

Records set, hurdles cleared in Sandwich track

By Silene Gordon - Sandwich Broadside
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Assistant Coach Mike Lavers with Captains Robbie Papapietro, Tom Hemingway, and Dave Regan.

CAPE COD —The Sandwich High School 4x800 relay teams set two school records last weekend as both the boys and girls winter track teams continue to push for strong finishes this season.

Competing at the Massachusetts State Track Coach Association Division 3 Relays at Reggie Lewis Center in Boston, the foursomes — and their teammates — once again did the blue and white proud. The

boys were fueled by the running of juniors Dave Regan, Paul David Gannett and David Allen along with senior Dana Murphy, who set the record with their 8:39:00 run. In addition to the record, the boys qualified for the state invitationals later this season.

For the girls, the performances of juniors Mikhaela Tropp, Grace Barter and Bethany Gomes and senior Haley Loonan put the team over the top with their time of 11:07:00. While they came up just shy of qualifying for states, head coach Steve Infascelli is confident the foursome will do so in one of their upcoming meets.

Infascelli, who says he is “big on checkpoints,” was pleased with the team’s overall performance at the event and continues to praise his athletes for their efforts this season. “Throughout the season these checkpoints are like pop quizzes,” says the coach. “We have three more weeks to get even more work done and see even better times. When these kids set records, it’s an eye-opener for them and it pushes them to do more.”

While both the boys and girls teams have fared well this season, Infascelli is encouraged by the athletes’ willingness to work. The team faces the same challenges of other athletes – juggling school and sport, staying healthy and keeping focus – yet they also contend with the inability to have a set practice spot. While other teams are sweating in gyms, the Sandwich winter track team is running, jumping and throwing outside, with this winter’s weather bringing some harsh conditions.

“Ninety-percent of the teams practice inside at some point,” says Infascelli, “but we are in a different situation. We do all of our practicing outside and it makes it hard, especially

for the power events – the throws and jumps — because they require rest in between intervals. To stand around in 17 degree weather is not ideal.

“We try to adapt – it’s a hurdle we need to get over,” says Infascelli.

The frigid conditions have not hampered spirits or results, however. With close to 40 athletes on each of the teams, the winter track program at Sandwich High School is thriving.

“I like to think the kids enjoy it so much and tell their friends, which is why our numbers are growing. Word is spreading and that’s great for us,” says the coach.

Those numbers are especially encouraging because the team lost a good group of seniors from last year. On the boys side, a successful cross country season has led to sound results in the distance events. Regan, who brings versatility and a lot of speed, and Murphy, an experienced athlete who also brings humor to the fold, are both captains and distance runners. Gavin Jones, a senior sprinter and hurdler, is also leading the way as a captain and point-earner, as is junior Robbie Papapietro.

The girls also bring experience and leadership, with senior Helen Carter, who competes in the 55-meter dash and 4x200 relay, out in front with direction and her “all business’ attitude. Tropp, who runs middle distances, and Barter, who was the girls cross country captain and is a distance runner, bring organization and a strong work ethic as well. Assistant captains are Gomes



Sandwich track captains Lucy Gauthier, Mikhaela Troop, Bethany Gomes and Grace Barter work out

and senior Lucy Gauthier, a high jumper and sprinter.

The teams will have one more dual meet before entering the exciting state invitational portion of the schedule, where the teams will have several representatives. For Infascelli, though, the results are second to the lessons of sportsmanship and self-respect that athletes learn and like so many coaches, he is a huge fan of his kids.

“I say it 100 times a day,” says Infascelli. “I have the best kids in the school. They’re in the middle of the hardest block of training and even though it’s difficult because we can’t be inside, there are no complaints. Everyone comes to work hard and to see where they can take this.”