

Bridgewater's Chokshi runs to crown

By JIM LAMBERT

Shawnee, No. 1 in The Star-Ledger Girls' Cross-Country Top 10, won its second straight girls' Group 4 championship yesterday when Janine Danks outdistanced Ines Rodriguez of Toms River North over the final 50 yards to take a decisive 41st place in the NJSSAA group championships at Holmdel County Park.

The top three teams and first 12 individuals in each group advanced to next Saturday's Meet of Champions on the 3.1-mile Holmdel course. The girls' race will go off at 11 a.m.

The individual champions were Janet Rue of Pitman in Group 1, Becky Leon of Cinnaminson in Group 2,

Marianne Livingston of Red Bank in Group 3 and Mona Chokshi of Bridgewater in Group 4.

The other team winners were Mater Dei of New Monmouth in Group 1, Cinnaminson in Group 2 and Northern Highlands in Group 3.

Shawnee was hurt by the loss of its No. 1 runner, Julie Goldstein, second in Group 4 last year in 20-05. She's been sidelined with stress fractures this season.

Danks knew what she had to do. Her coach, Mike Yurcho, spelled it out with shouts as she ran to the line.

Danks' surge to the tape in 21:56 proved to be the difference in the standings when Shawnee nipped Toms River North, 93-94.

Liz Moore led Shawnee when she finished sixth in 20:15.

"It was like a 50-yard dash," said Yurcho. "Janine passed her, then the other girl came back and Janine just got her at the tape. With Julie out for the season, we needed certain people to have big races, and that's what Janine gave us. She was the difference."

As expected Chokshi, a junior from Bridgewater, breezed to her third straight Group 4 championship and 46th consecutive victory in New Jersey with the days best time of 19:26.

The Group 4 race also produced the meets most inspiring performance when an exhausted Deanna Gastrock of West Milford passed Eileen Fitzgerald of Ridgewood with five yards to go and dove for the finish line to nip Krista Ferrara of Vineland to finish 12th in 20:39 and earn the final invitation to the Meet of Champions.

"I'm okay," said Gastrock who was treated for hyperventilation after the race. "I knew I had to pass them to get 12th, so I did everything I could."

Rue overcame tight hamstrings to win her second straight Group 1 championship in 20:00. Rue made her move right before the halfway mark to overtake Joni Ambrosia of Henry Hudson, who wound up second in 20:06.

"My left hamstring has been giving me the problems for the last three weeks," said Rue, with ice packs in place. "I've gone for therapy and thought I got rid of this problem. But they both got tight on me after I took the lead and I just said please, get me to the finish line."

Mater Dei triumphed in Group 1, outpointing Haddonfield, 60-76. Northern Highlands, ranked third,

won its first cross-country state championship in school history behind the efforts of Caroline Preece, third in 19:59, and Klara Zdenkova, 10th in 20:23.

"It was just a total effort on their parts," said head coach Jim Sok, coaching at Northern Highlands for 25 years.

Having Klara run 30 seconds faster than she's ever run and Caroline cutting 20 seconds off her best was the difference."

Livingston outkicked Kristen Hall of West Morris over the 100-yard homestretch to win the individual title in 19:50. Hall was second in 19:54.

The only other sub-19:00 was turned in by sophomore Leon of Cinnaminson, who won the Group 2 title in 19:41 to help her team take the team title.

TEAMS

1-Shawnee 93, 2-Toms River North 94, 3-Ridgewood 143, 4-Keary 164, 5-Bridgewater 230, 6-Vineland 184, 7-Marboro 199, 8-Woodbridge 230, 9-Freeland Township 264, 10-Toms River East

INDIVIDUALS

1-Marianne Livingston, Red Bank 19:50, 2-Kristen Hall, West Morris 19:54, 3-Caroline Preece, Northern Highlands 19:59, 4-Julie Schick, Mainland 20:03, 5-Christine Engel, Mt. Olive 20:14, 6-Mary Pat Erickson, Red Bank 20:15, 7-Megan Phillips, Ocean Township 20:17, 8-Amy Hillman, 20:23, 9-Klara Zdenkova, Northern Highlands 20:23, 10-Danielle Cucco, Morris Knolls 20:27, 11-Cathy Williams, Westbury Hills 20:28, 12-Sarah Hillabrough 20:29, 13-Christina Boyden, North Hunterdon 20:29, 14-Coleen Carson, Red Bank 20:35, 15-Danielle Rollick, Paul VI 20:41, 16-Michelle Street, Absegami 20:42, 20-Alli Foreman, Mainland 20:48.

