

Shawnee, Moorestown girls take titles

By Tom Rimback
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GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY

EGG HARBOR TWP. — Easy as 1-2-3. And why not — they are sister schools.

Yesterday at the South Jersey Open cross country meet, the three high schools of the Lenape District swept the top three spots in the girls Division 3 team standings.

Shawnee, led by race winner Jenna Darcy, defended its Division 3 title with 54 points. Lenape (65) and Cherokee (90) finished close behind in second and third place.

Moorestown, in Division 2, easily won its division behind a third-place finish by Betsy Bulat. In Division 1, Maple Shade's Rose Gallagher led all county runners and her team to a county-best fifth-place finish.

At the end, the talk was of the Lenape District sweep and how far Lenape and Cherokee have closed the gap with the Renegades.

"I wanted to run with the lead

pack," Lenape's Lindsay Scarborough said, who finished fifth. "I was pleased with the way I ran and the way the team finished. It gives us confidence to know that we can run with the best. I'm really proud of the team. It's really exciting."

Shawnee is still the best, for now. Darcy is the cornerstone of this season's team but like any runner she needs her teammates.

Dana Palumbo (fourth place), Heather McGarvie (16th), Laurence Lemaire (17th) and Samantha O'Reilly (26th) finished in the scoring for the Renegades. As usual it was a team effort.

Lindsey McCullough and Christie Bigelow rounded out the Shawnee varsity seven. Not one Shawnee runner finished lower than 30th in the race.

Shawnee's pack mentality is starting to rub off on its sister schools. Taken together the three schools were dominant.

Erin Riddle and Emily Jadwin finished ninth and 11th in the race for the Indians. Michelle Bilicki and Melissa Razo finished sixth and seventh for the Chiefs. Darcy and Palumbo finished first and fourth for Shawnee. In all, 17 of the top 36 runners were from the Lenape District. Eight of those runners finished in the top 11.

"I was talking to my coach (Chris Tarello) today and he wanted me to really go out hard today," Bilicki said. "I didn't feel that good today but I guess it worked because I finished sixth."

More importantly, Bilicki helped lead her team to a third place finish that was far closer to Shawnee than the Chiefs have been for a while.

"We have a lot more confidence in ourselves," Bilicki said. "Our goals are to run well and qualify for states. Coach T (Tarello) has really helped us."

In the Division 3 race Bulat, finished third behind Delsea's Brittany McCann and Tanesha Pittman of Woodrow Wilson. She

had hoped for a little better but left feeling good about her performance. After all, the Quakers easily outdistanced Woodrow Wilson, which was without its top runner Mia Cassa.

"I tried to step it up a little today," Bulat said. "Obviously Tanesha and Brittany ran real well today but I'm happy with my race."

Bulat had a little extra push yesterday. Like a shadow, Holy Cross Joanna Kloss stayed on Bulat's heels throughout the race.

"Catching Betsy was one of my goals today," Kloss said. "I passed her near the end but she passed me back. I ran behind her the whole time. I'm really happy because she's usually way ahead of me."

With a lesser field in the Parochial championships, Kloss is training hard for what in her mind is a bigger meet.

"I'm not really worried at all about South Jersey teams," Kloss said. "We only have to race the Parochial schools. I'm really excited about the County Open. I want to place really high there."