

NON-PUBLIC TRACK

RBC's McNamara wins 800

By Chris Rotolo

@rote7123.

TOMS RIVER—In the final 200 meters of the girls Non-Public South A 800 event, Red Bank Catholic's Marykate McNamara trailed Mount St. Mary's Nicole Rojas, and then arose the big question: Does this sophomore have the kick necessary to overtake the leader?

McNamara, a lacrosse player, had never run in the spring, but fell in love with track over the winter and decided to throw her heart and soul into it. The sophomore overtook the pack leader in the home stretch, and utilized a competitive edge developed from lacrosse to pass Rojas and win a foot race to the finish in a personal best time of 2:18.40.

"I've always played lacrosse and I've always loved it," explained McNamara. "But after running cross country and indoor track, I was able to figure out this is what I really love. This is my passion, I just had to take the time and figure that out."

Having never placed higher than third in championship meet, which came earlier this season in the 1,600 at the Monmouth County meet, McNamara entered the weekend as a relative unknown in the New Jersey track community, but altered perceptions with her victory on Saturday, as well as Friday evening's title-winning effort in the 1,600.

"This is very exciting and I'm excited that I qualified for the group meet next week," said McNamara. "Qualifying for the next meet was always the goal this weekend and because I had never run at this level be-



Red Bank Catholic's Marykate McNamara (front) finishes first in the 800. Her win helped the Caseys finish second overall. PETER ACKERMAN / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

fore, I just wanted to do my best and see where I fell."

McNamara's 2:18.40 is a personal best in the 800 and display of development the sophomore is pleased to see, but realizes is nothing to rest upon.

"I didn't expect to run that fast today, because my primary focus was qualifying. But coming off a win last night (Friday), I wanted to see if I could do it again. When I came across the line I wasn't sure if I had hit 18 or 17, but either way it would've been a PR (personal record)."

"I know I need to keep improving though. There are so many talented girls coming up in that group meet. It'll be an honor to run with them, but I want to step it up and see what I can really do."

Red Bank Catholic rode McNamara's first place finish to an overall second place team finish

posting a total of 95 team points to Monsignor Donovan's 132.

The Griffins flexed their muscle in the triple jump, as Claudia Dabrowski and Katie Weeks placed first and second reaching distances of 33-06.50 and 32-03, respectively, as well as the discus throw, where Weeks placed first with a 104-03 ahead of teammates Dana Carbone (5th - 90-05) and Marianna Singer (6th - 88-08).

Mater Dei's Fallon Quigley earned the South B high jump championship, reaching a height of 4-10 to pass up St. Rose's Leah Di Martini (4-08) and teammate Katie Viscardi (4-08).

Dabrowski would also win the pole vault reaching a height of 10-06.

St. John Vianney's Courtney Thompson raced to a victory in the 3,200 with an 11:06.68, beating the Red Bank

Catholic trio of Eryn Mills (2nd - 11:27.53), Emily Rienzo (4th - 12:00.92) and Kelly Mulvaney (5th - 12:07.53).

Red Bank Catholic's Rob Napolitano built upon Friday's 1,600 meter championship, in which the decorated senior ran 4:29.47, by outpacing an 800 field on Saturday that included a trio of top six finishers from CBA, including second place finisher Mike McClemens (1:58.79), Clark Mangini (1:59.09) in third, and Aaron Liberatore (1:59.65) in sixth. Napolitano's 1:57.31 was good enough to successfully defend his 2012 South A sectional.

However, CBA utilized the performances of McClemens, Mangini, and Liberatore to bolster its overall lead and earn the team title with a score of 138 1/2.

Chris Rotolo: crotolo@nj.com