

Janessa Mathews and Emily Renna Qualify for the NYS Track & Field Championships

The past doesn't necessarily predict the present, despite the popular belief that it does. Just ask Janessa Mathews, who in each of her past three pentathlon competitions, established a new personal best and along the way finished 2nd at the Monroe County championships and the Section V, AA Championships to Lauren Kellner of Pittsford Sutherland and Tori Schmidt of Hilton.

At the Section V, NY State Qualifying Championships, held at Victor High School, not only did Janessa Mathews not establish a new personal best, but in the process of winning the Championship defeated both Kellner and Schmidt in one of the closest competitions in recent memory.

The last event was the 800m, one of two events worth more than the other three, and it would decide who would advance to the state championships; and who would stay home. The difference between the three was less than 35 points, or about as long as it takes to clear your throat.

Minutes before the start of the race, one of Janessa's coaches talked over the strategy with her: "you have nothing to lose by being aggressive; you can't let either Kellner or Schmidt control the pace, as happened the last two weeks and resulted in 2nd place finishes. It was known from past experience that Schmidt would not easily let Mathews run away, but the plan was to force the pace and see what would happen—nothing lost if it didn't work, but if it did, she would have her championship in hand and a trip to Vestal High School for the NYS Track & Field Championships.

As the gun went off, both Schmidt and Mathews began to separate themselves immediately from the field of eight with Kellner, the leader running in mid pack. As the 400 meter mark approached, Mathews followed the plan and began her aggressive move, but Schmidt would not let her go; however, the two moved farther ahead of the pack and especially Kellner. In the back straight, Mathews again surged, picking up the pace considerably, but Schmidt wouldn't relinquish the lead—the two ran side-by-side the last 250 meters. If the gap between the two, and the pack the stayed the same, then Kellner would fall from the lead, and it would come down to how much of a gap remained between Schmidt and Mathews—and that would determine the champion. As the twosome sprinted toward the championship, less than .2 of a second separated them, or 13 points, at the finish line. Kellner would finish 3.35 seconds back, and she would end up staying home, finishing 2nd, and 18 points back, almost the gap Mathews finished back of Schmidt at the Sectional meet the week before [23 points]. Fifty-six points separated Mathews, Kellner and Schmidt

at the end. Each has accumulated more points in the past three weeks, but on this night, the only difference was this: who had more. Mathews totaled 2705 points while Kellner had 2687 and Schmidt, 2649.

Another irony of sorts with the competition was this interesting footnote to history: the pentathlon official was Holly Jones, the Fairport athlete who established the Fairport School record twenty years ago, 3230.

Emily Renna, competing in four events, again, had quite a day. She, along with Ally Martens, Casey Slabe and Julia Sanger finished 4th in the 4 x 100m relay. They ran 51.76. In addition, Renna was 3rd in the long jump with a 16' 5.25 leap and 2nd in the triple jump with a hop, skip and jump of 36' 1.5". None of those accomplishments, though, qualified her for the state championships, but her 2nd place finish in the 100m hurdles did. She ran 15.54. To have a 4th, 3rd, 2nd and 2nd in the top Section V Competition of the season is quite an accomplishment, and it does auger well for Emily Renna's ascendancy to the highest pinnacle of the sport in Section V this season.

Amanda Burkey, though only a freshman and in her first varsity campaign, acquitted herself quite well this season in her four multi-events, and especially the high jump. She established a personal best of 5' 6", the 3rd highest in Fairport school history, only behind Holly Jones [an Empire Games Champion] and Kim Deprez, who not only was a NYS Champion, but was a two-time NCAA Champion high jumper. Burkey finished 3rd at State Qs, clearing 5' 2". Her 5' 6" was the highest jump in Section V this season.

Establishing a personal best of 5:01.88 in the 1500m, Erin Sedita finished 6th in the field of eight. "I was very pleased with how Erin approached the race. I knew it had to be a nerve-wracking experience for someone so young, an 8th grader, but she kept to her plan and really hung in there very well. Her goal was to run sub-five minutes for the distance, and she came ever so close, but the most important thing to me was that she held her composure and ran her best and fastest race in the highest level of competition we have in Section V. That was quite an effort," said Rick Guido.

Michelle Barnum, in her last hurdle and last track race of her career, ended up with a season's best 67.76 to finish 5th, just as she did last year. Angie Zablony ran 69.86, faster than last week's sectional race, to finish 7th.

Renee Metzger was 7th in the shot put with 30' 5" and 8th in the discus with 90' 10".

The 4 x 800m relay of Erin Sedita, Lauren Star, Jane Rosenthal and Mary O'Hehir ran 10:08.68, finishing 8th.