

MORRIS COUNTY REWIND

Mountain Lakes made history, **Keturah Orji** soared into the record book again, and **Abe Gertler**, the **Randolph girls**, **Christian-Kildal Brandt**, **Bria Saunders**, **Anthony Zarro**, **Nick Medway** and **Conor McClain** all turned in impressive performances this past week.

Let's take a look back at all the great highlights in Morris County Rewind.

THREE AMIGOS

Mountain Lakes, led by **Adam Franklin**, **Ben DeVenezia** and **Chris Luciano**, made school history last Sunday when the trio combined to score every point to spark the Lakers to its first sectional indoor title last Sunday.

Franklin won the 400-meter run in 52.51, placed first the high jump at 5-10 and smashed the meet record in the 55 dash in 6.65. DeVenezia won a race and placed in two others, while Luciano had second- and third-place finishes to spark Mountain Lakes to a 64-55 victory over powerhouse Hasbrouck Heights in Group 1 at the NJSIAA North Jersey, Section 1 championships at the Bennett Center in Toms River.

Franklin, DeVenezia and Luciano combined to score every point for Mountain Lakes, which won its first indoor sectional title. Hasbrouck Heights was seeking its fifth straight title.

As for winning the sectional title with three guys doing all the scoring, Franklin said the group was confident it could pull it off.

"Even though we only have a few guys, we knew we had a shot at winning this and we went out and did it," Franklin said. "I felt I could win my three events and we knew Ben and Chris would do what they always do in the distance races for us."

Luciano was second in the 3,200 (9:48.02) and third in the 1,600 in 4:37.41, while DeVenezia won the 800 (2:02.33), was second in the 1,600 (4:26.73), and fifth in the 3,200 (10:39.83).

"Those kids work so hard and have so much heart," Allison said. "I am so proud of how they performed. No one deserves this more than they do."

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Adam Franklin of Mountain Lakes was chosen by The Star-Ledger as the Track and Field Athlete of the Week. Here is his profile

JUST THE STATS: Franklin won the 55 dash in a meet record and personal best tying 6.65, finished first in the 400 in 52.51, and captured the high jump by clearing 5-10 to lead Mountain Lakes to its first indoor sectional title at the North Jersey, Section 1, Group 1 Championships at the Bennett Center in Toms River last Sunday.

REACTION TO YOUR PERFORMANCE: "I am very glad that all the hard work in the off season is paying off. I just want to get stronger and faster to reach a higher level."

THOUGHTS ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU AND YOUR TEAMMATES TO WIN THE SECTIONAL TITLE WITH JUST 3 GUYS SCORING ALL THE

POINTS: "It is really great to be able to say you were part of a team with 3 guys that won a championship. Chris (Luciano) and Ben (DeVenezia) are really great kids and we are all best of friends. I am with these guys almost everyday whether it is to workout or just hangout. It means the world to come out with such a huge victory with those two."

NEXT MEET: The State Group 1 Championships on Friday, February 14th. Franklin will run the 400 and 55.

PERSONAL BESTS

55-6.65
100-10.93
200-22.1
300-37.3
400-52.5
HJ-5'10"

HOW AND WHY DID YOU GET INVOLVED IN TRACK: "Well, freshmen year I decided to go out for track because I did not want to play lacrosse (as all my other friends played). Also I did not want to sit around. Freshmen year I only do the long jump, high jump, and triple jump. I only started running sophomore year, where I started with the 200m. I immediately loved the coaches, Vicki Allison and Sue Bessin, because of their encouragement, and belief in my abilities."

GREATEST STRENGTH: "I believe my greatest strength as a runner is my ability to accelerate and get faster as the race continues."

FAVORITE EVENT: "The 200 because I love running the curve on the track and I love

gaining speed. The whole aspect of being shot out of a cannon is so much fun."

BIGGEST BREAKTHROUGH MOMENT: ``In sophomore year, Mountain Lakes was competing against Boonton in our last conference meet. If we lost that day, they (Boonton) would have won the conference. Of course the deciding event came down to the high jump at the end. The feeling of everyone cheering around me as I cleared each height just made my day. The height was 5'10" and I was on my last attempt. I started running toward the bar and I cleared it. We won! Everyone rushed around me and started cheering. It was a great feeling."

BIGGEST PERSONAL GOALS: ``My goal is to repeat and win the 100 and 200 at counties and break my record for the 100, and the record for the 200. Also, come in the top 6 at the Meet of Champions."

