

MORRIS COUNTY REWIND

Morris County's finest put on a great show as three meets records and several schools records were broken, Delbarton won its second straight title and the Mount Olive girls returned to the top for the first time in 17 years at Monday's Morris County Relays at Drew University in Madison.

Here is a look back at everything that happened at the Morris County Relays.

BOYS

Delbarton, which lost some keys stars to graduation and a few more to recent injuries, received several clutch performances to win its second straight title, and Morristown smashed two records at the 40th Morris County Boys Relay Championships.

With star sprinter Brendan Kenny (Achilles) and top thrower Tommy Rhodes (knee) sidelined for Delbarton, guys like **Jordan Earlywine, Luke Mayer, Mike Benz, Chris Beute, Teryon Lowery, and Matt Oplinger** rose to the occasion and sparked Delbarton to a 48-46 victory over Randolph for the third title in school history. Delbarton also won in 1976.

With the outcome of the meet still in doubt, Benz cleared a meet best 14-0 and Beute matched his personal best by making 11-9 to give Delbarton its lone victory in the pole vault with a combined 25-0, and then Oplinger (5-3) and Lowery (5-6) combined to place fifth in the high jump to clinch the team title for Delbarton heading into the meet-concluding 4x400.

Oplinger, who had been out all season with a foot injury, provided a big spark in his return as he split 22.8 in the 4x200 and 23.1 on the sprint medley to help those teams each place third."

Earlywine had carries of 2:04 in the SM and 2:03 on the runner-up 4x800 team

"Jordan and Matt are the kind of guys that always rise to the occasion," said Luke Mayer, who ran on the SM, 4x200 and shuttle hurdles. "No matter how they are feeling, they always come through for the team."

Delbarton coach Dave Sulley wasn't so sure his team could successfully defend its title because of the recent injuries.

"Without some of our top guys I really wasn't sure we could win this again," said Sulley. "But the sprint medley scored more than I thought we would and the high jump iced by

getting those two points. But it was really all the guys stepping up. Oplinger's foot was hurting him during the meet and he went to the trainer after the 4x200 and got it taped up and went back out there and ran a great leg on the SM. It was just a great team effort."

Morristown broke the only two meet records in the boys competition by winning the distance medley

in 10:43.28 and the 4x800 in 8:22.21.

"We saw what those records were and based on what we had already run this season we knew we could get them" said Sean Lyons, who split 4:28.0 and 2:02.4 as the anchor on both record breaking teams.

Madison also had a record breaking performance when it ran 31.31 to smash the school record of 32.5 set in 1985.

"This was a big goal of ours," said Dylan Anderson, Madison's leadoff hurdler. "We had been so close to already this season (32.82 last month) and we figured if we could break our school record we'd also have a great chance to win the event."

SHUTTLE HURDLES

Mat Richards suffered second degree burns on both hands on Sunday night, **Abe Gertler** was wearing a back brace, and **Auger Ding** almost missed the race.

But those three seniors somehow found their way to the starting line to join senior Dylan Anderson to make history in the shuttle hurdles for Madison.

Anderson gave the Dodgers the lead right away, Gertler and Ding ran strong in the middle, and then Richards, competing with both hands heavily wrapped, came storming across the line first in **a red hot 31.31!!!!**

That not only secured a victory for Madison, but also **smashed the long time school record** of 32.5 set way back in 1985 and represents the **second fastest time in N.J. this season.**

Only 2013 national indoor shuttle hurdle champion Union Catholic (29.84) has run faster this year than Madison's 31.31.

"We were close to the school record earlier this season (31.82 at the Gardiner Relays on Dec. 21), and knew we could do it," said Anderson. "To break it by more than one second is great feeling.

It was amazing that Madison's lineup was in tact considering everything that happened leading up to the race.

Richards suffered a scare on Sunday night when he got burned while attempting to put a log on a fire.

"I slipped and fell and my hands landed on the hot bricks around the fire," said Richards.

"I had to go to the hospital, but no way I was going to miss this meet."

Gertler's back has been killing him recently.

“I went to the chiropractor on Saturday and they said I could compete,” said Gertler.
“My back has been bothering me, but no way I was going to let it slow me down.”
As for Ding, he was running late and got to the meet just in time.
“It's hard to believe everything that happened, but we were able to put it all together and accomplished our goal,” said Anderson.

