

Girls Track Gets Tie For State Crown Thursday, March 01, 2007

Lincoln Sudbury won the MA All State title to complement the outdoor title it won last spring.

On Friday, the team scored 30 points to tie New Bedford for the crown at the Reggie Lewis Athletic center in Boston.

The Warriors were once again without the services of the fastest member of the team, Dana Jamieson, due to injury.

However, Molly Binder and the rest of the crew rose to the occasion for the second straight week to take a share of the crown. Binder won the state title in the 1000 meters and anchored a team of Jess Griffin, Emily Mephram, and Calli Pappas to a state title and meet record in the 4x800 meter relay.

The meet was expected to be one of the more tightly contested all-state meets in recent years, with several teams carrying legitimate aspirations for the title. From Division 1 there was Acton-Boxboro, which had tied L-S for the Division 1 title, as well as contenders Newton South and New Bedford. Joining them were champions from Division 2 (Central Catholic), Division 3 (Stoneham), and Division 4 (Bromfield).

In order to separate themselves from the crowd, the Warriors needed one or more of their athletes to place higher than their seeded position. The week before in the Division 1 meet it was Maggie Flemming, who took second place in the high jump, and captain Audrey Miller, who finished in fifth place in the 300, that were the surprises that spurred the team to victory. However, both had even longer odds to find points in the deeper and more difficult competition found at the all-state meet, and neither were able to duplicate their heroics from the previous week.

With two events down and with still no points on the board, the Warriors looked to Mephram in the 600 meters. Mephram, the sixth seed in the event, was supposed to run in the fastest heat against her main rivals, however, a late check-in caused her to be dropped to the second heat, a bad break for the Warriors. But it was at this point that the meet began to turn for the L-S. Mephram immediately opened up a huge lead on the rest of the field in her heat, and, despite running completely alone out front for the entire race, was able to post a time faster than two of the top heat's runners. Her fifth-place finish garnered the first points of the meet for her team.

Three of the five events where the Warriors had entries were now over, leaving them with the 1000 meters and the 4x800 relay as their two remaining chances to score points.

In the 1000 meters L-S had two runners entered, the top seed Binder, and Griffin. The Warriors needed to score big points against a deep and talented field to have any chance at the title, and Binder and Griffin did not disappoint. The race was run tactically as the field jockeyed for position, and into the final lap there were still six runners bunched together. Binder, a powerful runner, used a strong kick to hold off the rest of the field to take first, but the real key was Griffin roaring down the final straightaway to take a meet-saving second place. L-S had taken first and second for 18 points and was back in the hunt.

Going into the final events of the meet, the relays, the score was New Bedford 22, L-S 20, and Newton South 20. The first relay to be run was the 4x800. The Warriors had qualified teams for the 4x400 and the 4x800, so had the option of running their best runners in either one. Anticipating a strong challenge for team title from Newton South and Newton North, both of whom had strong 4x800 relay teams, the Warriors opted for the 4x800 in an attempt to take points away from those rivals. The prior week at the Division 1 meet they had called upon Olivia Reed to join Griffin, Mephram, and Binder in the 4x400 relay, and that team had set a meet record with their victory. This week it was sophomore Pappas who stepped in and the result was the same: first place in a meet record time.

Newton North had withheld its runners from individual events to keep them fresh for the relay, while three of the Warriors were running their second race of the day. Binder took the baton for the anchor leg in second place behind one of the premier milers in the state from Newton North, Jess Barton. Binder shadowed Barton for three laps before unleashing another huge kick in the last lap to earn a five-second victory over Newton North, with Newton South in third.

The score was now L-S 30, Newton South 26, and New Bedford 22 with two relays to go. New Bedford, holding onto its number two seed in the 4x200 relay, came in second to add eight points to its total and a share of the team title.

The last athletes to compete for the Warriors were the 4x400 relay of Reed, Rachel Potter, Stephanie Zeytoonian, and captain Larina Kleynerman.

The team competitions for the season are over for the Warriors, however, several individuals qualified for the New England championship meet this Friday: Mephram (600), Binder (1000), Griffin (1000), and the 4x800 relay team.