

North 1 Sectional Notes and Highlights



NJ State Meet Coverage

[Joe Compagni](#)

Nov 14, 2020



Group 1 Girls

The depth of the Mountain Lakes squad was on full display, as their 6th runner finished before any other school had their 4th across the line. Led by Grace Wills (2nd in 20:48), the Lakers picked up their 4th straight Sectional title. Coach Vicki Allison's crew has won 5 of the last 6 years and 11 overall, more than anyone else in Group 1 statewide.

Senior Sophia Knerr of North Warren defended the title she won last year here, pulling away in the second half of the race to finish in 20:20.

Group 1 Boys

Nathan Armstrong of Pompton Lakes defended his title with a 16:25 effort, continuing an excellent senior campaign. His titles last year and this year are the first Sectional wins for the Cardinal since 1972. Fellow senior Jack Kellaheer of North Warren kept it close, finishing in 16:31.

The team battle went to the crew with the closest pack: Kinnelon. With a 1-5 split of 1:06, the Colts tallied 64 points to outdo defending champ Hasbrouck Heights (85) and Mountain Lakes (93).

Group 2 Girls

No girl had repeated as North 1 Group 2 Sectional champion since Kaitlin Chegwidon of Wallkill Valley in 2008. Angelina Perez made it quite clear that would change today. After setting the Garrett Mountain course record with a 17:28 last week, Perez ran under 18 minutes here for the fourth time here with a 17:31 effort. No other girl has run in the 17s on this course more than once. New to running and a surprise Sectional winner in 2019, the Lakeland Regional junior has emerged as one of the top performers in the state this fall.

"It's a hard finish," said Perez of the uphill final 800 meters at Garrett Mountain. "I'm getting a little more used to it after the last few weeks."

The Lakeland girls, ranked 13th in the state coming in, made history as a team as well, winning their first Sectional title ever. Junior Abigail Horevay was 4th overall in 19:50 and Lakeland had 5 of the top 17 finishers to win with 46 points after finishing 2nd here last year. West Milford was 2nd with 85 points.

A lifelong runner who made her presence known on the high school scene this year, River Dell freshman Christina Allen was 2nd in 18:30.

Group 2 Boys

Aidan Carroll of Glen Rock was able to celebrate the final steps to the finish line, and for good reason. His win in 16:38 gave the junior the school course record and gave the Panthers their first Sectional title. His margin was 32 seconds over freshman Alex Saldana of River Dell.

"My coaches have been telling me the entire time, 'you're going to win this - you need to win this,'" Carroll said. "I was really excited about it, but I honestly got kind of nervous coming into it."

The team race was much tighter. Indian Hills was 1st with 84, Demarest was 2nd with 88 and defending champion Lakeland Regional was 3rd with 96. The teams were nearly deadlocked through their top 4. But Indian Hills senior Anthony Macejka was the most valuable 5th man of the day, taking 28th in 18:38. He was just 1:11 behind the Braves' top runner, freshman Daniel Phillips in 6th. Indian Hills has now won 2 of the last 3 Sectional titles.

Group 3 Girls

Northern Highland Regional was the dominant force here this year. Their 7th runner made it up the hill and across the line at Garrett Mountain before anyone else had 3 runners in, leading to a sparkling winning score of 29 points. With Jessica Reilly (2nd, 20:15) leading the way, the Highlanders won their 5th in a row, 6th in the last 7 years, and 15th Sectional title in school history.

No one could match Ramapo's Brianna Braver, though. After finishing 6th here last year, she ran over a minute faster as a sophomore to win in 19:16.

"I was not expecting to win, but I felt really good today and it's our last race," said Braver.

Group 3 Boys

Not to be outdone, Ramapo senior Bobby Hymans made it a sweep of the individual titles for the Gryphon, running 16:28 to win by 13 seconds. Hymans was 13th here last year in 17:28.

"I think it was just a matter of making the decision that I wanted to be good, and accepting what it was going to take to be that good," said Hymans. "Despite the fact that we probably weren't going to have many races, it was just a matter of knowing those opportunities would come and being ready when I had those opportunities to execute the way I wanted to."

Morris Hills had won this meet in 2017 and 2018 before Old Tappan took the crown last year. In a challenging fall, Morris Hills was determined to get that title back, and was able to do so by a slim margin over Roxbury, 73-77. Led by sophomore Albin Mullan (2nd in 16:41), the Scarlet Knights had a top-5 average that was just 2 seconds faster than the Gaels.

Group 4 Girls

Nothing says 'powerhouse' more than a 20-point score to win a Sectional title. That was the NJ #2 Ridgewood girls, who went 2-3-4-5-6. With junior AnnaMarie Tretola (18:45) and senior Sarah Policano (18:57) leading the way, the Rebels had a meet-leading 19:14 top-5 average and a 1:02 gap for the fivesome. For good measure, their 6th and 7th runners were also in the top 10. Ridgewood now has 25 Sectional titles, including the last 3 in a row.

The individual winner was Clifton's Mia Dubic in 18:40. After taking 3rd in this race and 23rd at the Meet of Champions last year, Dubac has notched 7 wins and a pair of 2nd place finishes in 9 races in her senior campaign this fall, including a best of 17:59 at Darlington Park two weeks ago.

"I tried to distance myself from (the Ridgewood girls) from the start because I know that they are really strong," she said. "This was definitely one of my best races of the season."

Like many of the top runners in the field, the senior plans to take advantage of some of the post-season all-star meets happening at Holmdel Park and other venues in the next three weeks.

Group 4 Boys

Clifton picked up the individual win in the boys' race as well, marking the first time the Mustangs have earned both titles. Junior Jacob Heredia ran away from the field with a 16:19, the fastest time of the day on the unforgiving Garrett Mountain course.

Heredia has earned 7 wins along with two 2nd place finishes in 9 races this fall, the fastest being a 15:27 at Darlington Park two weeks ago.

"It's definitely different here than literally every other course you're going to run," said Heredia. "I wanted to make that first mile count so I didn't really wait on anybody. I just went out."

Making it count in the team race were the NJ #17 Ridgewood boys, who scored 40 points to hold off Montclair (57). Senior Jay Boogaert (16:49), junior Sean Fortunato (16:52) and junior Mick Barbi (16:52) went 2-3-4 to lead the way for the Rebels. Their 17:11 top-5 average was the best of the day here. The win was their 11th straight Sectional title and 27th overall.