

Stage set for Burico's best in County

Gold medals await top performers in meet

Halimah Bashir, Erica Davis, Rose Perry, Aleyna Schafer and Kristen Tricocci each own two. Kim Bonner, Ariel Brockman, Abby Campbell, Danielle Neukirch, Danielle O'Reilly and Kristine Slivinski all have one.

Meanwhile, Okechi Ogbuokiri, Brittnee Bynoe, Latasha Leake, Tabatha Haskins, Lenore Crumel and the rest of Burlington County's best girls track athletes will be shooting for their first coveted County Open title tomorrow at Maple Shade High School.

Ogbuokiri, the 2002 BCT Girls Track Athlete of the Year, will be the favorite to take home at least two gold medals, depending on how many events she enters, while the most hotly contested event could be the high jump.

Shawnee junior Campbell won the event two years ago, as a freshman, and Cinnaminson's Tricocci took first last year as a freshman, but the two could be in for a uphill battle against Northern Burlington's Leake.



Ed Kenney
Girl Track

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GOLD From D1

Tricocci, who jumped 5-5 in the winter and went 5-4 last Saturday for first place in the BCL Patriot Division meet, will be at a slight disadvantage as she will be competing in at least two other events, while Campbell and Leake will concentrate mostly on the jumps.

Leake has jumped 5-7 this spring and won the Liberty with a jump of 5-6. Campbell jumped 5-8 a year ago and is hot with recent victories at Ike Willis and the Olympic Conference Championships.

"I'm looking forward to it," Campbell said. "I really think having good competition helps."

Meanwhile, Ogbuokiri is coming off a pair of victories (400-meter intermediate hurdles and 800 run) at last weekend's Liberty meet.

Her 2:15.49 in the 800 and 1:04.9 in the 400 IM are the two best times by a county athlete, this year. She owns the fastest 400 time (54.24 indoors) of any county girl.

If Ogbuokiri opts not to run the intermediate hurdles, look for teammate Rhea Mann to edge the likes of Lenape's Kristalynn Jones, Holy Cross' Ave Moran and Maple Shade's Danielle Diblasio.

Rancocas Valley's Renee Passalacqua and defending champion Neukirch of Shawnee are two runners who could give Ogbuokiri fits in the half-mile, while Bordentown's Crumel and Willingboro's Bashir will provide the stiffest competition in the 400.

Crumel, a sophomore, is coming off three meet records at last week's Patriot meet, including the day's fastest times in the 100, 200 and 400. Bashir, who has been bothered by a quad injury and strep throat, appears ready to defend her 2002 titles in both the 200 and 400.

Brockman is the favorite to repeat as 100 champion. The Cherokee senior is the defending champ and has taken first at Ike Willis and the Olympic meet. On Wednesday at the Olympic meet, Brockman ran 11.8 in the 100 and 24.8 in the 200, both of which are best in the county this year.

Willingboro junior Channel Hamilton took first in both sprints at the Liberty meet last weekend and could make some noise in both events tomorrow.

The 100 high hurdles should be Kim Allen's to win, but the Willingboro junior has been slowed with a foot injury. If she doesn't take top honors, don't be surprised if Mann, Jones, Shawnee's Haskins or Cinnaminson's Tricocci go home with the gold.

Tricocci is the favorite to defend her 2002 long jump title. The Cinnaminson sophomore has jumped 18-1/4 this season, but could be pushed by Leake or Willingboro freshman Erica Cook.

In the throws, Riverside's Perry and Northern Burlington's Davis have both had good runs. Davis won both the shot put and the discus in 2001 and Perry took both events last year.

If things go as planned, look for Perry to take the gold in the

shot and Davis to win the disc. If there are any surprises, Shawnee's Diana Mack or Rancocas Valley's Stephanie Daniels could be heard from.

The big question is in the javelin, where two-time defending champion Schafer of Northern Burlington will have her hands full with the likes of Mack and Rancocas Valley's Kelly Bass, who have both thrown over 110 feet this spring.

A lot has changed in the county over the past 12 months involving the two distance events. Meghan Hughes, the defending 3,200 champion, is not competing this spring and a pair of freshman — Willingboro's Brittnee Bynoe and Cherokee's Lisa Burkholder — have catapulted to the top of the list of distance runners.

Bynoe had a very good fall and a great winter, but doesn't appear to be at 100 percent recently, while Burkholder has really turned it on over the past few

weeks, with strong 1,600 showings at Ike Willis (5:19.2 for third place) and the Olympic meet (5:12.4 for first).

Both will be among the favorites, but are not guaranteed medals in fields that consist of defending 1,600 champion Slivinski of Lenape, Rancocas Valley's Jackie Dunn, Cherokee's Mahia Lyles and the Shawnee trio of Kim Bonner, Katie Quinn and Robin McDowell.

Cinnaminson's Jenny Matteson, Moorestown's Caroline Hipple and Kate Laramie, Northern's Sara Grossman and Holy Cross' Kelly Martin could sneak into medal contention in one of the distance events.

Shawnee's O'Reilly will look to hold off Burlington Township's Nicole Zwartjes and Moorestown's Jess Kloss to defend her pole vault title.

Ed Kenney is a sports writer for the Burlington County Times. His e-mail address is ekenny@phillyburbs.com.