

Feature Friday: Luke Pash Is Ready To Rock The Trails

[Jim Lambert](#)

Jul 25, 2024



A huge kick, a big heart, a high octane motor and a passion for the sport have combined to make [Luke Pash](#) one of the best distance runners in the country on the track and on the trails.

Pash, a rising senior at Ridgewood, is coming off a historic junior year that saw him throw down some jaw-dropping performances, which have elevated his confidence heading into the upcoming XC season.

How great was Pash's junior year??

Check out these numbers and stats!!

Last fall, Pash ran 15:41 at Holmdel Park, placed third in Group 4, was seventh at the Meet of Champions, and earned a berth in the Nike National Championships.

During the indoor season, he went sub 9 in the 3,200 to win the Meet of Champions title.

Then this past spring, Pash absolutely blew up the track by running a meet record 4:04.49 to win the 1,600 at the Meet of Champions and then he burned a 4:02.24 split on Ridgewood's DMR at New Balance Nationals!!!!

Pash is just the third runner in state history to go sub 9 and sub 4:05!!!

How awesome is that!!!

Pash is jacked up for his final high school XC season and feels he's ready to make a huge drop at Holmdel and contend with defending champion Joe Barrett of CBA for the coveted Meet of Champions title.

NJ MileSplit recently caught up with Pash to get his thoughts on his chances of winning the Meet of Champions XC title, the goals he has for himself and his team, his remarkable outdoor season, his quest to go sub 4 in the mile, his distance running journey, his summer training and a whole lot more.

So lean back in your fancy beach chair or grab your favorite spot on the couch and enjoy our latest installment of Feature Friday, our first for the XC season, as we shine the spotlight on the great Luke Pash!!!!

[Luke Pash](#)

[Ridgewood](#)

NJM: How is your summer training going? How many miles a week have you been running, and where have you mostly been running? Is your training different from last summer? If so, in what way is it different?

My summer has been great so far!! So far in the summer I have been doing around 62 miles a week. I have been mostly running at home in Ridgewood every morning with my team. My training is pretty similar to last year with just a slight increase in weekly mileage.

Have you attended a Running Camp this summer, or are you planning to attend one? If so, which camp and in what ways do you feel running camp helps in your preparation for the upcoming season?

I have not and I'm not planning on attending a running camp this summer. I went to a running camp the summer after my freshman year and I had a lot of fun with a few of my teammates, but I enjoy staying home and running at home more.

After running a big Holmdel PR of 15:41 last season, and dropping a 15:27 at Darlington and a 15:56 at Bowdoin, and qualifying for the Nike Nationals, what type of goals do you have for yourself this season? What times would you like to hit at Darlington, Holmdel, and Bowdoin?

I have many goals going into the season for myself and my team. For me, I love to win so that means more than time for me, so my goal is to win as much as possible. Starting with Darlington, I would love to break the 15 minute barrier there. At Holmdel, my goal is to be as close to 15 minutes as possible, and with the competition I have, it is definitely possible. As a team at Holmdel, winning our group and getting top 3 again at states is our goal. I loved racing at Bowdoin last year at NXR and I'm really excited to go back and be able to try and win and drop a fast time, along with a team nationals trip would be amazing.

After winning Meet of Champions titles in the 3,200 last indoors and in the 1,600 this past spring, how big of a goal is it for you to win the Meet of Champions title in cross-country and how do you feel about your chances of winning that race?

Winning is always a big goal for me so winning MOC in cross country would mean so much to me. I think I have a great chance this year to go out and win along with being able to drop a fast time. Overall I'm really looking forward to going out and competing with the best in the state. NJ is obviously loaded with distance running talent with 5 guys, including yourself, returning who have run under 16 at Holmdel. Defending Meet of Champs winner Joe Barrett leads the way after running 15:21 at Holmdel last year. So, there is some speculation that we could see times close to 15:00 at Holmdel this season!



What are thoughts on the amount of talent in NJ and the potential for times to be under 15:10?

I love the competition that NJ brings to every championship race and knowing that I'm up there with a huge chance to win MOC is something I think about to push me to get better everyday. I think that it is very possible to go under 15:10 with the competition the state offers.

Your team returns four of the top 7 back from a squad that finished second in Group 4 and third at the Meet of Champions. So you must be very excited about the potential your team has heading into this season. What is your team capable of this season and what are the goals and expectations for the Ridgewood pack this fall?

