

Girls track ties for Class A state title Thursday, February 22, 2007

The Warriors received some bad news before the meet as they were going to be missing arguably their best runner in Dana Jamieson against a field that included New Bedford, Bay State Conference champ Newton North, defending state champion Acton-Boxboro, and the team that had just defeated them at the DCL championship meet one week ago, Newton South.

The result? L-S won.

In a meet that was pure Hollywood, the Warriors rode clutch performances through bad luck and controversy to a disputed tie with A-B, two points ahead of Newton South. Going into the last event of the meet, the 4x400 relay, the scoreboard showed Newton South with 46 points, A-B with 42 points, and L-S with 37 points.

First place in an event receives 10 points, followed by eight, six, four, two, and one for the next five slots, so for the Warriors to have a chance at victory they needed to win the final relay.

For those paying attention, the math does not work out so that L-S can beat Newton South by two and tie A-B, but more on that later.

The meet moved on into the strength of the L-S team: its middle distance, and the Warriors did not disappoint.

First, Emily Mephram ran a 1:37.5, good for second place and eight points in the 600 meters. Next came the 1000 meters where the Warriors racked up 16 more points. Molly Binder ran a 2:57.8 to become the Division 1 champion, with Jess Griffin sandwiching an Andover runner to take third in 2:58.9.

The last three events of the day were the relays and the score was L-S 34, Newton South 32, A-B 32, and with New Bedford 31. The 4x800 meters was up first, and Newton South came in second to push its total to 40 points. The Warriors sent the quartet of Calli Pappas, Clair Arthur, Rachel Potter, and Stephanie Zeytoonian to carry the baton for the Warriors. A strong anchor leg by Zeytoonian resulted in her passing a Haverhill runner for fifth place. The leg was important, not only for the extra point it provided in a close meet, but because the top five in each event automatically qualified for the all-state meet next week.

It was now Newton South 40, L-S 34. A-B struck back in the 4x200 relay. The favored Colonials took first place. New Bedford's team crossed the line in second, but the Whalers had fouled Newton South during the course of the race and the official's yellow flag was raised, indicating a disqualification. The disqualification allowed Newton South to move up to third place. L-S entered the 4x200 meter relay with a strong team, but one that was only seeded 10th in the fast Division 1 field. However, once again the Warriors exceeded expectations as Miller, Laura Noce, freshman Leah Sax, and Kleynerman took an unexpected point in the event, moving up to sixth place on New Bedford's disqualification.

So entering the final relay, the scoreboard showed Newton South with 46 points, A-B with 42, and L-S with 37.

Newton South did not have a strong entry in the event, but A-B did, so in order for the Warriors to win the meet they needed a first place and for the Colonials to come in no better than fourth. L-S had the fastest time in the state in this event going into the meet, but that was with Jamieson as its anchor. However, the true strength of the L-S team is its depth, and the Warriors called upon Olivia Reed, who was a member of last spring's outdoor state champion 4x400 team.

In true Hollywood fashion, not only did the Warriors win and A-B came in fourth, but the Warrior quartet of Griffin, Mephram, Reed, and Binder broke the meet record.

However, when the scores came up after the relay, it showed L-S and A-B tied with 46 and Newton South with 44. This Hollywood ending had a cruel twist. New Bedford had protested its disqualification in the 4x200 relay, and in an unusual move the officials overturned the original ruling, reinstating New Bedford's second-place finish. The adjustment caused L-S to move back to seventh in the event, costing it a point, and Newton South lost two points moving from third to fourth.

Other participants for the Warriors in the meet included: Cecilia Igwe-Kalu, Laura Noce (55), Emily Schneider (300), Pappas, Potter, Jen Gossels, Hannah Ziobrowski, Alexandra Giacalone, and senior captain Christine Duggan (mile), Ellie Hylton, Holly Clarke, Barbara MacNeil (two mile), Reed (600), Zeytoonian (1000), Flemming (hurdles), Kleynerman (long jump), and Jackie Jarmulowicz (shot put).

Qualifiers for the all-state meet to be held this Saturday include: Miller (300), Mephram (600), Binder, Griffin (1000), Flemming (high jump), and all three relay teams.