BIGGEST TEAM GOALS FOR THE REST OF THE SEASON: ``Have our girls team and boys team perform well at groups and have everyone move on to the Meet of Champions. ``Also get ready for a great spring season."

GREATEST MOMENT IN TRACK: ``Winning the sectional championship with three guys scoring had to be the greatest moment in track for me and our town. The feeling of accomplishing something like that with such a small team is awesome."

FAVORITE MOVIE: Blades of Glory

FAVORITE TV SHOW: Sports Center

FAVORITE FOOD: Oysters

FAVORITE TRACK ATHLETE: Micheal Johnson

OTHER ACTIVITIES: Football and Jack & Jill

TRADING PLACES: Michael Jordan (when he was younger) because I love playing basketball and playing in the NBA would great.

PRESIDENT FOR A DAY: `` I would just make sure that everyone in the US had a place to live."

IN 10 YEARS: ``Working in Broadcast Communications."

COLLEGE PLANS: ``I have not committed to a school as of yet. I'm still visiting. I am also being recruited to play football. I have interest in The University of Rhode Island, Moravian, Wilkes, Virginia Wesleyan, Kings, and La Salle."

AIR ORJI KEEPS FLYING

Keturah Orji of Mount Olive added to her status as an All-Time great in the horizontal jumps when she smashed her own state record by soaring a **US #2 all-time 44-0 in the TJ** and added a **20-1 1/2** victory in the LJ at the Varsity Classic on Tuesday night at the New Balance Track and Field Center in N.Y. Both marks were meet records.

ORJI IS JUST AMAZING!!!!!!

``Air Orji" missed the national indoor TJ record by just 4 and 3/4 inches. The national record of 44-6 3/4 was set in 2007 by Ke'Nyia Richardson of Holy Names in Oakland, Calif.

The Georgia-bound Orji, the indoor and outdoor national TJ champion last year, leads the US this season in the TJ with her N.J. state record 44-0 and in the LJ with the 20-8 3/4 she went last month at the New Balance Games.

Orji will return to the runway at the New Balance Center to take aim at the national TJ record on Feb. 26 at the Eastern Championships.

CAN ORJI BECOME THE FIRST GIRL IN U.S. HIGH SCHOOL HISTORY (indoor or outdoors) TO HIT 45 IN THE TJ?

I WOULDN'T BET AGAINST IT!!!!

GERTLER TAKES HIS GAME TO NEW HEIGHTS

Abe Gertler of Madison had a career day when he came up with a huge breakthrough in the pole vault when the senior cleared a **Morris County record-tying 15-0** to finish fourth at the Varsity Classic on Tuesday night at the New Balance Track and Field Center in New York.

Gertler is now tied for the state lead at 15-0 with Luke Annichiarico of Old Tappan.

Gertler, who came into the Varsity Classic with a PR of 14-0, tied Jordan Pacheco of Morris Hills for the Morris County indoor record. Pacheco made 15-0 multiple times last winter.

SAUNDERS SPARKS PARSIPPANY

Double-winner **Bria Saunders** won the 400 in a meet record 58.09 and captured the 55 dash in 7.30 to lead ParsIPPany to a runner-up finish to Ramapo, 77-42, at the North Jersey, Section 1 Group 1 meet last Sunday at the Bennett Center in Toms River.

Also for ParsIPPany, Ally Schlosser placed 2nd in the 1600 in 5:18.31, and 5th in the 800

in 2:26.98. Freshman Haley Pignatelli placed 4th in the 1600 in 5:25.65 and 4th in the 3200 in 12:02.08. Jen Mylnar placed 5th in the 55 HH in 9:28, and the 4x400 team of Saunders, Mlynar, Megan Wizinewski, and Gabby Rachmaciej finished fifth in 4:17.69.

The Parsippany boys, seventh in North Jersey, Section 1, Group 2 with 23 points, had their best performance in years with Malik Francis placing 2nd in the hurdles in 8:19 and 6th in the 400 in 53.99. Peter Hernandez was 3rd in the 400 in 53.13, and Josh Crawford was 5th in the 55 in 6:88. The 4x400 team placed 3rd in 3:37.34 with Crawford. Aaron Wood, Francis, and Peter Hernandez.

TOUGH DECISION

Kylene Cochrane of West Morris had a tough choice to make-run the mile at the prestigious Millrose Games or compete at the state group meet and Meet of Of Champions?

Cochrane had opted for the Millrose Games, which will be held on Feb. 15 at the New Balance Track and Field Center in New York. That is the same day as the state Group 3 meet at the Bennett Center in Toms River, which caused an obvious scheduling conflict.

