

DISTRICT 1 TRACK & FIELD

All smiles for Upper Darby's Jackson after 100 dash title

By Terry Toohey
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CALN TWP. » Upper Darby's Lavar Jackson stood on the medals stand with a huge smile on his face after winning the boys Class 3A 100-meter dash at the District 1 Track & Field Championships Saturday.

A year ago, Jackson ran the sixth-fastest time in the qualifying round but never got to show what he could do in the final. He pulled a hamstring in the preliminary heats of the 4 x 100 relay. He was able to appear in the 100 final but jogged the race to finish eighth in 21.10 seconds.

"This year, I was a little nervous coming in," Jackson said. "I didn't want the same thing to happen. I wanted to redeem myself and put some smiles on my coaches' faces. I wanted to let them know their hard work paid off."

Jackson did that and more. After breaking the school record with a time of 10.83 seconds in prelims Friday, he came back and claimed gold, betting his mark to 10.77. Jackson also took second in the 200 with a PR of 21.67.

"My goal at states is to go 21.4 mid to high," Jackson said. "I'll be running my college track at Shippensburg so I'm looking forward to that."

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Until this season, Penn Wood's Kivaleon Clarke was football and basketball player. This year he decided to expand his athletic horizons and explore track. The question is what events would he try?

That was easily resolved, thanks to his dad, Vance Clarke, who was a jumper at Mississippi State.

"I said let me try triple jump and see if I get the hang of it," Clarke said. "If not, I'll do sprints. I took a liking to the jump, and here I am."

In two months, Clark went from newbie to a state qualifier in the triple jump. He leaped career best 44-4 ½ to take second and punch his ticket to Shippensburg. That topped his previous best by 16 inches.



PETE BANNAN — DAILY TIMES

Upper Darby's Lavar Jackson, in action Friday, won the Class 3A 100-meter dash Saturday at the District 1 Track & Field championships in a school-record time of 10.77 seconds.

"I've really taking a liking to the jumping," Clarke said.

Jackson and Clarke will be joined in Shippensburg by a number of Delco athletes, including six from the Central League.

Haverford's Patrick Lawson, Penncrest's Gavin Mogck and Radnor's Luke Bodden finished second, fourth and sixth, respectively, in a fast 3,200 to punch their states tickets. The top 10 runners in the final bettered the state qualifying standard of 9:31.71.

Strath Haven's A.J. Glavicic took second in the 400 and teamed with Emilio Hooper-Erades, Dan Wuen-schel and Jack Shronk for seventh in the 4 x 400. Emerson Hull was seventh in the 110 hurdles and advanced on time (15.10) for the Panthers, Noah Price took fourth in the pole vault (13-0). The top five finishes in each event automatically qualify for the state championships.

Chester's Walton Garnett was

fifth in the 400 and anchored the team of Jayden Bantum, Quamere Cosby and Zion Spotwood to fifth in the 4 x 400. Penn Wood's Terry Dweh was in the hurdles and will join Clare at the state meet.

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It was a good day for Chester Charter Scholars Academy in Class 2A.

Zachary Howard won the 110 hurdles and finished third in the 300 hurdles. Teammate Malachi Holmes took second in the 100 dash.

Delco Christian received gold-medal performances from C.J. Simbiri and Josh Colonia. Simbiri won the triple jump with a leap of 46-6 ½, the second best effort of his career. It was just two inches off his best. Colonia won the shot put.

"I'm ecstatic with that," Simbiri said. "The thing I'm happiest about is my consistency. With consistency I'll definitely PR soon. I'm hoping it happens at states."

BASEBALL

Bonner can't solve McNiff as Roman ends repeat hopes

By Matt Smith
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UPPER DARBY » Myles McNiff reared back and let his fastball fly Saturday. Bonner & Prendergast's hitters couldn't catch up.

The left handed pitched two sizzling innings of relief to help Roman Catholic unseat the reigning Catholic League champions. The No. 6 Cahillites overcame an early two-run deficit, withstanding a two-run homer by Kevin McGonigle, and eliminated the third-seeded Friars with a 5-3 victory. McNiff delivered at the plate and on the mound in relief of starter Tom Flaherty.

Roman will play No. 2 La Salle, a 6-0 winner over Cardinal O'Hara, in Wednesday's semifinals.

With the Cahillites leading 4-3, McNiff took the ball in the sixth inning with a man on and nobody out. The first pitch he threw drilled nine-hole hitter Justin Shepherd, setting the stage for a Bonner comeback with McGonigle lurking in the two-hole. McNiff got Jaxon Kehoe to hit a fly ball to center, then went after McGonigle, the subject of a handful of MLB scouts in attendance. The 2023 league MVP worked a 3-1 count before Roman decided, wisely, to intentionally walk McGonigle and load the bases.

That's when McNiff rose to the challenge, striking out both Irv Fisher and Harry Carr to end the Bonner threat.

"I knew I would have the opportunity to come in and pitch and I was ready," McNiff said. "It's really special to come in here and do this with a great group of guys. We've been through a lot. Now we are trying to make the best of our situation."

Carr got the start for the Friars and pitched well until the fourth. Nate Bryant singled and McNiff followed with his second double in as many at-bats to put two runners in scoring position. Petey Cressa smacked an RBI single, and McNiff scored on an error to even the score. Flaherty

ROMAN CATHOLIC 5, BONNER & PRENDERGAST 3

Roman Catholic 100 300 1 - 5 9 2
Bonner & Prendergast 210 000 0 - 3 5 1
WP: Flaherty; LP: Carr; S: McNiff
2B: McNiff 2 (RC); HR: McGonigle (BP).

worked a full count and drilled an RBI single to give Roman a 4-3 advantage.

"They had some good at bats against (Carr). They weren't hitting him all over the yard, that wasn't the case at all ... and they took advantage of some seeing-eye singles," Bonner coach Steve DeBarberie said. "Our biggest emphasis all year is finishing. We get guys down 0-2 or 1-2 and then they work it back to a full count. And that's where bad things happen. So we have to do a better job at putting guys away."

Roman tacked on an insurance run in the top of the seventh inning off Kehoe, who pitched 3.1 innings of relief. Billy Price singled, stole second base and scored on a Santino Harwood sacrifice fly.

The Friars' biggest goal this season was to successfully defend their Catholic League title, which they won last season to end a 12-year drought, with arguably the greatest team in school history.

"I think we came in today and there was a little bit of doubt. That's a very good team and they beat us earlier in the year, 2-1," DeBarberie said. "Last year we had that swagger and that confidence every single game. It's always better in my mind to play with that confidence, with that target on your back and still be the hunter."

After the second inning, Bonner's bats were silenced by Flaherty and McNiff, who combined for five walks and three hit batsmen. The Friars stranded 10 runners on base. McNiff struck out Bryan Henry with a man on third base to end the game.

Bonner & Prendie will compete for the District 12 title in early June before embarking on a run in the PIAA Class 5A tournament next month. This is the Friars' first season as a Class 5A program.