I have been with most of these guys on our team this year from the beginning, so I'm super excited about this season and what we can do. Our plan as a team is to win all our major county meets in the beginning and compete when championship seasons come. I mentioned a bit earlier, but I think as a team we can win the Group 4 championship, and for states I would love to get second and one up last year. To cap off the team year, being able to go to NXN with these guys would be amazing, so we are all striving for that.

You are coming off an amazing junior year on the track with PR's of 4:04.49 for 1,600, 8:59.77, and 1:53.19 for 800. How much of a huge confidence builder was that for you, and how much hungrier did that make you to have the best XC season of your career this fall?

After the outdoor track season, it has given me so much confidence to myself knowing what I can do and what I'm capable of. Going into the XC season it is super exciting and I'm looking to end my last high school cross country year the best yet.

Let's get more into your times on the track! By running 4:04.49 and 8:59.77, you are only the third runner in NJ high school history to break 4:05 and 9!!!! Edward Cheserek and Marco Langon are the other two. How does that make you feel, Luke? How amazed are you by what you accomplished last year, or did you see it coming?

Having my name up on a list with only two other guys is incredible to me. Knowing I'm being compared to the greats in state history, I have no words. I'm super proud of what I've accomplished and knowing I can do more keeps me going. If you told freshmen Luke my current times, I wouldn't have believed you, but deep down I was told that I could do great things and that I was meant for this.

What was the key for you to drop your times so much on the track? What was the biggest difference in your training, the way you raced and your mindset that you feel enabled you to make such huge drops?

The biggest thing for me was consistency. Being consistent throughout my whole life really changed when I started getting better and better. Also I have so much trust in my coaches so they have had a huge impact on my success and training. Learning how to race was something that I definitely learned a lot about throughout the years and my goal is to never make the same mistake twice. My mindset has always been the same and that is to compete, well and be able to trust and have confidence in myself. Having so much support also gives me a great boost to everything.



The biggest dream/goal of every high school miler is to go sub 4 in the mile. After your 4:04.49 1,600 and your 4:02.24 anchor in the DMR at New Balance Nationals, how do you feel about your chances of going sub 4 in your senior year, how big of a goal is that for you, and how much would that mean to you, Luke?

After this past outdoor season I've definitely thought about running sub 4 in the mile. Getting this close makes me want it so bad. I've thought about it in the past but I always put it as a future goal but I think the future might be coming sooner than later. Breaking 4 is at the top of my goals and always has been when I dedicated myself to this sport. Being able to do that would be so incredible and I don't even know how I would react.

What is the story behind how you became a runner? When did you first start running, and how did it come about?

The story is one day I was at my friend's house and his dad had mentioned that he had cross country practice next week. I asked what that was because I had no idea and he said it was distance running. His dad told me it's basically running 5 miles non stop at a good pace then this could be a good sport to try and for some reason I thought that sounded cool and signed up. I had never run track before high school, I played recreation and travel baseball and basically every other sport growing up. I had so much fun with the team that year, which led me to doing winter track, decided baseball was not where I wanted to be and ran spring track instead. That was the best decision of my life. Unfortunately that friend no longer runs on the team, but I'll give him credit for getting me started on my running journey.

When was your first big breakthrough moment when you began to realize that you could do big things in this sport?

I feel like I've had many moments that have shown me my potential, but I would say breaking Ridgewood's school record in the 3200 indoors for the first time at MOC my sophomore year. In that race I realized that I could compete with the best in the state. I didn't even know I could break the record until after, and that gave me so much confidence going forward. Recently though, running 4:02 (anchor split in the DMR at NBN) for 1600m has really shown me that I have the chance to do better and have more great things to come!!

What do you love the most about being a runner, and what do you love the most about running in N.J.?

I basically love everything about being a runner, except for bad races, workouts where you die and long runs that leave you dead for the rest of the day, so maybe not everything. Even those bad things are fun though because I'm doing it with my teammates and my coach. I know after every hard workout it leaves me stronger, bad races are learning lessons and those long runs are so rewarding at the end. Also who doesn't like to say "yeah i just did a quick 12 miles this morning." I love running in NJ because it's my home and it's where I feel comfortable, especially with my teammates. When I'm running with them it goes by so fast even if it's below freezing out or if it's 90 degrees.

