

IN THE SCHOOLS

Elmuccio leads Westfield; N. Hunterdon triumphs again

By JIM LAMBERT

Elmuccio celebrated his 17th birthday by running 16:27.2 to win the 4 race for the second straight and lead Westfield, No. 2 in The Ledger Top 10 and runner-up the two years, to its first state title 1981 at the NISIAA Boys' Group Country Championships yesterday at Holmdel Park.

One of the most impressive performances of the season, top Christian Brothers, behind Eric Savoth's 16:27.2 victory, avenged last year's loss to Paul VI by whipping its rival, 22-68, to win the Parochial A for a record 12th time. Paul VI is tied sixth.

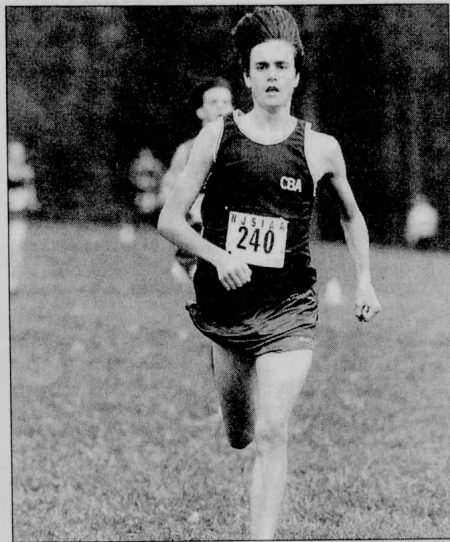
Unranked Holmdel ran its best of the season to surprise No. 9 Hills, which beat Holmdel last year, to repeat in Group 2. In Group 3, North Hunterdon averaged to win its fourth straight title and kicked Mainland knocked out of No. 8 River South, 111-124, to place 14.

Mike LaLonde finished first in 4 to lead No. 7 Pope John to a second straight title in Group 1. In each race, the top three teams first 10 individuals who ran for teams automatically qualified for Friday's state Meet of Champions at the Park. The M of C girls races at 11 a.m. and the boys' races at 11 a.m.

Westfield just missed winning 4 in 1993 when it placed second Eastern on a sixth-runner tiebreaker. Last year, Westfield finished third to Highland Regional, 67-92, field, which scored 91 points through yesterday by beating ranked teams. No. 10 Ridgewood second with 124, No. 5 Highland third with 139 and No. 4 Toms River East finished fifth with 141.

"It feels nice to finally win after close the last two years," said field coach Jack Martin. "This is a good win. We've had Matt as our real nice pack from two to three years ago."

In addition to Elmuccio's heroics, field received a gutsy performance from Abdallah Simaika. About 600 into the race, Simaika stopped about 10 seconds while he vomited,



Eric Savoth of CBA heads for finish line and victory in boys Parochial A cross country race in state groups meet yesterday.

but he forced himself to continue and wound up as Westfield's fourth man, 27th overall, in 17:35.9.

"We might still have won if Abdallah dropped out, but it would have been a lot hairier," said Martin. "He showed a lot of guts and certainly was a big reason why we were able to win."

As for Elmuccio, the wicked-kicking junior didn't wait until late to grab the lead as he so often does. Instead, he shot to the front near the mile mark and was never seriously threatened.

"I wanted to work hard early and save something for the end," said Elmuccio, who, along with Savoth, had the fastest times of the day at 16:27.2 in their races. "Yeah, this was a real nice way to celebrate my birthday."

Elmuccio, a junior, is one of the favorites to win the M of C title.

"I expect to be right there and I feel good about my chances of winning."

In the Parochial A race, CBA averaged 16:37, had its fourth man in before Paul VI's first and 49 seconds separated Savoth and No. 5 man Bill Hoffman, ninth in 17:19. Last year, Paul VI pounded CBA, 25-57, and then went on to win the M of C.

"Last year, we were intimidated by them and got rocked," said CBA's Brian Cunniff, fourth in 16:49.7. "We were definitely motivated by that. They are our rivals and we always want to win."

"It's always going to be a war when we go up against them," said CBA's Brian Bennett, third in 16:38.2. "That's just the way it is."

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year," said CBA coach Tom Heath. "But this didn't mean anything. Next week is what matters most."

CBA is the heavy favorite to extend its state record to eight M of C titles.