Cochrane will join Holmdel's Marin Warner in the mile at Millrose. Warner also choose Millrose over the state meets. Courtney Thompson of St. John Vianney went the other way, selecting the state meets over Millrose.

MR. EVERYTHING

There wasn't any athlete in the state that was busier or showed more versatility than **Nick Medway** of Whippany Park at the state sectionals last weekend at the Bennett Center in Toms River.

At the North Jersey, Section 2, Group 1 meet, Medway, a senior, won the high jump by clearing 6-0, finished second in the 55 hurdles in 8.10, second in the dash in 6.69 (the same time as the winner Darren Lindsey of Science), and 37-4 $\frac{3}{4}$ in the shot put. Medway racked up 28 of Whippany Park's 51 $\frac{1}{2}$ points, which placed the Wildcats second in the team standings behind Bernards (92).

ZARRO SOARS INTO THE RECORD BOOK

Senior **Anthony Zarro** of Randolph, who has been knocking on the 22 foot door in the long jump all season, finally crashed through it when he soared a school record 22-1 $\frac{1}{2}$ to place second at the Varsity Classic in New York this past Tuesday. Zarro's 22-1 $\frac{1}{2}$ is tied for No. 4 in the state this season and broke the Randolph school record of 21-10 $\frac{1}{4}$ that was set in 2005 by Nick Syzonenko at the Eastern Championships.

Zarro is the second Morris County long jumper to go over 22 feet this season. Montville

senior **Booker McLean** went 22-0, No. 2 in the state, at the Metropolitan Invitational last month.

KILDAL-BRANDT KEEPS ROLLING

Junior **Christian Kildal-Brandt** of Mendham, who set the county automatic time record in the 600 last month (1:20.50-No. 2 in the U.S. this season), stepped up to the 800 for the first time this season at the Varsity Classic this past Tuesday in New York, and he delivered another spectacular performance.

Kildal-Brandt, who has blossomed into a big star this season, didn't win the race, but his runner-up finish in a school indoor record of 1:54.8 is the fastest in the state this season and No. 9 in the nation this season. Kildal-Brandt came back after the 800 to split 49.0 on the runner-up 4x400 that ran 3:28.5, No. 14 in the state this season.

GREAT TRIPLE

Conor McClain of Morris Hills was scheduled to do two events, the shot put and the 55 dash, at the North Jersey, Section 1 Group 2 meet last Sunday at the Bennett Center in Toms River.

But after placing third in the shot put with a 47-2 ¼, the 55 hurdle trials hadn't begun yet. So McClain had enough time to jump into that event. McClain wound up sixth in the hurdles in 8.49, and capped his day by nearly placing in the dash as well, running a personal best 6.99 to finish seventh. McClain helped Morris Hills place fourth in the team standings with 38 ½ points.

RANDOLPH 4X800 SPARKLES IN N.Y.

It was just a matter of time before the **Randolph** girls, always one of the best 4x800 relay team in the state, dropped a fast time in that race.

That time came this past Tuesday when **Liz Wellman (2:20.6)**, **Carole Harsch (2:25.9)**, **Margaret Thomson (2:21.9)**, and **Nora McSorley (2:21.2)** combined to finish second at the Varsity Classic in New York in 9:29.6. That's the No. 2 time in the state this season and No. 9 nationally.

New Jersey now has six of the top 14 ranked 4x800 teams in the nation, including **US #1 Freehold Township (9:19.51)**.

KEEPING TRACK

Morristown finished sixth in the distance medley relay at the Varsity Classic in 10:36.6. The splits for Morristown were 3:14.0 for **Greg Arabagian**, **53.1 for John Vallachi**, **2:00.2 for Rudy Torres**, and **4:28.5 for Sean Lyons**.

COMING UP

The state sectional championships for the Group 3 and 4 schools is scheduled for this weekend. All meets will be held at the Bennett Center in Toms River. Also this weekend is the New Balance Collegiate Invitational at the New Balance Track and Field Center in New York.

HERE IS THE SECTIONAL SCHEDULE

Friday, Feb. 7-Central Jersey, Groups 3 and 4, 3:45 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 8-South Jersey, Groups 3 and 4, 9 a.m.

Saturday, Feb. 8-North Jersey, Sec. 2 Groups 3 and 4, 3:30 p.m.

Sunday, Feb. 9-North Jersey, Sec. 1 Group 3 and 4, 9 a.m.