

MORRIS COUNTY BOYS REWIND-WEEK 5

One of the coolest things about covering a track meet is watching a team come together and accomplish something for the first time and make history. That's what happened at Caruso Stadium at Morris Knolls High this past Saturday when Mendham celebrated its first Morris County Relays title ever with a great all-round effort from a number of young studs and its veteran leaders.

Here is a look back at some of the highlights from the 68th boys Morris County Relays.

MORRIS COUNTY RELAYS REWIND

MENDHAM RULES THE DAY

When Christian Kildal-Brandt came charging across the finish line first in the 4x400-meter relay at Saturday, it touched off a wild celebration as his Mendham teammates mobbed him by the side of the track.

They had a great reason to go crazy because the 4x400 victory in 3:23.60 put the finishing touches on a historic triumph, as the Mendham boys captured their first team title ever at Caruso Stadium at Morris Knolls in Rockaway.

Mendham outscored defending champion Randolph, 89-78, completing a sweep of the team titles. The Mendham girls also won its first title.

"We didn't know what to expect coming into this meet," said Kildal-Brandt, a sophomore who is one many talented underclassmen on the team. "To come out here and actually win this is just so surreal and unbelievable.

There are so many great teams in Morris County, so to finish on top is pretty amazing. We had so many guys step for us and that was the difference."

Kildal-Brandt also ran on the runner-up sprint medley and anchored the 4x200 (1:44.33) to victory. Mendham head coach Dave Quinn called the 4x200 race pivotal.

"After we won that 4x200, that gave us a lot of momentum," said Quinn, in his second year as head coach. "Right after that we won the 4x800 and Spenser had his great jumps in the high jump. We began to see a path to victory. What a great day for Mendham."

Quinn was referring to sophomore Spenser Clouse in the high jump, who

provided plenty of drama and excitement when he made a meet-best 6-5 to secure a runner-up finish in the high jump.

Clouse, competing in his first season of track, came into the meet with a personal best of 6-0.

"I don't know what got into me," Clouse said. "I guess my adrenaline just took over and I was able to come up with my best jumps. I knew my team was counting on me and it feels great to be a part of making Mendham history."

There were several other big contributors to the Mendham victory.

Junior Justin Naselli split 1:57.0 on the winning 4x800 and also ran a leg on the winning 4x1,600 with a 4:22.7 carry, and anchored the runner-up SM. Sophomore Paul Ehmann ran on the 4x1,600 and 4x800 and anchored the runner-up DM. Senior Pat Carney and sophomore Dylan Heraghty ran on the 4x200, 4x400 and SM, junior Tyler Pressl ran on the DM, 4x800 and 4x1,600, and senior Tom Pavarini led off the DM and ran on the 4x1,600 and 4x800.

What makes Mendham's victory even more impressive is how many big stars graduated last spring after Mendham won its first state sectional title (North Jersey, Section 2, Group 3).

"It is hard to believe that this team is better than last year's team, but these young guys just all got better and better and worked so hard," Quinn said.

"And we have a great group of senior leaders. Together they made history today and I couldn't be prouder of all of them."

BROTHERLY LOVE

One of the other big highlights of the meet came in the SM when Mountain Lakes sophomore Ben DeVenezia got the baton in third place and cranked out a huge personal best of 1:53.7 to rally his team to victory in 3:31.11. Also on the Mountain Lakes SM team were Adam Franklin, Jack Palazzi and Josh DeVenezia.

"Because my brother Josh is the only senior on the sprint medley team we all really wanted to win this for him," said Ben DeVenezia, who ran an eight-second personal best. "He has worked so hard and has been such a great leader on our team. He does any event the coaches need him to do. He deserved to win a gold medal at the county meet and that really motivated me to go out there and run as fast as I did."

DM

Morristown received splits of 3:11.1 from Greg Arabagian, 52.3 from Kamau Dumas, 1:59.9 from Rudy ``El Flashito'' Torres, and 2:27.8 anchored from Alex Cary, who came from behind to give Morristown the victory in 10:32.35.

Morristown has targeted the school record of 10:19 set in 1981 as one of its biggest goals this season. It will take aim at the record at the East Coast Relays on May 20 at Randolph.

MILLER TIME

Senior Dan Miller of Morristown unloaded a personal best and meet best throw of 53-1 $\frac{1}{4}$, No. 20 in the state this season, to lead his team to victory in the team shot put with a combined 142-7 $\frac{1}{4}$.

Miller is now No. 2 in Morris County this season behind the 56-11 $\frac{3}{4}$ thrown by Grant Sanchez of Morris Hills.

FUTURE TEAMMATES LEAD CHARGE IN THE 400 IH

Greg Leeper of Morris Hills had the top time of the meet in the 400 hurdles of 54.79 and Jules Hislop of Delbarton was the second fastest (55.62) of the meet.

Leeper also had a meet best and personal best long jump of 22-11, and Hislop anchored Delbarton to victory at the county meet in the shuttles (1:02.74) with a 14.6 split.

Leeper and Hislop, who will be teammates at Dartmouth next year, will battle it out for the county title in the 400 IH next Tuesday at Boonton.

FIELD DAY

Randolph nearly repeated as team champs behind a strong field event performance, led by Ryan and Aaron Harris, Anthony Zarro, and Sam Kaplan.

The Rams won the javelin, long jump and high jump.

In the javelin, Kaplan (154-9), Aaron Harris (150-4) and Ryan Harris (146-2) teamed up for the victory. Zarro (6-2), Ryan Harris (6-0) and Aaron Haris (5-8) took first in the high jump. In the LJ, it was Zarro (21-1 ¼), Ryan Harris (20-5 ½) and Aaron Harris (19-8).

IN THE PADDOCK

The two-day NJAC Championships are scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday, May 7-8 at two different sites.

The National and American Division teams will compete for one overall championships at Morris Hills. The Independence, Freedom and Liberty Divisions will clash for one overall championship at Wallkill Valley.

Actions is scheduled to start at 4 p.m., both days. Thursday and Friday are the rain dates at the same places and times.

The two-day Morris County Championships are scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday, May 14-15 at Boonton. Start time is 4 p.m. each day.