

## **THIS WEEK IN MORRIS COUNTY XC**

Every year, the adidas Shore Coaches Invitational provides a great mid-season challenge for teams and runners as they compete on the state championship course at Holmdel Park.

The meet separates contenders from pretenders, offering a great chance for teams and runners to showcase their talent and open some eyes. It's a preview as to what may happen at the State Group and Meet of Champions next month on the rugged 3.1-mile layout.

Morris County certainly made its presence felt following last Saturday's Shore Coaches Invitational.

As expected, Josiah Hanks of Trinity Christian was one of the top performers of the day, but the Chatham boys may have shocked a few people with their performance.

Let's get a deeper into what happened at the Shore Coaches Invitational with Morris County Rewind.

## **MORRIS COUNTY REWIND**

### **COUGARS MAKE BIG CLIMB WITH RECORD PERFORMANCE**

While there were understandably a lot of eyes on the Championship Race at the Shore Coaches Invitational last Saturday, which generated a lot of buzz, the Chatham boys created plenty of noise of their own with an eye-popping performance that certainly opened more than a few eyes.

Competing in the D Division race against sectional rival Summit, Chatham ran a great pack race, putting six guys in the top 28th with a 54 second compression from 1-6 and a 17:24.6 average on its way to a very impressive 73-83 victory over Summit.

According to research done by Chatham coach Pat Barry, the 17:24.6 average is a school record and it's the first time Chatham has ever won a race at the Shore Coaches meet!!!

Chatham's performance (it finished 11 on the merge scoring) vaulted the Cougars from unranked in the state rankings all the way to No. 14 in the latest Star-Ledger Super 25 state rankings.

Chatham's top 7 with their place in the race-

5-Junior Will Mitchell, 16:53

8-Senior Dominic Vernazza, 17:10

20-Junior Grant Hauck, 17:37

22-Senior Andrew Vena, 17:37

27-Senior Parth Shah, 17:46

28-Sophomore Liam Hynes, 17:47

60-Sophomore Patrick Mortenson, 18:47

“I was extremely proud of the way we ran on Saturday,” said Chatham coach Pat Barry. “The team is taking pride in its ability to run as a team. They see this weekly because of

the competition we face in the National Division of NJAC with Mendham, Delbarton and Morristown. We race along side of Pope John and Morris Hills from the American division as well. We know we have to compete with these “team” oriented squads, so we had to really work on that. It’s starting to pay off. We not only had five in the top 27 but our sixth was 28th. As for PR’s, that was the PR for most of the runners, the exception being Dominic who ran 16:55 last year in this meet.”

## **HANKO TAKES SAT AND THEN ACES HOLMDEL**

Josiah Hanko certainly had a long and stressful day last Saturday.

The senior at Trinity Christian had to get up bright and early and hustle over to Kinnelon High to take his SAT.

He was at Kinnelon from 7:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., then went back to his home in Montville to change, and then hurried to Holmdel Park, arriving there 50 minutes before his race (3:20 p.m.).

But everything worked out fine for Hanko, who completed his hectic and memorable day by ripping a Holmdel personal best of 15:59 to place second in the Championship Division. Mike Brannigan of Northport in New York was first in 15:45.

Hanko’s time was the fourth fastest of the day among the 1,195 varsity runners that competed during the day, and a personal best at Holmdel by one second. At the Meet of Champions last year, Hanko ran 16:00 to finish 12th.

“It was a crazy day,” said Hanko, who won the state Non-Public B title and was 12th at the Meet of Champions last year in 16:00. “I was pretty nervous about how things would go, but overall I am happy with the way everything turned out. To get second and break 16 for the first time here is a great accomplishment. I do wish I responded quicker when the leaders made their move coming out of the bowl. But I have been working real hard on my downhill running, and it paid off because I was able to catch some guys in the last half-mile.”

Hanko's runner-up finish was the third great race in a row for him. The previous two Saturday's he finished first at both the Wave Mania Invitational in Warwick, N.Y., and at the Six Flags Invitational in Jackson.

Hanko was originally scheduled to run in Saturday's Eastern States Championship race at Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx, but after three straight hard weeks of racing, he will take a break from racing this weekend. He will instead take a college visit to Wisconsin.