DISTANCE MEDLEY RELAY

Morristown, aiming for the meet record of 10:46.5 set way back in 1977 by Morris Catholic, broke it by nearly 3 seconds with its winning time of **10:43.28..**

MORRISTOWN SPLITS

Greg Arabagian -3:17

John Vallachi - 55

Rudy Torres-2:02

Sean Lyons-4:28

4X200-METER RELAY

Randolph wins in 1:35.99

RANDOLPH SPLITS

Stephen Nalbach 23.7

Collin McAlmont 23.6

Nick Ciccaglione 24.2

James Lienhardt 23.7

4x800-METER RELAY

Morristown broke its second meet record of the night, this time running 8:22.21 to break the mark of 8:23.25 set in 2010 by Morristown.

MORRISTOWN SPLITS

Greg Arabagian-2:01.6

John Vallachi-2:09.4

Evan Quinn-2:08.5

Sean Lyons-2:02.4

SPRINT MEDLEY RELAY

Christian Kildal Brandt split **1:59.0** and brought **Mendham** across first in 3:42.99, just missing the meet record of 3:42.18.

SHOT PUT

Ethan Weiss (50-4) and **Matt Kraemer (50-3 3/4)** had the top two throws of the meet to give Mount Olive the win with a combined **100-8 1/4**. Weiss and Kraemer had both been over 50 before, but this was the first meet where they combined to top the century mark.

POLE VAULT

Mike Benz makes a meet best 14-0 and teammate **Chris Beute** cleared **11-0**, tying his **PR**, to give **Delbarton** the victory with a combined **25-0**.

HIGH JUMP

Anthony Zarro cleared a meet best 6-2 and **Ryan Schuren** made 5-3 to give **Randolph** the victory with a combined 11-5.

4X400-METER RELAY

Randolph wins the 4x400 in 3:36.08 to rally to finish second to **Delbarton** in the final yteam standings, 48-4.

RANDOLPH SPLITS

Stephen Nalbach 54.2

Dan Leanza 54.2

Nick Ciccaglione 54.3

Collin McAlmont 52.9

GIRLS

Mount Olive, led by **Keturah Orji, Alicia Warren, and Sarah Masukewicz**, burned up the track with three golds and a meet record on the way to its first title in 17 years at the 34th Morris County Girls Relay Championships.

Mount Olive, which outscored defending champion Mendham, 47 ½-42, piled up 42 of its points on the track, highlighted by its meet record 1:49.13 victory in the 4x200.

It's the first title for Mount Olive since 1997 and its third overall. It also won in 1990.

The Georgia-bound Orji, a two-time national triple jump champion, was her sensational self as she showed off her sprint speed by anchoring the 4x200 (25.8) and 4x400 (62.1) and splitting 59.5 on the runner-up sprint medley relay.

Warren also ran on the 4x200 4x400 and SM, and Masukewicz anchored the winning 4x800 (10:01.99) with a 2:25.7 split. **Suzanne Nimoh and Alexis Reyes** also had big meets. Nimoh ran on the 4x200 and 4x400, and Reyes ran a leg on the SM and 4x400.

Orji said it meant a lot to her team to put Mount Olive back in top.

“This really means a lot to us,” said Orji. “We had some injuries and weren't sure if we could win this, but everyone stepped up and we pulled it out. “I love being the history books so it was great to break that 4x200 record and help our team win this for the first time in a long time.”

Chatham and West Morris each broke school records.

Chatham pulled off a surprise victory in the shuttle hurdles when **Elizabeth Malatesta (8.8)**,

Erin O'Connor (8.7), Elaine Weaver (9.4) and Simone Kirton (8.0) combined to run a school record 34.98 in the second heat.

Both **Butler and Randolph, the top two seeds**, suffered a mishap on the second leg when both hurdlers went down, which opened the door for Chatham to steal the win.

“When we saw that it really lifted our spirits,” said O'Connor. “We knew we had a chance and we all got real excited. We knew we had a great opportunity to win.”

In the distance medley, **West Morris** received splits of 3:59.7 from **Brennan Sharkey**, 65.0 from **Katie Sabatino**, 2:32.9 from **Meg Lloyd**, and 5:01.4 from **Kylene Cochrane** to finish first in a school record 12:38.91, the second fastest time in the state this season. The old school record of 12:47.60 was set last year.

