chronicle Sports Editor

HE PERSEVERED

****** Probably one of the most exciting races in Eastern Oregon this year was the 880-yard run Friday at Hermiston in the District 7-A1 track meet.

No less than three runners cracked the state qualifying standard of 2:00.0, which automatically seeds them in the state tournament at Corvallis this weekend

But of the three, perhaps the most gratifying part of the story so far as Mid-Columbia track fans are concerned, is the second-riolon performance by senior Harry Skandera of The Dalles.

Skandera is a gangly drink of water, about 6-2, who showed the potential four years ago but with a bad break has had to settle for second best since...

The stringy speedster, local cinder followers remember,

injured a foot at the first of the season a year ago. It was serious enough to put him on ice the rest of the

season. As a result, The Dalles lost its principal hope in the distance events.

It was a training injury following the season-opening threequarter meet at Jefferson High School in Portland that did it For the rest of the year, Skandera sat on the sidelines and watched others seek the inspirational blue ribbon.

When the 1964 season rolled around, he was ready to don the spikes once again and shoot for the mile and half-mile laurels.

More to condition himself than anything else. Skandera turned out for Coach Don Martin's basketball squad last De-

cember. He showed some promise in practice but it soon became evident track was more his oyster.

Martin released the thinclad so he could concentrate more on yetting himself into shape for the upcoming track season. His practice runs stretched over half of the Mid-Colum-

bia area, including a jaunt to the top of the Rowena Loops. All of this was a carefully planned schedule leading up to the district meet last Friday When the DHS season opened this year, with another

three-quarter meet at Jefferson, Skandera was an easy winner in two events. He took the three-quarter mile in 3:24.5 and the 660-vard run in 1:31.4.

He'd done better the year before, but not by much. And what he'd done this time was the first evidence to his coach. Al Miller, that he could become one of Oregon's best prep distance runners. Then came this year's Willamette Relays. Miller took a handful of locals and in the distance medley, Skandera ran the mile in 4:37.8, his best clocking for a DHS team. It looked for sure like he was making a comeback. But the run was costly. He reinjured the foot and it looked like his

prep track career had come to an end.

was examined and he had a special tennis shoe build-up by If he was going to run competitively again, he was told. he'd better use tennis shoes for a while and workout on grass rather than the track. For two weeks, Skandera worked out easily on the grass, missing two meets. Then came the Wa-Hi Relays and the mile

none other than Oregon Track Coach Bill Bowerman.

But it hadn't. He traveled to Eugene where his foot

team race. The Dalles team finished fourth in this event. Skandera, though getting back on the campaign trail, still was in tennis shoes. Next came the dual meet with Bend at home, where Miller decided enter him in the newest event in Oregon prep circles-the two-mile run. It wasn't a speed test so much as one of endurance-and testing the foot.

Skandera not only made the required eight circuits of the 440-yard course, but won the event in 10:37.3. It wasn't a spectacular time, but he showed a strengthening foot, which was the major consideration at the moment. But he still was

wearing tennis shoes. Then came his first crack at the mile in a four-way meet

here. Against Redmond, Wy'east and Jesuit, he came in second clocked at 4:49.0. Later, in a dual meet with Pendleton here, he took second

in the mile again, this time finishing quite a ways behind smooth Harold Delamarter of the Buckaroos, but in an improved 4.47.0-and for the first time in several weeks in track shoes. Delamarter clocked a 4:42.0.

Next for The Dalles runner was the metric meet in Bend. In two events there, he ran fifth in the 1,500-meter event in 4 28 0, and fifth in the 800-meter run in 2:09.0. Winning time in this event was 2:02.9 by favored Herb Hickman of Bend.

Then came one of the season's main tests-the subdistrict meet at Rend His times improved in both the mile and 880. Finishing

third in the mile, Skanders was clocked at 4:43.0. But in the 880, also finishing in third place, he came home in 2 03 6, a new Dalles High School record. It bettered John

Merriss' year-old mark of 2:03.9. What's more, it told both him and Miller that the foot had pretty well healed and he could start "letting out."

There remained still another test. The district meet was uncoming at Hermiston. Was he really ready?

best run of his career a 1 59 8

Exervone knows the answer to that now. He was. He sped around the oval twice and almost won the event, clocking the

tered the former meet mark of 2.06.0 by Bend's Herb Hickman a year ago and beath his own record of 2.03.5 set just a work earlier in the subhistrict meet at Bend. Winning this event in the district was Dick Hall of Pendiction, just a step ahead of the rejuveranted Skandera at 1.584. And just a step behind him was another Pendictionite. Delamatric, in 1.509.

He not only set a new Dalles High School record, but bet-

Miller's influence, Rowerman's shoe build-up and training plan, is one off-season training, or even jogging last winter to the Rowern Lespis and back.

— But more than anything else; it was perseverance—If he hadult really made the effort and stayed with it, he already would have hing up his spikes.

hadn't really made the effort and stayed with it, he already would have hing up his spikes. But this weekend, Skandera, as one of two representatives from The Dailes and one of more than 30 from District 7-At, will be back on the track again when the state meet is held

at Corvelles