Hanko's next race will be the Morris County Championships on Oct. 29 at Greystone. He was second last year at the county meet.

## **SUB 17**

While Hanko had the top Morris County boys time of the day, there were some noteworthy performances under 17 minutes at the Shore Coaches meet

Here is a look at the sub 17 minute times by Morris County runners and where they ranked among the 1,195 runners that ran in the seven varsity race.

4-Josiah Hanko, Trinity Christian, 15:59

17-Ben DeVenezia, Mountain Lakes, 16:28

24-Paul Ehmann, Mendham, 16:31

57 Patrick Hanley, Madison, and Will Mitchell, Chatham, 16:53

The next fastest Morris County runner-

77-Matt Weintraub, Morris Hills, 17:01

## **TOP AVERAGES WITH PLACE IN THE MERGE SCORING**

11-Chatham-17:24

15-Mendham-17:26

32-Delbarton-17:44

34-Mountain Lakes-17:42

38-Morris Hills, 17:47

## **LETHAL 1-2-3 COMBO**

Of the 108 teams that scored at the Shore Coaches Invitational last Saturday, only one team had

three of the 25 fastest girls among the 895 girls that finished in the varsity races.

Guess what team it was?? I will give you a minute.....

Time is up.

The answer is West Morris!!!

Competing in the Championship Division, senior Brennan Sharkey led the way for West Morris by placing third in 19:03. Super sophomore Sierra Castaneda, a star on the rise, was eighth in 19:36, and senior Kylene Cochrane was 11th in 19:46.

Sharkey's time was the fifth fastest on the entire day, Castaneda's 16th fastest, and Cochrane's was the 21st fastest. One more thing about Castaneda, she was also the third fastest sophomore at the meet.

Led by Sharkey, Castaneda, and Cochrane, West Morris placed sixth in the Championship race with 139 points (No. 1 Red Bank Catholic won with 100).

West Morris, ranked No. 16 in the state, also averaged 20:29 and finished 10th in the merge scoring, just ahead of Mendham, which competed in the B Division race. Mendham averaged 20:48, the second fastest among Morris County teams.

## **RAM TOUGH**

Although it took the starting line short-handed with a couple key runners coming back from injuries, the No. 13 ranked Randolph girls ran a gutsy race to finish ninth in the Championship Division at the Shore Coaches meet with .

Junior Liz Lansing, in her first season of XC, was fourth for the Rams in the race with the 7th fastest time of the meet (19:12).

Margaret Thomson (20:07), Nora McSorley (20:46) and Melissa Ryan (22:32) all had Holmdel PR's for Randolph, and one of its JV runners (Karsyn Wagner) stepped up and ran a 22:35 in her first Holmdel run.

Randolph, a team that is capable of contending for the state Group 4 and Meet of Champions titles when healthy, hopes to have Carole Harsch and Liz Wellman back in its lineup at the NJAC Championships on Oct. 22 at Greystone. Harsch, who is coming back from an ankle injury, and Wellman (concussion) are both training and working their way back into top form.

## **THE MOTOWN EXPRESS IS FINALLY READY TO ROLL**

Coming into the season, the Morristown boys were picked to win the state Group 3 title. But because they have yet to run at full strength and have maintained a low profile, many people have been left wondering what coach Paul Buccino's Colonials are capable of. The wait is over.

Morristown, ranked 11th in the state, is finally healthy and at full strength, and Buccino will let his pack loose at Saturday's Manhattan Invitational at Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx.

The Colonials will get a strong test as they will run in the E Division (1:39 p.m), a race that includes No. 2 Haddonfield.

The Mo-Town 7 will be Rudy ``El Flashito" Torres, Sean Lyons, Greg Arabagian, Gavin Pitt, Evan Quinn, John Vallachi, and Ben Edwards.

## **THE BLEULER REPORT**

Walt Bleuler, the boys and girls coach at Parsippany, is a great track record when it comes to providing weekly updates about his teams. Thanks, Walt!!!!

Here is his latest report-

``The girls improved their record to 5-1 with wins over Hanover Park and Madison. The girls did not have Ally Schlosser due to a issue with her hip. Senior Jen Mlynar had her first with by placing first in her first year in xc. She was followed by Bria Saunders. Kati Hsu, Gabby Rachmaciej, and Amanda Angulo.