EVENT BY EVENT BREAKDOWN

SHUTTLE HURDLES

Butler and Randolph came in to the race as the top two teams in the county, but both suffered a mishap when their second hurdlers went down. Randolph won the heat in 35 high, but the falls by both teams opened the door for another team to grab the gold. **Chatham** took advantage by winning the second heat to finish first overall in a school record 34.98.

CHATHAM SPLITS

Elizabeth Malatesta- 8.8

Erin O'Connor-8.7

Elaine Weaver-9.4

Simone Kirton-8.0

DISTANCE MEDLEY RELAY

West Morris wins in a **school record 12:38.91**, the second fastest time in the state this season, as four teams break 13 minutes!!
The former school record of 12:47.60 was set last year.

WEST MORRIS SPLITS

Brennan Sharkey-3:59.7

Katie Sabatino-65.0

Meg Llyod-2:32.9

Kylene Cochrane-5:01.4

4X200-METER RELAY

Mount Olive takes down the meet record by stopping the clock at **1:49.13**.
The former record of 1:49. was set by **Chatham** in 2006?

MOUNT OLIVE SPLITS

Alicia Warren-27.3

Suzanne Nimoh- 27.7

Micaela Poggi 28.0

Keturah Orji- 25.8

4X800-METER RELAY

Mount Olive wins in 10:01.99.

MOUNT OLIVE SPLITS

Lindsay Schafer-2:32.7

Erin Schafer-2:32.4

Sara Christian-2:30.8

Sarah Masukewicz-2:25.7

SPRINT MEDLEY

Morris Hills wins it 4:24.14 as Ashleigh Thurston anchors on 2:23. Mount Olive gets 2nd in 4:29.23.

MORRIS HILLS SPLITS

Rhianna Follet-63.2

Chelsea Jorgensen-28.0

Casey Lyness 28.6

Ashleigh Thurston-2:23.3

4X400-METER RELAY

Mount Olive wins the 4x400 in 4:16.01

MOUNT OLIVE SPLITS

Alicia Warren-62.2

Suzanne Nimoh-65.8

Alexis Reyes-62.1

Keturah Orji-62.1

SHOT PUT

Helene Rowland of Madison had the top throw of the meet with a **37-1** and **Jefferson's Jordan Wildermuth (35-6 3/4)** and **Caitlin Noonan (33-6)** teamed up to win the event with a combined **69-0 3/4**.

HIGH JUMP

Sophomore Leah Wis of Montville, who is battling through a sore quad, had the top jump of the meet with a **5-4** and **Whippany Park sophomores Kristen Hall and Gina Dello Russo** each made **5-0** for a winning total of **10-0**.

POLE VAULT

Julia Mszanski cleared a meet best **10-0** and **Kelly Duggan** made **7-6** to give **Mendham** the victory with a combined **17-6**.

KEEPING TRACK

Morristown, with three sub 2 minute legs, won the boys 4x800 in a **NJ #3** and **US #5 8:05.73** at the Hispanic Games on Saturday night at the 168th Street Armory in New York.

Morristown's splits were 1:59 x for **Rudy ``El Flashito'' Torres**, 1:58 x for **Greg Arabagian**, 2:08 x for **John Vallachi**, and 1:59 x for **Sean Lyons**.

When the **Randolph boys** made an impressive late meet run to try to catch Delbarton at the Morris County Relays (they wound up second by two points), **Stephen Nalbach, Collin McAlmont and Greg Stickle** came up big for the Rams.

Nalbach had a tweaked hamstring and had an easy week prior to the meet and ran the shuttles, 4x200 and 4x400. McAlmont ran four races- the shuttles, 4x200, SMR, and 4x400. Stickle, a football and lacrosse player, and is out for his second season after missing his sophomore season with an injury. Stickle ran a very impressive 2:00 anchor leg on the runner-up SMR team.

The Randolph girls were missing some key runners due to illness (Carole Harsch and Margaret Thomson) at the county relays, but did receive strong performance from **Liz Wellman** (3:38 1,200/2:24 4x800) and **Nora McSorley** (2:23 in the DM/2:27 4x800).

The **33rd Cliff Back Invitational** is scheduled for this Friday (Jan. 10) at 4:30 p.m. at Drew University. **The Morris County Freshmen-Sophomore Championships** are on tap for this Monday (Jan. 13) at 4:30 p.m. at Drew.

