

## MORRIS COUNTY REWIND

**Keturah Orji** of Mount Olive completed the greatest horizontal jumping season in New Jersey indoor track and field history with a remarkable double, **Christian Kildal-Brandt** of Mendham smashed another county record, and several other Morris County athletes made their presence felt at the New Balance Nationals on New York earlier this month.

Let's take a look at some of the highlights in the final Morris County Rewind of the indoor season.

### AIR ORJI SAILS INTO THE RECORD BOOK

**Keturah Orji** of Mount Olive capped off an undefeated season in the horizontal jumps by sweeping the long jump and triple jump at the New Balance Nationals in New York.

On Saturday, March 15, Orji leaped 21-5 to capture the long jump. The next day the Georgia-bound star captured the triple jump for the second straight year with an indoor personal best and meet record 44-2, No. 2 in U.S. indoor history.

Here is a video interview with Keturah

"I'm much happier with the triple jump than I was with the long jump," said Orji, who soared 20-8  $\frac{3}{4}$  in the long jump January, No. 2 in state indoor history behind the national record 21-7  $\frac{1}{2}$  by the great Carol Lewis of Willingboro in 1981. "An indoor PR is good, even though I was going for the national record (44-6  $\frac{3}{4}$ )."

Orji jumped 41-3  $\frac{3}{4}$  on her first attempt in the trials before hitting 43-1 twice.

In the finals, Orji went 42-2  $\frac{1}{4}$ , 44-2, and 43-3  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

She said the pressure makes her perform her best.

"I kind of like that pressure," Orji said. "It gives me that adrenaline that I need."

### ANOTHER RECORD FOR CKB

**Christian Kildal-Brandt** of Mendham finished off one of the best seasons in county indoor history at the New Balance Nationals by smashing another county record.

In the trials of the 400, Kildal-Brandt, a junior, became the first runner in Morris County history to break 49 seconds indoors in the 400 when he ran a county indoor record 48.89.

Earlier in the season, Kildal-Brandt ran a county automatic time record in the 600 of 1:20.50, split 48.4 on the anchor leg when Mendham ran a county indoor record 3:23.74 in the 4x400, and ran a personal best 1:54.8 in the 800, the top time in the county this season and No. 4 in the state this season, and ran on Mendham's 4x800 that clocked a 7:56.56, the No. 1 time in the county and No. 8 in the state this season.

### KEEPING TRACK

At the New Balance Nationals, **Mackenzie Barry** of Mendham placed seventh in the 5-K (17:12.78) and 15<sup>th</sup> in the 2-mile (10:44.81), **Brennan Sharkey** of West Morris finished 12<sup>th</sup> in the 5-K (17:51.73) and teammate **Kylene Cochrane** placed 12<sup>th</sup> in the mile (4:58.24).

The Randolph girls finished 13<sup>th</sup> in the distance medley (12:16.37) and 21<sup>st</sup> in the 4x800 (9:36.40).

The DM splits were 3:50.08 for **Carole Harsch**, 62.81 for **Margaret Thomson**, 2:17.44 for **Nora May McSorley**, and 5:06.04 for **Liz Wellman**. In the 4x800, the splits were 2:22.77 for McSorley, 2:25.96 for Thomson, 2:26.09 for Harsch, and 2:21.59 for Wellman.

**Mike Benz** of Delbarton, the Meet of Champions winner in the pole vault, cleared 14-4 ½ to finish 20th and **Abe Gertler** of Madison also made 14-4 ½ to place 23<sup>rd</sup> at nationals.

### ON THE MEND

Two of the biggest stars in the state, **Liz Lansing** of Randolph and **Josiah Hanko** of Trinity Christian, are attempting comebacks this spring after each suffered set backs this past winter.

Lansing, a Nike National finalist in her first cross-country season last fall and a multiple state champion, suffered a stress fracture while playing basketball this past winter. Lansing, a junior, is training on a bike right now

and hopes to be cleared to start running soon.

The Duke-bound Hanco, the state Non Public B cross-country champion the past two years and a multiple state champion on the track, was stricken with Lyme Disease at the end of the XC season and missed the entire indoor season. According to Trinity Christian coach Brian Lee, Hanco is now dealing with an Achilles issue.

Good luck to Liz and Josiah on their road to recovery. Hope to see you both back on the track as soon as possible!!!

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

With the outdoor season set to begin this Tuesday, I would like to remind all coaches to please send me highlights on your team-such as school records, personal bests, impressive splits, college decisions etc. each week during the season. My email is lambo2126@hotmail.com.

The Star-Ledger's All-State and All-County teams will be published this Sunday, March 30. It will all be right here

Here are some links that will take you to some good websites for New Jersey track and field coverage this spring.

My twitter account is here

The NJ.com boys track and field page is here

The NJ.com girls track and field page is here

The NJ.com facebook page is here

The NJ milesplit page is here