

No. 12 Cherokee scores a big upset victory

After a few years of slipping under the *Courier-Post* radar, Cherokee ran directly into our line of sight Tuesday. And after a brilliant performance on enemy territory, the Chiefs probably won't be going away any time soon.

Cherokee, No. 12 in the Top 20, defeated No. 2 Eastern and came away victorious.

Eastern, the defending champion, was in Voorhees, the defending group 4 state champion.

"We're really excited," said Cherokee coach Ray Bodine, who took over the head spot seven years ago. "They're (Eastern) a very good team and Don Jones does a real nice job with the girls. This is the probably the first time we've won in our program."



Ryan Lawrence

It's only fair to put Cherokee in the same group and say its name in the same breath as its divisional foes. When you share the Olympic Conference American Division label with Group 4 powerhouses like Shawnee, Washington Township and Eastern, along with Lenape and Cherry Hill East, it can be easy to get lost in the shuffle.

And, unfortunately, that may have been Cherokee's position in the last few years.

"I think we've finished in the Top 20 once, and in a couple of those years, our only losses were to Washington Township and Shawnee," Bodine explained. "And in one of those years, we only lost to them by a total of eight points, and we still can't get into the Top 20."

After Tuesday, Cherokee won't have to worry about a Top

20, or even a Top 10 berth. By beating one of South Jersey's best, Cherokee automatically becomes one of South Jersey's best, until proven otherwise.

In their 70-66 upset over Eastern, the Chiefs relied on depth and senior leadership. Bodine said the biggest race of the day was the 800 meters, when two upperclassmen swung the momentum into Cherokee's favor.

Jenna Viggiano took a lead and won. Malia Lyles saw Viggiano's effort and picked up her pace. Their efforts didn't go unnoticed.

"That was right in the middle of the meet, the kids saw what was going on," Bodine said. "It was a big psychological boost for us. I think that's when I lost my voice."

Another key event had to be the 4x400. The foursome of Viggiano, fellow senior Ariel Brockman and juniors Emily Keller and Brianna LaRoche knocked off Eastern's dynamite, defending Group 4 state champion relay team.

over No. 2 Eastern

Junior Jenn Cohen won the shot, sophomore Catherine Holmes won the high jump. Seniors Carolyn Trezza and Kaitlyn Marmarou took second and third in the javelin, respectively. And Megan O'Leary finished first in the 3,200.

It was a team effort, one that each and every member of the squad worked hard for, and deservedly won.

"They were sky high, and I was so proud of them," Bodine said of the bus ride home. "They've planted the seeds of having a good season, but now we need to re-focus. By beating a team of that caliber, people are going to realize that Cherokee team is no slouch and they're gonna come at us now, too."

Girls' Track

School	Rec	Prv
1. Willingboro	0-0	1
2. Shawnee	2-0	4
3. Winslow Twp.	1-0	3
4. Woodrow Wilson	0-0	8
5. Highland	4-0	6
6. Cherokee	2-0	12
7. Eastern	1-1	2
8. Bishop Eustace	0-0	11
9. Bridgeton	5-0	5
10. Haddonfield	1-0	7
11. Pleasantville	1-0	9
12. Washington Twp.	0-1	13
13. Paul VI	1-0	10
14. Schalick	2-0	17
15. Kingsway	1-0	15
16. Cinnaminson	0-0	—
17. Moorestown	2-0	—
18. West Deptford	1-0	16
19. Delsea	0-1	18
20. Ocean City	1-1	19

The Top 20 was selected by staff writer Ryan Lawrence. Any questions or corrections please call (856) 486-2424, fax (856) 663-2831.