

# Cross-country: Park Ridge/Emerson girls stand out at North Jersey Championships qualifier

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NorthJersey.com

Any disappointment that Park Ridge/Emerson might have had in missing last week's NJIC Colonial championship was lessened Saturday when the co-op girls cross-country team performed above even its own head coach's expectations.

The girls won the Pod 3 title at the North Jersey Invitational at Garret Mountain, 29-59, over Mount St. Dominic Academy less than a week after returning to action following a COVID-19-related shutdown.

"We ran well at the Brett Taylor meet (Oct. 17) a day before we got shut down and I think it gave them a sign and the confidence they needed to run on their own after the shutdown," said PRE head coach Mike Farrell. "The first workout we had after we came on Tuesday was a good sign that they done the work while we were out."

Four of the top five finishers for Park Ridge/Emerson didn't run last fall, including race winner Cali Marck, whose winning time of 20:59 for the 5,000 meter course was nearly a minute faster than her race at Brett Taylor. Presumptive Emerson volleyball players Eliza Dul and Ryan Grompone, who came out for the team because the volleyball season was delayed until February, finished 11-12. Junior Ava Morgan, who ran as a freshman but seemed to lose interest and skipped last fall, made a huge impact. Morgan finished eighth, again with a nearly one minute improvement over her previous best.

Marck beat Newark Academy's Kayva Nivarthy and PRE teammate Elyse von der Lieth, the only returnee in the team's top five. It was the first time she defeated von der Lieth in four races.

"She ran 12:30 on the track as a freshman in the 3,200 so we knew she had the talent to do this," said Farrell. "Her spikes hadn't come in when we ran the Brett Taylor so she ran in trainers and did pretty well. But I'm not sure we could have expected this."

"When my track season got pulled, I thought it would be cool to try something new," said Marck, who runs indoor and outdoor track at Emerson. "When I pulled ahead of Elyse (after the 2-mile mark) I was kind of nervous that I was going too fast and that people would pass me on the final hill."

Marck was surprised by her win, but elated to share the win with her teammates, who won a major invitational race for just the second team in program history.

"I'm shocked to have won and really proud of myself," she said. "It was amazing to do this as a team because we've been working very hard. After we missed the league championships we focused on this and we did it."

"(Emerson indoor coach) Trevor Hedges got Eliza and Ryan out when he saw that volleyball had been delayed," said Farrell. "And Ava started running again when COVID hit because she wanted to be outside and she started liking running again."

Senior Rich Weissenborn completed the outstanding day for PRE when he won the boys race in 17:05, 150 meters ahead of Newark Academy's Matthew Malloy, who led his team to an easy 15-73 win over Eastern Christian and a spot in the North Jersey finale on Nov. 7.

## Ridgewood sweeps Pod 2

Ridgewood's girls cross-country team, running the meet as a workout, easily won the second of three pods and advanced to the finale with a 20-47 win over IHA in the first head-to-head meeting of the two Bergen County powers.

Mia Dubac of Clifton, running as an individual won the race easily in 19:02 with IHA sophomore Leanna Johnston second, in 19:54, a big Garret Mountain personal best. The Ridgewood quintet of AnnaMarie

Tretola, Sarah Policano, Lily Williams, Olivia Shattuck and Caroline Deiss finished in the next five spots within eight seconds of each other, but still recorded the day's best team time by over five minutes over runner-up IHA.

Sean Fortunato, Jay Boogaert and Mick Barbi finished 4-5-6 as the Maroon boys easily defeated Clifton, 44-63, in the first of three probable matchups over the next two weeks between the area's top two teams. Quinn McCutcheon was ninth for Ridgewood, which put four runners between Clifton race winner Jacob Heredia and Clifton's No. 2 Harrison Schimpf, who finished 10th.

Heredia ran 16:24 to defeat NV/Old Tappan's Steven Hatano and Ramapo's Bobby Hymans by about 40 meters as both Hatano and Hymans ran 16:33.



## **Armstrong, Allen remain red hot**

Pompton Lakes senior Nathan Armstrong and River Dell freshman Christina Allen remained unbeaten against North Jersey competition with easy wins in the Pod 1 races.

Armstrong, whose only loss came in an excellent fifth place finish at the Colt Invitational at the state course at Holmdel on Oct. 21, won his fifth race of the year at Garret Mountain, running a Garret personal best time of 16:21, the same he ran at last year's Passaic County championships. He finished more than 100 meters ahead of Glen Rock's Aidan Carroll, who PR'ed in 16:45.

NV/Demarest went 4-5 behind Andrew Kleinman and Theo Davis and put four runners ahead of Hasbrouck Heights' third to hand the Aviators a 64-77 defeat, the first time Heights has lost to a North Jersey school this year.

Allen finished nearly 300 meters ahead of NV/Demarest's Casey Walter in 19:03 in winning her fourth race in four tries. Allen led the Golden Hawks to a comfortable 54-81-82 win over Mahwah and Demarest for the team title, helped by the 9-10 finish of freshman Isabella Gabay and junior Alex Grivas. Amanda Mircovich was 13th and Sarah Cookson rounded out the scorers for River Dell which will skip the finale to prepare for sectionals on Nov. 14.

## Qualifiers Announced

Fifteen boys teams and 13 girls teams will compete in the North Jersey Finale on Nov. 7 according to the list released by meet directors Sunday.

The boys race will start at 10 a.m. and includes Pod winners Ridgewood, NV/Demarest and Newark Academy. Bergen Catholic, Clifton, Hasbrouck Heights, Leonia, NV/Old Tappan, Pompton Lakes, Ramapo and Wayne Hills advanced from their finishes at Saturday's North Jersey Championships. Don Bosco, Indian Hills, Lakeland and Northern Highlands were advanced after they were unable to compete Saturday. Aidan Carroll of Glen Rock, Rich Weissenborn of Park Ridge/Emerson, Shawn Corcoran and Ryan Pena of Wayne Valley, Jaden Uram of Tenafly, Johnathan Ramac of Rutherford all qualified individually from their performances and Marcus Cheema and Owen Long of Westwood and Alex Saldana of River Dell were advanced.

The girls race follows at 10:45 a.m. Pod winners Ridgewood and Park Ridge/Emerson will compete along with IHA, NV/Demarest, Mahwah, Ramapo, Lyndhurst, Leonia, NV/Old Tappan and Glen Rock, who advanced Saturday. Indian Hills, Lakeland and Northern Highlands were advanced. Individuals advancing from Saturday's meet were Mia and Remy Dubac of Clifton, Isabella Drezek of Hasbrouck Heights, Molly Riva of Kittatinny, Marilyn Gonzalez of Passaic, Carol Aguirre of Mt. St. Dominic, Kyla Leathers and Leah Strauss of Wayne Hills, Molly Cantillion of Newark Academy and Emma Burd of Montclair Kimberley. Kayla Jarski of Westwood and Kelsey Pereira and Tasnim Eissa of Cliffside Park were also advanced.

*Paul Schwartz covers high school track and field for NorthJersey.com. For full access to live scores, breaking news and analysis from our Varsity Aces team, subscribe today. To get breaking news directly to your inbox, [sign up for our newsletter](#) and [download our app](#).*

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