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CLASS A STATE RELAYS

A blue-chip effort by L-S

With wealth of talent, girls earn state title

By Jason Claffey, Globe Correspondent | January 15, 2007

The Massachusetts State Track Coaches Association medals are about the size of silver dollars and feature a male and female runner in front of an emblem of the state. Dozens were stacked like poker chips on a table in front of race official Matt Auger during yesterday's Class A State Relays at the Reggie Lewis Center. Throughout the day, a steady stream of runners walked up to claim the awards, with Auger resembling a casino cashier as he doled out stacks to the winning relay teams.

No team cashed out more than the Lincoln-Sudbury girls. The Warriors tallied 49 points -- the highest of the day for the girls or boys -- in a one-point victory over Newton North.

Lincoln-Sudbury's middle-distance team of Emily Mephram, Dana Jamieson, Molly Binder, and Jess Griffin (none of whom are seniors) gathered a pocketful of medals with first-place finishes in the 4 x 400- and 4 x 800-meter races. The group's time in the 800 (9:24.12) shattered a 25-year-old Class A record set by Waltham in 1982 (9:31.1). Their time in the 400 (4:00.83) was three-100ths of a second off another 25-year-old Class A record set by Beverly.

Coach Mel Gonsalves said he knew he could bank on a strong performance from the foursome. All ran cross-country and were part of a squad that finished second at the All-State meet.

But Gonsalves said the difference yesterday was the performance of his throwers and jumpers, who combined for top-four finishes in the high jump, long jump, and shot put. "The nickel and dime points," he said.

Jamieson (who anchored both middle-distance teams) and teammates Jordan Chen and Larina Kleynerman scored a first-place finish in the long jump with a total distance of 14 meters. Jamieson jumped the farthest with a distance of 17 feet 1 inch.

L-S hit the jackpot in the 800. Along with its first-place finish, its younger "B" team placed third (9:55.13), the Warriors garnering 16 total points.

"That's fast," said L-S distance coach Chris Tarello of his "B" team, Claire Arthur, Steph Zeytoonian, Calli Pappas, and Olivia Reed.

Also setting Class A records for the girls were the New Bedford 4 x 50 shuttle hurdle team (29.53) and the Bridgewater-Raynham high jump team (4.60 meters).

Newton North's Jess Barton, holder of the fastest mile in the state this season, led her team to first-place finishes in the 1,600 sprint medley relay and the distance medley.

"The name of the relays was officially changed this year to the Jim Kalperis State Relays. A former Falmouth track coach, Kalperis started the relays 30 years ago at Boston University and is retiring after this year.