The girls went to Holmdel (last Saturday) without Bria and Jen because of the SAT exam. The team placed 9th in the D race and they were lead by Gabby Rachmaciej-22:40, KatiHsu-22:59, Amanda Angulo-23:03, Michele Giambrone-23:29, and Nelly Guzman. The girls had never run at Holmdel and still were competitive without Schlosser, Mlynar and Saunders.

We are looking forward to the Manhattan meet (Oct. 12,) and some good training for the conference, county and the sectional meet

``The boys had a win over Hanover Park and a loss to Madison. The boys are now 2-3. Team was led by Bhargaff Tarpara in 18:22 followed by Ronald Tudorache 19:17, Arun Pardurpachy 20:00, Jonathan Ho 20:02, Steven Patrocula 20:19, and Eric Schlosser 20:43. Times are improving with a young team. The same group went to Holmdel without Tarpara. Team was lead by Tudorache in 18:52 in his first run in the Bowl. We hope to have these boys begin to run faster and in a pack that can average in the 18:50 range. They continue to work hard and the best it yet to come."

## **ALONG THE TRAIL**

The No. 17 ranked Mendham boys, despite missing front-runner Justin Naselli, still finished a very strong 12th and averaged 17:26 in the Championship Division at the Shore Coaches meet. Mendham, 15th in the merge scoring, received four PR's, and junior star Paul Ehmann led the charge by placing 14th in 16:31, matching his Holmdel best

The No. 18 ranked Mendham girls placed second to Shawnee in the Shore Coaches B race (56-96) and had a 20:48 average and finished 11th in the merge.

Here are the top times by Morris County girls at the Shore Coaches meet with their places in the merge.

**Top times**

5-Brennan Sharkey, West Morris, 19:03

7-Liz Lansing, Randolph, and Mackenzie Barry, Mendham, 19:12

15-Sierra Castaneda, West Morris, 19:36

21-Kylene Cochrane, West Morris, 19:46

34-Margaret Thomson, Randolph, 20:07

58-Sarah Masukewicz, Mount Olive, 20:26

64-Alexandra Christian, Mount Olive, Olivia Viparina, Roxbury, and Defne Sement, Mendham, 20:31

**Top teams with average and place in merge scoring**

10-West Morris-20:29

11-Mendham-20:48

19-Mount Olive-21:17

21-Randolph-21:02

23-Chatham-21:24

40-Roxbury-22:00

45-Mountain Lakes-22:12

53-Villa Walsh-22:32

66-Morris Knolls-23:08

77-Parsippany-23:22

Many Morris County teams will be in action at Saturday's 41st Manhattan Invitational at Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx.

Chatham, Morris Knolls, Morristown, Montville, Delbarton, Mountain Lakes, Villa Walsh, and Parsippany are also entered. I am not sure if teams will be missing any runners.

## **STATE RANKINGS**

### **BOYS**

- 1-Christian Brothers Academy
- 2-Haddonfield
- 3-West Windsor-Plainsboro South
- 4-Don Bosco Prep
- 5-Middletown North
- 6-Cherry Hill East
- 7-South Brunswick
- 8-Westfield
- 9-Holmdel
- 10-Voorhees
- 11-Morristown
- 12-Hillsborough
- 13-Millburn
- 14-Chatham
- 15-Bernards
- 16-Pope John
- 17-Mendham
- 18-Kingsway
- 19-Southern
- 20-Ridgewood
- 21-Summit
- 22-Indian Hills
- 23-Robbinsville

24-Delsea

25-Haddon Township

## **GIRLS**

1-Red Bank Catholic

2-Rumson

3-Haddonfield

4-Mount St. Dominic

5-Holmdel

6-Shawnee

7-Westfield

8-Hillsborough

9-West Windsor-Plainsboro South

10-North Hunterdon

11-Mount Olive

12-Freehold Township

13-Randolph

14-Toms River North

15-Voorhees

16-West Morris

17-Ridge

18-Mendham

19-Wayne Hills

20-Millburn

21-Southern

22-Seneca



23-Ridgewood

24-Immaculate Heart

25-Holy Angels

That's all for now.

A preview of the NJAC Championships and a recap of the Manhattan meet will be here next week!!

Until then, GET UR MORRIS COUNTY XC ON!!!