

Bergen County record that stood for 11 years has been broken twice in 12 months



Ridgewood's Virginia Morley has been involved in some historic results early this spring. (Mark R. Sullivan | For NJ Advance Media)

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For "lack of a better term," [Virginia Morley](#) said with a laugh, [Ridgewood's](#) hurdlers "just want to go off" this year.

If the early-season results are any indication, the Maroons are 'off' to a pretty good start.

Not even a week removed from the Arcadia Invitational in California, Ridgewood's trio of 400-meter hurdlers -- Morley, [Katherine Muccio](#) and [Victoria Purritano](#) -- put forth a county record-breaking performance Friday at the Jack Yockers Bergen County Relays.

If that sounds familiar, it should.

"All three of us broke this record last year," the seniors said virtually in unison. "It's nice to be back."

After the previous record -- set by Ridgewood in 2007 -- stood for 11 years, Muccio, Morley and Purritano have now rewritten the Bergen County record books twice in past 12 months.

On Friday, the talented triumvirate teamed up to run a combined 3:13.00 -- besting their 3:14.20 of a year ago by more than a second, as Muccio clocked in at a blazing 1:01.20, Purritano at 1:05.10 and Morley at 1:06.70, all three placing in the top six in Division A with Muccio's time being tops in N.J. this spring and setting a new school record.

"Obviously going into it, it was in the back of our minds that we could do it again," said Morley, committed to Colgate. "It was another opportunity for us to do it again. But it's easy to get caught up in the records and breaking them. We tried staying grounded and focused on running our race and doing our thing. We just focused on the task at hand and representing our team."

One week earlier, this same trio -- along with [Sara VandenAssem](#) -- teamed up and delivered a 1:01.71 in the shuttle hurdlers at Arcadia to win their heat, take fifth overall and stake claim to the third-fastest time in Bergen County history.

And keep in mind, we're still only halfway through April.

"It's all been pretty crazy already," said Purritano, bound for The College of New Jersey next year. "It's our senior year and obviously we all want to our last year to be our best year. That's our mindset. To be in California last week and to have to come back and compete that Monday in a dual meet one day after getting back then coming here, it's been stressful. It's been hectic. But we got it together and so far, so good."

No one's enjoying the early-season success as much as Muccio, the Penn-bound star whose outdoor season last spring was cut short by a torn deltoid ligament in her ankle in May -- an injury that kept her off the track until late October and prevented her from hurdling all winter.



Ridgewood's Katherine Muccio has been one of the biggest stars in the state so far this season. *(Andrew Mills | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)* "Now she's back and better than ever," Purritano said, not needing to point out [Muccio's headline-grabbing victory at Arcadia in the 300-meter hurdles](#) (in 43.13; a new Bergen County record and fourth all-time in state history) or the fact she had just set a new personal-best Friday in the 400H, breaking the 1:01.87 she posted as a sophomore at the outdoor Meet of Champions, placing seventh overall.

"Our coaches prepare us so well and we know coming into every race what we need to focus on," said Muccio, who also supplied a 57-second leg in the 400 on Ridgewood's distance medley relay team at Arcadia (12:10.17).

"For us, it's about getting better, enjoying the season and having fun. It's our last year together and it's nice when you can run for your teammates. That's what it's all about."

Ridgewood will enter Saturday in first place overall in Division A with 55 points, two ahead of Old Tappan and nine ahead of Northern Highlands.

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