GROUP 1

TEAMS: 1-Cinnaminson 97, 2-Kittatinny 102, 3-Newton 117, 4-Somersville 129, 5-Bishop Eustace 156, 6-Kearnes 175, 7-Delaware Valley 241, 8-Kingsway 255, 9-Freehold Borough 256, 10-West Deptford 269, 11-Rutherford 275, 12-Carfield 282, 13-Immaculata 288, 14-Dover 288, 15-Hillside 306, 16-Bonnton 305, 17-Buena 306, 18-Allison 414, 19-Buller 499, 20-Englewood 519.

INDIVIDUALS

1-Becky Leon, Cinnaminson 19:41, 2-Erica More, Kingsway 20:17, 3-Melissa Zabel, Chatham 20:36, 4-Catherine Kinsey, West Deptford 20:41, 5-Monica Patel, South Plainfield 20:42, 6-Renee Norcross, Voorhees 20:46, 7-Tricia Hafner, Cinnaminson 20:54, 8-Christy Mucha, Newton 21:01, 9-Eileen Fahy, Rutherford 21:03, 10-Vivette Pala, Mendham 21:05, 11-Dana Stypinski, Cinnaminson 21:09, 12-Marie Gutowski, Bishop Eustace 21:09, 13-Dawn Gunther, Kittatinny 21:10, 14-Jessica Smith, Bishop Eustace 21:15, 15-Sue Freehold Borough 21:37, 17-Linda Seymour, Somerville 21:39, 18-Dana Auler, Newton 21:39, 19-Melodie Montivero, Long Branch 21:43, 20-Amber Malinowski, Kittatinny 21:45.

GROUP 2

TEAMS: 1-Mater Dei 60, 2-Haddonfield 76, 3-Palmdale Park 100, 4-Round Brook 104, 5-Pingry 187, 6-Woodbury 208, 7-Highland Park 229, 8-Middletown 233, 9-Helshorne 240, 10-Paulsboro 241, 11-Emerson Borough 277, 12-Schallick 288, 13-Arts 292, 14-Verona 305, 15-Cinnaminson 334, 16-Croton 341, 17-North Arlington 461.

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GROUP 3

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275, 11-Middletown South 282, 12-Fair Lawn 284, 13-Verona 311, 14-Livingston 341, 15-Westfield 357, 16-Highland 367, 17-West Orange 388, 18-Roxbury 402, 19-Immaculate Heart 472, 20-Lincoln 517.

INDIVIDUALS: 1-Mona Chokshi, Bridgewater 19:50, 2-Jenna Rogers, Ridgewood 19:49, 3-Heather Bury, West Orange 19:51, 4-Paula Costa, Keary 19:54, 5-Tracy Romo, Verona 20:11, 6-Liz More, Shawnee 20:17, 7-Sonya Swaha, Piscataway 20:14, 8-Vanessa McClure, Paterson-Kennedy 20:21, 9-Ariana Jensen, Marlboro 20:30, 10-Kendall Castillo, Freshkill Township 20:32, 11-Vivida Castillo, Memorial 20:39, 12-Deanne Gastrock, West Milford 20:39, 13-Ferrara Vineland 20:39, 14-Eileen Fitzgerald, Ridgewood 20:40, 15-Amy O'Donnell, Toms River East 20:42, 16-Alyson Lamko, Toms River North 20:54, 17-Annamarie Richards, Keary 20:54, 18-Jennifer Flood, Toms River North 21:01, 19-Amber Estok, Toms River North 21:03, 20-Kim Hopkins, Trenton 21:11.

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Becky Leon of Cinnaminson runs to victory in NJSSAA Group 2 girls' cross-country championships yesterday at Holmdel Park

Connor TDs trigger Pingry to 43-13 romp

Pingry, behind Josh Connor, took charge in the first quarter on the way to a 43-13 football victory over the McCorkle School yesterday in Martinsville.

Connor scored on runs of five and 47 yards in the first when Pingry (2-7) pulled away to a 22-0 lead. Later in the quarter, Michael Breheny took it in from the 10.

Pingry increased its lead to 36-0 in the second period behind the passing of Rodney Sherman. The senior quarterback hit Terry Egan for a 40-yard

touchdown and Jeff Tong from five yards out. Jason Stabell made it 43-0 early in the third with a one-yard run.

McCorkle (0-9) scored once in each of the last two quarters. Dorian Craig went in from the three in the third and James Holloway hit Craig with a six-yard TD pass in the fourth.

Pingry
McCorkle School 22 0 7 0-43
P-Connor 1 run (Connor kick)
P-Connor 6 pass (Connor kick)
P-Breheny 10 run (Breheny pass from Sherman)
P-Egan 40 pass from Sherman (Connor kick)
P-Tong 5 pass from Sherman (Connor kick)
M-Craig 6 pass from Holloway (Donnelly kick)



Chatham's Melissa Zobel placed third in the girls' Group 2 race yesterday at Holmdel Park



Kristen Hall of West Morris is on her way to a second-place finish in Group 3 girls' race yesterday