

Sports

Local Runners Shine at NVLs

Naugatuck boys, Woodland girls, Greyhounds' Moriello win league titles

Photos by Callum Borchers

By Callum Borchers
Editor

WATERTOWN — It was a day of repeats at the Naugatuck Valley League cross country championships: The Woodland girls won their second straight team title, Naugatuck's Rosa Moriello captured her third consecutive individual crown, and the Naugy boys claimed their fourth team championship in a row.

The Hawks trio of Brittany Albright, Crystal Steinfeld and Melissa Kiley, who finished third, fourth and seventh, respectively, in 2008, were almost as impressive this year, taking fourth, fifth and eighth, in the same order. They, along with Sarah Melville (18th) and Kelly

Smith (28th), made up the Black and Gold's scoring five, who totaled 63 points. That was 14 lower than second-place Holy Cross, which Woodland had beaten by a single point only a week and a half before to secure back-to-back undefeated regular seasons.

"After that meet in Torrington, I told the team this is the second season now," head coach Jeff Lownds said. "I told them they need to step up, and they did that. I really believe we ran as well today as we could."

Moriello, despite a pounding headache, pounded the course and field again, smashing her own meet record by 47 seconds, with a winning time of 17 minutes, 50 seconds. Her closest competitor, the Crusaders'

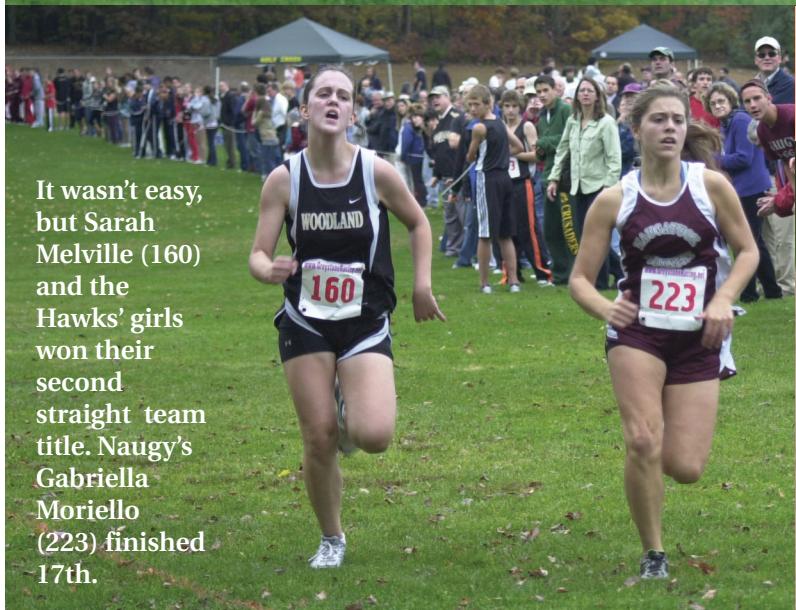
Megan Bobinski, finished in 19:19.

"I wish I was coming back next year to do it again," Moriello said. "But I have states and I have Open, and I'm hoping to drop my times at Wickam [Park]," where the Class L, State Open and New England championships will be held this year.

Becky Renzoni (12th), Gabriella Moriello (17th), Shelby Hale (26th) and Samantha Hilde (27th) helped the Greyhounds to third place in the team standings.

On the boys' side, the untouchable Chris Bendtsen of Wolcott matched Rosa Moriello with his own individual three-peat, winning in a meet-record 15:24. Though

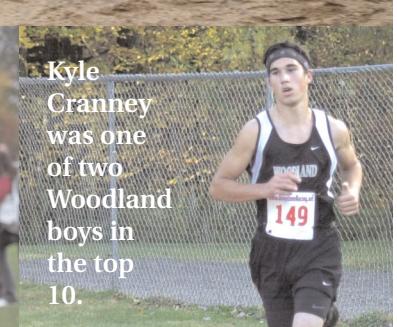
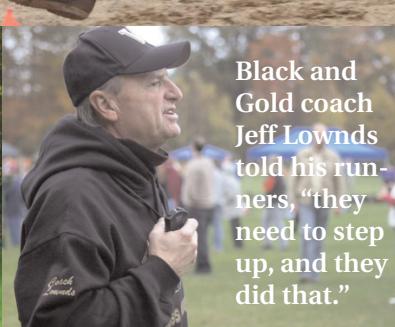
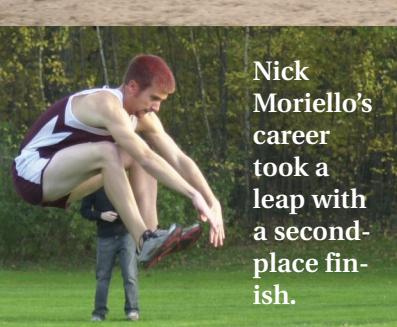
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Check out highlights of the NVL cross country championships at www.mycitizensnews.com



Rosa Moriello hacked 47 seconds off her own meet record, winning a third NVL championship in 17 minutes, 50 seconds.



Naugatuck freshman Erik Desousa edged Wolcott's Tyler Scheibenflug in a photo finish to take fourth place and help his team wear the NVL crown for the fourth year in a row.

Nick Moriello's career took a leap with a second-place finish.

Black and Gold coach Jeff Lownds told his runners, "they need to step up, and they did that."

Kyle Cranney was one of two Woodland boys in the top 10.