As advertised, the best individual matchup came in Group 3 where Mainland's Scott Keyser held off Central Regional's Sean McCafferty to win in 16:32. McCafferty was second in 16:34. Keyser, second to McCafferty in the South Jersey sectional two weeks ago, has a 2-1 edge on McCafferty this season. McCafferty beat Keyser at the Shore Coaches meet.

North Hunterdon's Chris Robinson, who won six in 17:07, held the lead going into the bowl, but he cramped up and wasn't able to respond to the surges made by Keyser and McCafferty. Keyser opened about a 25-yard gap as he came out of the bowl, but McCafferty quickly closed the deficit to about 10 yards with a half mile to go.

"I thought for sure he was going to get me," Keyser said. "He's got a kick and I felt him coming. I wanted to build a lead, so I hammered coming out of the bowl because I know how good he is on the flats."

In the D Division race at the Shore Coaches meet last month at Holmdel, Morris Hills finished second with 105 points behind Pope John and Holmdel was third with 120. Yesterday, Holmdel beat runner-up Morris Hills, 65-103.

One of the keys for Holmdel was that its No. 5 man, Steve Christenson, beat Morris Hills' fourth man, Holmdel was led by the 1994 Group 2 champion, Rich Christenson, Steve's twin, who was second in 17:17. Holmdel also received a clutch fifth from Erik Olson in 17:23.5. Haddonfield's Eric Bennett won the race in 17:13.9.

"I'm shocked," said Holmdel coach Bill Loughran. "We were hoping to catch lightning in a bottle and we did. We knew we had to run our best race of the season and that Morris Hills would have to be a little off and that's what happened. I prayed for rain all week and we got it. I felt that a wet course would favor us because we always run here. I was just hoping to get one guy in the top 10, but Rich and Erik ran great races. We were so inconsistent all year. But today the guys put it all together when it counted most. This is sweeter than last year."



They're off and running as boys Parochial A race begins in state group championships yesterday.

BOYS STATE GROUP CHAMPIONSHIPS

GROUP 1
TEAMS: 1-Westfield 124, 2-Ridgewood 124, 3-Highland Regional 139, 4-Toms River East 141, 5-East Brunswick 216, 6-Vineland 27, 7-Kearny 240, 8-Cherokee 252, 9-Newark East Side 262, 10-Old Bridge 271, 11-Hunterdon Central 278, 12-Morristown 280, 13-Randolph 291, 14-Eastern 298, 15-Middletown North 305, 16-Passaic/Del. 317, 17-West Valley 335, 18-Vernon 357, 19-Clifton 436.

INDIVIDUALS: 1-Matt Elmuccio, Westfield 16:27.2; 2-John Wassili, Highland Regional 16:34.8; 3-Roger Munoz, Kearny 16:37; 4-Nick Nugner, Highland Regional 16:47.7; 5-Kyle Sany, Toms River East 17:12.1; 6-Drew Pronko, Morris Knolls 17:01.7; 7-Mark Freund, Eastern 17:02.4; 8-Wilfredo Rivera, Old Bridge 17:06.1; 9-Tom Delsordo, Morristown 17:07.7; 10-Skip Allen, Hunterdon Central 17:11.1; 11-Jim Rutter, Toms River East 17:13.1; 12-Kevin Colmer, Highland Regional 17:13.9; 13-Rich Christenson, Westfield 17:14.5; 15-Nell Burr, Ridgewood 17:16.1; 16-Kyle Wilkowsky, Hunterdon Central 17:16.5; 17-Steven Alica, Vineland 17:16.9; 18-Bernardo Fraser, Passaic 17:17; 19-Mike Cohen, Ridgewood 17:23.8; 20-Ryan Stelvik, Westfield 17:25.2.

GROUP 2
TEAMS: 1-North Hunterdon 34, 2-Mainland 111, 3-Toms River South 124, 4-Highstown 174, 5-Manchester Township 178, 6-Cumberland 199, 7-Williamstown 217, 8-Watchung Hills 222, 9-South Brunswick 230, 10-Demarest 246, 11-Mt. Olive 248, 12-Cranford 276, 13-Passaic Valley 346, 14-Paramus 357, 15-West Morris 358, 16-Hamilton North 381, 17-Phillipsburg 384, 18-Scott Plains 388, 19-Garfield 394, 20-High Point 494.

