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MCINTYRE RELAYS

Quartet shows no sign of slowing

Lincoln-Sudbury girls break 800 mark again

By Jason Claffey, Globe Correspondent | January 29, 2007

Lincoln-Sudbury coach Mel Gonsalves described the improvement of his girls' 4 x 800-meter relay team over the last two weeks as "sharpening a pencil." That's also what race officials have been doing to rewrite the record books.

After smashing a 25-year-old record at the Class A State Relays two weeks ago by finishing in 9 minutes 24.12 seconds, Emily Mephram, Jess Griffin, Molly Binder, and Dana Jamieson bested their time by nearly six seconds, winning in 9:18.21 yesterday in the McIntyre Relays at the Reggie Lewis Track Center. Yesterday's finish is one of the five fastest in the nation for high school teams this season, according to race official John Carroll.

The splits told the story. Mephram (2:23), Griffin (2:18), Binder (2:19), and Jamieson (2:17) didn't have a weak link among them. Binder, the third runner, was staked to a 30-yard lead when she got the baton and opened it to about 60 yards when she passed off to Jamieson. As she tore around the 200-meter oval track, Jamieson didn't relinquish an inch to second-place Newton North (9:28.48).

Gonsalves said his team can shave even more time off its pace.

"There's still time to come off there," he said, citing that the runners haven't peaked in their training or had an extended period of rest before a race.

The state record for the 4 x 800 is 9:14.37 set by Bromfield in 2002. The mark is inscribed in gold lettering on the Bob McIntyre Wall of Honor at the Lewis Center.

"We've been over to see that," said distance coach Chris Tarello, who oversees the team's training regimen. The Warriors have been forced to practice outside in the school's parking lot the past few weeks because a new gym is under construction. It's taken a toll on Mephram, who battled a chest cold all week.

As for his runners' chances of breaking Bromfield's record, Tarello was cautiously optimistic. "Emily ran a 2:19 last week at [the] Yale [Invitational], so there's four seconds right there."