

New coach, high hopes for Chiefs

The Cherokee High School girls cross country team has a new coach when the Chiefs open against Triton and Cherry Hill East next week.

Chris Tarello, a former standout

track runner at Shawnee High School and Rider University, takes over the helm for Amy Bodine.

An assistant to Stephen Shaklee for the Cherokee boys team last fall, Tarello was hired in late July.

This isn't Tarello's first head coaching position. Three years ago, he went 6-2 as coach of the Sacred Heart girls cross country team, then guided the school's indoor girls program the same year.

The Chiefs are short on numbers
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Cross Country

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for Tarello's first season. There are only 11 girls out, including just one freshman.

"I was hired before I had a chance to talk to any of the girls (about coming out for the team)," said Tarello, who was an assistant distance coach

for Shawnee's girls track program the last two years.

Five letterwinners returning from last year's 4-4 team make up the nucleus of this year's squad.

Junior Michelle Bilicki, who won last Saturday's home scrimmage with Lenape, Delran and Rancocas Valley in 20:57, heads the list of returnees, along with seniors Melissa Razo, Julie Harms, Shiri Greenstein and Sara Brown.

"I'm hoping we're going to have a strong top three," said Tarello, who is a history teacher at Cherokee. "Michelle (Bilicki) has been one of our top runners. Melissa Razo and Julie Harms trained for the first time this summer and are looking phenomenal."

Promising newcomers include sophomores Lauren Jones and Emma Rastelli and freshman Jenna Viggiano.

Shawnee will make another run at title

By Josh Lashley
BCT sports writer

Cherokee

■ **Coach:** Chris Tarello

■ **1998 division record:** 4-4

■ **1998 overall record:** 4-4

■ **Returns:** Michelle Bilicki (jr.), Julie Harms (sr.), Melissa Razo, Sara Brown and Shiri Greenstein.

■ **Newcomers:** Lauren Jones, Jessica Caccamo, Emma Rastelli and Jenna Viggiano.

■ **Top Returnee:** Bilicki was fourth in the Burlington County Open and 11th in South Jersey Group 4 last year. "Michelle has worked hard all summer along with Razo and Harms to lead a strong top three," Tarello said.

■ **Outlook:** "We are a team with quality athletes," Tarello said. "However, we lack the depth to compete with the top teams in South Jersey."

■ **The BCT says:** Tarello has enough returnees to make his adjustment to the helm a little easier. Look for Bilicki to make a lot of

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It appears to be the same old story, just a different year, if you follow the Shawnee High School girls cross country program. Mike Yurcho's squad looks to be the team to beat once again in the very difficult Olympic Conference American Division race.

Led by senior Jenna Darcy, the 1998 Burlington County Times Runner of the Year, the Renegades

OLYMPIC GIRLS

may not miss a beat as they pursue their fourth straight Olympic American title. They've ruled the division since joining the conference in 1996. For that matter, they've ruled Group 4 on the sectional and state level throughout the 1990s.

Cherokee welcomes first-year coach Chris Tarello and he has five runners with varsity experience, led by junior standout Michelle Bilicki. It probably won't be enough for the Chiefs to stay with Shawnee, but they should be able to stay with just about everyone else in the division.

If depth is to be a factor in the Olympic, don't count out Lenape. Mike DiBenedetto has seen a lot of familiar faces in practice, led by senior Lindsay Scarborough. Time will tell if it pays off.

Following is a glance at the county's teams in the Olympic American:

Could this be year for new No. 1?

Preseason Top 20

School	'98 Rec.	'98 Rank
1. Shawnee	8-0	1
2. Woodrow Wilson	7-1	3
3. Moorestown	7-0	2
4. Bishop Eustace	8-0	7
5. Middle Twp.	9-1	13
6. Washington Twp.	6-2	4
7. Mainland	8-2	15
8. Kingsway	12-1	14
9. Haddonfield	6-0	6
10. Eastern	6-2	19
11. Paul VI	6-2	10
12. Ocean City	8-1	8
13. Buena	11-1	5
14. Overbrook	4-4	—
15. Lenape	3-5	18
16. Absegami	6-4	—
17. Cherokee	4-4	—
18. Bridgeton	10-2	—
19. Holy Cross	6-1	11
20. Maple Shade	5-3	—

The Top 20 Poll is selected by staff writer Jeff Wolfe in conjunction with area coaches.

OLYMPIC AMERICAN

Cherokee

Coech: Chris Tarello, 1st season

Last season: 4-4 overall

Returning runners: (5) Julie Harms, Sr.; Melissa Razo, Sr.; Michelle Bilicki, Jr.; Sara Brown, Sr.; Shiri Greenstein, Sr.

New runners: (1) Lauren Jones, So.

Outlook: The team had a good summer.