

# Cherokee girls' 4x800 relay team runs season's best in Father Judge Relays

The Cherokee High School girls' 4x800 relay team finished sixth Saturday at the Father Judge Relays, but ran the fastest time in South Jersey this season at 9:34.14. The time shaved over two seconds off their previous fastest South Jersey time of 9:36.4.

Members of the Chiefs' relay team are Erin Chiarulli, who ran a 2:19 split, Michelle Bilicki, Melissa Razo and Julie Harms.

■ Bordentown (Groups I-II) and Edgewood (Groups III-IV) each placed second in the Highland Park Relays.

Bordentown was victorious in the pole vault relay and had five second-place finishes.

Edgewood, with the team of Justin Richardson, Kyle Murray, Aaron John and Dennis Davis took first in the 4x400 with a time of 3:23.51. The Eagles also placed first in the high jump relay, Richardson and Jack Thompson both cleared 6-foot-2, and the 4x100 with Squire Servance, Aaron Johnson, Thompson and Davis finishing in 42.76.

Carcanague said. "We need this win.' And he went out and got it."

It wasn't easy, though.

After breezing through the first set, Pikus (3-5) lost nine of the next 10 games. He trailed, 3-0, in the third set before he won six straight games to take the match.

**A strong sixth.** On the one hand, they finished sixth. On the other, they shaved two more seconds off the school record.

Cherokee girls' track coach Chris Tarello chose to focus on that second hand.

The Chiefs' 4x800-meter relay team of juniors Erin Chiarulli and Michelle Bilicki and seniors Melissa Razo and Julie Harms competed against an elite field Saturday at the Father Judge Relays in Philadelphia, finishing in 9 minutes, 34.13 seconds. That lopped two seconds off the team's winning time at the Woodbury Relays a week earlier.

"It was a really fast race," Tarello said. "We were using it as a tune-up for the Penn Relays. We think

ished a convincing run through the Tarboro (N.C.) Classic with an 11-0 victory over host Tarboro in the title game.

The Rams, 11-0, outscored their three opponents, 43-1, in their three tournament games. Junior catcher Mike Rucci earned MVP honors, going 9-for-10 with two home runs, two doubles and 13 RBIs in the tourney. He also threw out all seven runners who attempted to steal.

Rucci went 3-for-3 in the final, including a home run. Matt Ryan (two doubles), Anthony Yula, Joe Lamb, Brad Reed and winning pitcher Mark Michael (a triple) each added two hits, while Bill Boyer homered for the Rams. Gloucester Catholic placed eight players on the nine-man all-tournament team.

## Softball

Kristi Zarr hit a two-run double in a three-run first inning as Steinert outlasted No. 3 Cherokee, 4-3. Amanda Wilson hurled a five-hitter for the win, striking out six and walking

we have a chance to make the Championship of America."

Qualifying for one of the eight spots in the championship race might seem like a pipe dream for a team that just finished sixth against a much smaller field, but Tarello says otherwise.

Cherokee was a solid sixth, finishing 23 seconds ahead of seventh-place Hunterdon Central and just 4.12 seconds out of third place.

Last year, a team running 9:34 in the preliminaries made the final, and Tarello, a first-year coach, expects his four runners to drop more time when they get to Franklin Field on Thursday.

On Saturday, Tarello juggled the lineup, moving Chiarulli from anchor to leadoff, and liked what he saw. Chiarulli responded with a personal-best split of 2:19.

"It was real encouraging to see the girls compete in every leg," Tarello said. "In every leg, they were racing against somebody. Everyone looked confident."