

IN THE SCHOOLS

Mt. Olive, Morris Hills triumph

By JIM LAMBERT

BOYS X-C

In one of the most dominant and impressive team performances of the day, senior Chris Robinson finished first in 18:49 and led a sweep of the first three places for North Hunterdon, fifth in the Star-Ledger Boys' Cross-Country Top 10, when the perennial state power rolled to its fourth straight group 3 title at the NJSIAA Central Jersey Cross-Country Championships yesterday in Holmdel Park.

Also at Holmdel, East Brunswick won Group 4 for the first time since 1982, Holmdel made it four straight in group 2 and Bernards led by Jeff Finline's 17:51 victory, captured Group 1 for the first time since 1988.

The biggest shock of the day came at the South Jersey meet on a flat and st Kingsway High course in Swedesboro when No. 3 Highland Regional, the defending state Group 4 champion, finished a disappointing fourth. Sixth-ranked Toms River East, relying again on its tight pack, finished first in Group with Cherokee second and Eastern third.

Everything else went as expected South Jersey as No. 8 Toms River South in Group 3, Haddonfield in group 2 and Maple Shade in Group 1 retained their titles. In one of the best individual matchups of the day,

feated Maitland's Scott Keyser, 15:11 to 15:19, in South Jersey, Group 3.

In North Jersey, Section 1 at Garret Mountain in West Paterson, No. 10 Ridgewood easily won Group 4, Demarest won Group 3, Newton, led by Ray Biersback's 16:51 victory, finished first in Group 2 and Palisades Park successfully defended in Group 1.

At the North Jersey, Section 2 meet at Warinanco Park in Elizabeth, No. 4 Westfield, with Matt Elmuccio winning for the third straight time, repeated in Group 4. Steve Slattery won in 17:14 to help Mt. Olive win Group 3. No. 9 Morris Hills, which lost to Jefferson, 42-52 last year, avenged that defeat by beating Jefferson, 34-41, to win Group 2 and in Group 1, Whippany Park dethroned Science.

The top five teams and top 10 individuals in each group in each section earned a ticket into the state group championships on Nov. 11 at Holmdel Park. At the group championships, the top three teams and the top 10 individuals running for other schools will qualify for the NJSIAA Meet of Champions at Holmdel on Nov. 18.

In North Hunterdon's victory, senior Chris Dolan was second to Robinson in 16:55, senior Jon Tillman, the

17:30, sophomore Juan York was eighth in 17:57 and freshman Nathan (Gunner) Sisco was 10th in 18:01. That's a team average of 17:26.

"Our top three can run with anyone in the state," said North Hunterdon coach Bob O'Rourke. "But our fourth and fifth guys hold the keys. I don't like to look past the Group 3 race, but I don't think CBA (the No. 1 ranked team) has things locked up at the Meet of Champions. We're not going to give anything away."

Jay Wassell of Highland, the defending South Jersey, Group 4 champion, repeated as expected in 15:32 and teammate Nick Noquer was third in 15:56. Highland's third man, Kevin Connor, was 16th in 16:27, but it's fourth man, Mike O'Neil, was 1:25 behind Connor in 63d in 17:52 and fifthman Jason Joseph was 70th in 17:57. Meanwhile, Toms River East's first man, Jim Rutzler was fourth in 16:01 and fifth man Pat Anderson was 29th in 16:54 for a gap of just 53 seconds.

The most bizarre race of the day involved Elmuccio and Morristown sophomore Tom DeSordo in North Jersey, Section 2, Group 4.

DeSordo held about a 10-yard

lead on Elmuccio as the two approached the two-mile mark. When DeSordo veered right instead of staying straight. In the spirit of good sportsmanship, Elmuccio yelled to DeSordo and pointed him in the right direction. According to a race official, DeSordo's mishap cost him about three seconds and cut his lead to just a couple of yards.

Elmuccio stayed on DeSordo's tail until they hit the track. Then Elmuccio unleashed his wicked kick and closed with a 67-second final quarter-mile to pull away from DeSordo for a 16:52 victory. DeSordo, who won the sophomore division at the New Jersey Catholic Conference Class Meet at Warinanco last month, was second in 16:57.

"He was making all kinds of cuts throughout the race," said Elmuccio. "I don't think he was familiar with the course. When he made that turn, I just yelled for him to go in the right direction."

"I never had any doubts about my standing in the race. I have a lot of confidence in my kick and I knew coming onto the track that I would eventually grab the lead."

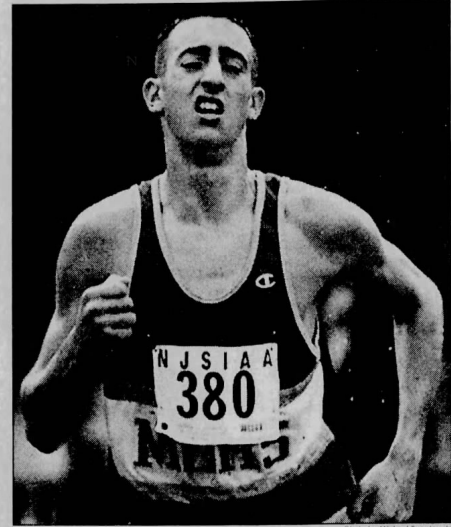


Photo by Michael Sypniewski

Steve Slattery of Mount Olive wins Group 3 meet at Warinanco Park

BOYS STATE SECTIONAL CROSS-COUNTRY RESULTS

NORTH JERSEY, SECTION 2

Valley 287, 11-Passaic Tech 365, 12-West Milford 384, 13-Easton 394, 14-Doverton 404

75, 3-Middletown North 90, 4-Hunterdon Cen-

terbury 247, 11-Millville 287, 12-Lenape 289, 13-Atlantic City 313, 14-Southern Regional 314