

Boys and Girls produce Champions at the RIT Invitational

Fairport's Boys' 4 x 400m relay and the Girls' 4 x 800m relay won championships at the 6th annual RIT Penfield Track & Field Invitational against a strong intersectional field of 35 schools.

The 8-lap relay for Fairport, over the 200 meter indoor track at the Gordon Field House, produced the Section's fastest relay time with Peter Larmann [55.1], Ian Steltmann [55.1], Cam Johnson [54.3pr] and Justin Green [53.1], 3:37.68. It was an exciting team competition with lead-off leg Larmann, back from bronchitis, settling in with a "conservative pace" before he handed off to Ian Steltmann in 4th place. Steltmann ran with the pack he found himself with for almost a lap before accelerating past two runners in the last 150; he handed off to Cam Johnson, close behind the leader, and Johnson did what he usually does—challenge for the lead, which he did taking the lead coming off the last turn. Justin Green ran a highly competitive race, with a good split ratio of his 1st and 2nd 200 meters, maintaining the lead through 300 meters and then accelerating away. Fortunately for Fairport, the RH quartet, Colby Burke anchoring, started their late race surge from far back and finished less than a second back of Fairport making the finish anticlimactic. "RH seemed to come from no where to make the race somewhat of an unexpected challenge once Justin looked over his shoulder at the Hilton runner, giving him a glance and a wink, and sped away," said coach Ken Schaumberg.

The girls' sixteen-lap affair, the 4 x 800 meter relay, "owned it seems over the recent span of a few years by Fairport," said coach Sean Van Laeken, was ranked 3rd with Pittsford Mendon and Buffalo's Clarence ranked ahead on the start line. Lauren Burke, leading off with her first race in almost a month, controlled the field with an comfortable 2:27.5 split, which gave Fairport the lead. Rachel Malone, the 2nd leg, ran 2:32.1 as the lead became much closer—and the lead was up for grabs until Ashton Hughes took control, as she has a want to do, with strong first half; she widened the lead considerably for Angie Zablonty, who has been anchoring relays this season with a confidence and assurance of the seasoned veteran she is. While she was moving comfortably ahead with some relaxed running, the lead widened—a 2:33.7 effort. Zablonty and her teammates picked up the championship medals with an eleven second margin over second place Clarence.

The Boys' 4 x 800 meter relay of Ian Steltmann [2:07.4], Simon Ghebrewoldi [2:13.9], Cam Johnson [2:07.1pr], and Justin Green [2:07.3] ran 8:35.95 to take 4th behind RH's 8:09.54, the leading time in Section V this season. "The relay splits were pretty even, three running 2:07--and Cam getting his 2nd pr of the day; unfortunately, Simon has been sick so he did all he could considering," said Van Laeken as he went over the splits with the relay afterwards.

The Girls 4 x 400 meter relay of Michelle Barnum [63.5], Julia Sanger [68.4], Lauren Star [65] and Angie Zablonty [61.5pr] ran 4:18.78 to finish a second-and-a-half behind champion Webster Thomas. "The girls did well, and ran away from the competition early on with Michelle Barnum displaying a great deal of confidence, especially at the 350 mark—that was good to see," said Dave Rapplelea, one of the coaches.

"Julia Sanger, much like Simon in the 4 x 800 meter relay has been sick most of the week, ran 68.4 as the 2nd runner; and Lauren Star, her first 400, ran quite well, moving the team closer to the lead as she handed off to anchor leg, Angie Zablonty," said Van Laeken. "Before I knew it, I went out pretty quickly and just ahead was the Williamsville runner—I thought I better relax and save something for later, but the race just moved along for me with a 28.9 opening 200, [pretty fast] and before I knew it, we had the lead," said Zablonty. "She had the lead until the last 120 meters when Webster Thomas' Shavonna Hinton came up from a long way back and pressured Zablonty--the two of them separated themselves from the other teams, by almost two plus seconds. In the end, Zablonty ran a personal best in the losing effort, but it was well worth seeing all the girls compete as well as they did," said Rick Guido, the sprint coach.

Individual achievements were notable, especially with Collin Wheatly--he established a personal best of 12' 6" in the pole vault. He tied for 4th--"and it was his best vault either indoors or outdoors--and it was 15" higher than he has vaulted this season. I think what helped Collin so much was going in much higher this time. He was able to save his energy by having his best vaults, usually the first three, at a much higher height," said Ken Schaumberg, Collin's coach.

Emily Renna ran 8.97 seconds in the 55 meter hurdles, tying her personal best; she finished 2nd, .07 seconds behind Lauren Kellner of Pittsford Sutherland. "I called Coach Van Auken right after my race to share the

news with him—I knew he would like to hear the result,” said Renna later. Mike Van Auken has been recovering at home from a recent illness. Renna also triple jumped **32' 9"**, a **personal best**, for an 8th place finish.

Michelle Barnum ran 1:43.63 in the 600 meter run, a season's best, and it was the way she ran it that caught the eye of many. In the fastest 600 of the season, she gave no quarter and sped along in third place and battled back and forth with Valerie Palermo of Webster Schroeder. The race was won by Webster Thomas' Shavonna Hinton in 1:38.26, just ahead of Kala Allen of Williamsville—who ran 1:39.68. Barnum finished 4th. Almost lost in the fast speed of the race, but not in fact, was the 1:46.4 recorded by Jane Rosenthal. It was a personal best and placed her 7th in the field of 44. "Jane has a lot of speed and is pretty efficient as a runner so it isn't surprising to see her mix it up with a field like that," said Van Laeken.

Lauren Burke ran **7.61** in the 55 meter dash, a **season's best**, to finish 3rd. When asked how she was able to run her season's best 55 meter dash after an injury kept her from competing for almost a month, "I guess I was rested," she would say.

Rachel Malone finished 7th in the 1000 meter run and Matt Stoutz and Brandon Backstein set **personal bests** with their **2:56.2** and **2:57.85**, respectively. Emma Dustman also established a **personal best** of **3:29.75** in the same event. The 4 x 200 meter relay team of Julia Sanger, Janessa Mathews, Tylyn Martin and Lauren Star ran 1:54.82 to finish 8th. Aston Hughes placed 6th in the 1500 meter run.

The next race for the Fairport contingent is February 18th, the Section V Championships at RIT.