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BAY STATE MCINTYRE INVITATIONAL

Barton surges ahead of field Brockton's Gill holds off Gibson

By Jason Claffey, Globe Correspondent | October 14, 2006

NORTHFIELD -- The course at Northfield Mountain begins easily with a short hurdle over a bunny hill about 40 yards long. Then comes Hemlock Hill, a half-mile climb straight uphill that has a black diamond degree of difficulty but doesn't have the luxury of a ski lift.

"A [lift] would've been nice. Or one of those conveyor belts they have at airports," said Newton North's Jessica Barton, who won the Division 1 girls' race in 19 minutes 49 seconds yesterday at the Bay State McIntyre Invitational.

Barton ran with the front-runners going up Hemlock and still felt fresh when she began her descent. "I didn't feel that bad going up," she said. "At the 1-mile mark, I felt good enough to run up into first."

Barton remained in the lead and finished 20 yards ahead of second-place finisher Dana Jamieson of Lincoln-Sudbury.

L-S won in the overall team results with 37 points, followed by Dennis-Yarmouth, Marshfield, and Natick. D-Y's Colleen Wetherbee didn't run but was in attendance to get a look at the course, site of the All-State meet next month.

In the week leading up to the race, L-S coach Chris Tarello prepared for the race by not really preparing at all. "I usually set everything up for them before a race and give them a plan," said Tarello. "This week I didn't do that. I told them, 'You guys make your own race plan. If you want [to win], you decide how you do it.' I did it to try to break the monotony."

Tarello's strategy was effective as Jamieson and five teammates (Hannah Ziobrowski, Barbara MacNeil, Emily Mephram, Holly Clark, and Steph Zeytoonian) finished in the top 20.

The Warriors split into three groups with Jamieson, Ziobrowski, and MacNeil in attack mode up front, Mephram and Jess Griffin in the middle, and freshman Clark and Zeytoonian in the back. The seven runners averaged 20:45, and would've been faster but Griffin was forced to walk parts of the race due to a stomach cramp after the first mile.