INDIVIDUALS: 1-Scott Keyser, Mainland 16:32; 2-Sean McCafferty, Central Regional 16:34.8; 3-Steve Slattery, Mt. Olive 16:51.9; 4-Jason Klopfach, Toms River South 16:58.8; 5-Andrew Knight, Ramapo 17:02.6; 6-Chris Robinson, North Hunterdon 17:01.7; 7-Chris Dolan, North Hunterdon 17:10.9; 8-Ed Letts, Middle Township 17:15.4; 9-Matt Lathans, Kidde Township 17:26.5; 10-Brendan Ryan, Egg Harbor 17:29; 11-Rahab Lynch, Delco 17:31.5; 12-Eric Herold, Lacey 17:38.9; 13-Joe Gelsmar, Hamilton West 17:40.6; 14-Isidro Pimentel, Snyder 17:41.1; 15-Cary Snyder, Demarest 17:44.3; 17-Jeremy Battles, River Dell 17:46.5; 18-Nathan Sisco, North Hunterdon 17:46.8; 19-Peter Davis, Toms River South 17:53.4; 20-Tim Kober, Watchung Hills 17:56.9.

GROUP 3
TEAMS: 1-Holmdel 65, 2-Morris Hills 103, 3-Haddonfield 112, 4-Jefferson 115, 5-Somerville 145, 6-Voorhees 157, 7-Newton 178, 8-Stratton 290, 9-Clearview 290, 10-Pinebluffs 303, 11-Brighton 306, 12-Chatam 325, 13-Freeland Borough 345, 14-Caldwell 348, 15-Matawan 349, 16-Dover 392, 17-Hatfield 407, 18-Westwood 414, 19-Rutherford 484, 20-Walkerville 400.

INDIVIDUALS: 1-Eric Bennett, Haddonfield 17:13.9; 2-Rich Christenson, Holmdel 17:17.7; 3-Mark Kitz, Carteret 17:20.4; 4-Scott Clayton, Pinebluffs 17:22.3; 5-Adam VanAntwerp, Jefferson 17:23.5; 6-Erik Olson, Holmdel 17:30; 7-Jason Heller, Voorhees 17:33.4; 8-Joe Braithwaite, Asbury Park 17:37.2; 9-Sloan Fisk, Haddonfield 17:43.3; 10-Ray Biersbach, Newton 17:52.4; 11-Aaron Kinsley, West Deptford 17:52.4; 12-Eric Egenolf, Freehold Borough 17:52.9; 13-Mike McCurdy, Morris Hills 17:55.1; 14-Nixon Himan, Clearview 17:58.9; 15-Forest Jones, Morris Hills 17:59.5; 16-Brian Bergen, Caldwell 18:02.1; 17-Dave Elmquist, Holmdel 18:04.4; 18-Kevin Dulio, Morris Hills 18:07.5; 19-Willy Towle, Newton 18:09.1; 20-Tristan Schiormann, Holmdel 18:10.

GROUP 4
TEAMS: 1-Palmsades Park 88, 2-Bernards 96, 3-Henry Hudson 131, 4-Montgomery 141, 5-Metuchen 167, 6-Maple Shade 17, 7-Haddon Township 218, 8-HighPoint Park 221, 9-Newark Science 267, 10-Bogota 301, 11-A.P. Schalk 304, 12-Saddle Brook 304, 13-Emerson Borough 322, 14-Park Ridge 334, 15-Point Pleasant Beach 358, 16-Kinnelon 370, 17-Keansburg 375, 18-Plumville 397, 19-Point Pleasant 454.

INDIVIDUALS: 1-Pat Ryan, Glassboro 17:04.6; 2-Jaime Cortes, Palisades Park 17:10.1; 3-Jeff Clark, Bogota 17:12.9; 4-Adam Sharf, Warwick 17:22.2; 5-Diego Giffone, Palisades Park 17:25.1; 6-Frank Antonelli, Point Pleasant Beach 17:26; 7-John Nespolo, Pequannock 17:30; 8-Bobby Goers, Palisades Park 17:30.4; 9-Hugo Juarez, Palisades Park 17:35.6; 10-Mike Fulton, Maple Shade 17:37.3; 11-Chris Kulik, Bernards 17:44.7; 12-Jay McGovern, Henry Hudson 17:45.1; 13-Brian Sailer, Whiggam Park 17:50.8; 14-Hezalia Cassucha, Emerson Borough 17:51; 15-Clinton Blackmore, South River 17:57.3; 16-Jungyong Pak, Haddon Township 17:57.6; 17-Gilby Hawkins, Leonia 17:58.4; 18-Scott Vestch, Montgomery 17:58.9; 19-Tom Skaggs, Maple Shade 18:02.2; 20-Dave McGovern, Henry Hudson 18:05.

PAROCHIAL A
TEAMS: 1-Christian Brothers 22, 2-Paul VI 48, 3-Paramus Catholic 120, 4-Seton Hall Prep 132, 5-Bergen Catholic 169, 6-St. Joseph's (Met.) 187, 7-Don Bosco Prep 192, 8-Bishop Ahern 214, 9-Delbarton 207, 10-Nichols Dome 207, 11-Hudson Catholic 231, 12-St. Peter's Prep 227, 13-Magr. Donovan 24, 14-Holy Cross 364, 15-Queen of Peace 377.

INDIVIDUALS: 1-Eric Savoth, Christian Brothers 16:30; 2-Brian Bennett, Christian Brothers 16:38.2; 3-Brian Cunniff, Christian Brothers 16:49.7; 4-Terence Rozler-Byrd, Christian Brothers 16:53.7; 5-Austin O'Reilly, Magr. Donovan 17:06.4; 6-Andrew Zupia, Paramus Catholic 17:07.6; 7-Ryan Anderson, Paul VI 17:14.4; 8-Matt McNally, Paul VI 17:22.2; 10-Kevin Gilman, Bergen Catholic 17:23.2; 12-Brian Bach, Paul VI 17:24.2; 13-Marco Alves, Queen of Peace 17:31.4; 14-Dan Lawton, Seton Hall Prep 17:32.4; 15-Craig Noonan, Seton Hall Prep 17:35.8; 16-Joe Dichiera, Christian Brothers 17:36.5; 17-Kurt Erier, Don Bosco Prep 17:40.1; 18-Adam Huber, Paul VI 17:40.4; 19-Robert Zagula, Paramus Catholic 17:41.2; 20-Greg Blazick, Paul VI 17:46.2; 21-Steven Seiberger, Bishop Ahern 17:47.8; 22-Ray Driscoll, St. Joseph's (Met.) 17:48.3; 23-Doug Bennett, Delbarton 17:52.

PAROCHIAL B
TEAMS: 1-Pope John 26, 2-Red Bank Catholic 80, 3-St. John Vianney 128, 4-Bishop Eustace 137, 5-Piney 160, 6-Sacred Heart 201, 7-Roselle Catholic 204, 8-St. Rose 254, 9-Gloucester Catholic 272, 10-St. James 295, 11-Union Catholic 298, 12-Immaculata 327, 13-Mater Del 38, 14-Newark Academy 388, 15-Morris Catholic 400, 16-Wilwood Catholic 405, 17-Montclair Immaculate 407, 18-Eastern Christian 409, 19-St. Joseph (Hampton) 54, 20-Oratory Prep 457, 21-St. Mary's (Rum.) 416.

INDIVIDUALS: 1-Mike LaLonde, Pope John 16:28.4; 2-John Clark, Red Bank Catholic 16:31.9; 3-Mike McGowan, Bishop Eustace 17:16.7; 4-Kevin Sacco, Sacred Heart 17:27.8; 5-Connor Fox, Pope John 17:31.5; 6-Edu Juarez, Pope John 17:31.8; 7-Kevin Weatherill, St. James 17:38.9; 8-Mark Woolley, Pope John 17:41.5; 9-Andrew Grady, Piney 17:48.4; 10-Matt Dav, Pope John 17:51.3; 11-Chris Cummins, Bishop Eustace 17:55; 12-Paul Cicci, St. John Vianney 17:56.9; 13-Christopher Navia, Union Catholic 17:58.4; 14-Damian Gallagher, Gloucester Catholic 18:01; 15-Michael Maguire, St. Rose 18:04.5; 16-Martin Kerrigan, Red Bank Catholic 18:06.7; 17-Mike Freppau, St. John Vianney 18:09.2; 18-Derek Cunningham, Red Bank Catholic 18:10.9; 19-Douglas Campbell, Red Bank Catholic 18:11; 20-Michael Herrode, Good Counsel 18:12.6; 21-Alex Torres, Roselle Catholic 18:15.8.