



October 24, 2009

## Notebook: Sectionals, states to test Haddonfield

By GUS OSTRUM  
Courier-Post Staff

*Haddonfield cross country star Jon "Boo" Vitez and his teammates are ready to make their move -- and the next three weeks of training will be key to how far the Bulldawgs go in the upcoming state group meet and Meet of Champions at Holmdel Park.*

*Most of the major races around South Jersey and the state have been completed. The next major round of competition for most schools begins with the South Jersey Group 2 sectionals at Delsea on Nov. 7, followed by state group championships at Holmdel Park on Nov. 14 and the Meet of Champions, also at Holmdel Park, on Nov. 21.*

*For the Bulldawgs, No. 1 in the Courier-Post's Top 20 rankings, a crucial test begins. Their stated goal prior to the season was to win the Meet of Champions team crown at Holmdel Park. It would be the second such title in school history for the Dawgs, who also won the championship in 2001.*

*Haddonfield performed well in the recent Colonial Conference All-Star Meet at Pennypacker Park on Thursday. Vitez shattered a course record by former Haddonfield star Chris Platt by clocking a time of 14:57, besting the old mark of 15:11.*

*The Dawgs placed four of their runners in the top five, including Matt Nussbaum (second, 15:46), Ben Potts (third, 15:48) and Colin Baker (fifth, 16:24), and had seven runners finish in the top 10.*

*But Vitez knows that if the Dawgs are to overcome such state powers as Christian Brothers Academy, Millburn, West Windsor-Plainsboro North and Don Bosco Prep in the state Meet of Champions, they will simply have to keep working harder.*

*"We haven't had a day where every single runner on the team has raced well at the same time," said Vitez. "We know that's ready to happen and we hope we can pull together starting with the sectionals, but the next few weeks of independent training are pretty important to get on the right track."*

*Coming into the current campaign and throughout the 2009 season, Vitez has always maintained a leadership role on this talented group of athletes.*

*"Boo is focused and he'll certainly do anything necessary to help the team in the states and the state meet of champions," coach Nick Baker said. "He has always done his part and has been a terrific leader on this team."*

*Vitez has made an impact on the Haddonfield program from the start of his career, placing 11th in the Group 2 state meet as a freshman followed by back-to-back Group 2 state crowns in 2007 and 2008. He has also been selected for the All-South Jersey first team twice, in 2007 and 2008.*

*Haddonfield's success in the Group 2 state meet and Meet of Champions will rely on Vitez's supporting cast. Potts, Nussbaum, and Colin Baker will likely be at the top of their game for the state competition, so an MOC crown may come down to points being picked up by the rest of the Dawgs' solid pack -- Ethan Quanci, Tim Malloy, David Twitchell, and Ray Schlitt among others.*

*"When you're up against the best in the state, you must be clicking on all cylinders," said coach Baker, whose teams have captured three consecutive group state championships. "At this level, one or two talented runners won't win it alone for you. Everyone must contribute to the team success."*

*Stay tuned.*

### *Champions*

*Congrats to the recent county and league champions from around South Jersey. As mentioned earlier, Haddonfield's Vitez won the Colonial Conference All-Star meet at Pennypacker Park in a course record time of 14:57.*

*In the Burlington County League championships on Thursday, New Egypt's Nikolai Hladick won the Freedom Division crown in 17:45 while Maple Shade captured team honors with a meet low of 29 points.*

*In the Burlco Liberty Division, Moorestown enjoyed a clean sweep with Anthony Horten taking individual honors in 16:57 followed closely by Burlington Township's Tim Reardon in 17:01. Moorestown easily won the Liberty team title with 26 points.*

*In the Burlco Patriot Division, Delran's Pete Iannuzzi placed first in 17:42 to lead the Bears to the division crown with 29 points, besting runnerup Holy Cross' 41 points.*

*It was all Pennsville in the Salem County Championships. Tyler Cummings placed first in a time of 16:52 while teammates Grant Kircher (third, 17:12), Chris Ellington (fifth, 17:38), and Ben Moyer (sixth, 17:42) all placed in the top 10 as the Eagles rolled to the county championship.*

*St. Augustine Prep's Phil Fanz captured first place honors in Thursday's Atlantic County Championships.*

### *Burlo stars*

*The usual familiar faces were the big winners in the Burlington County Open last Friday at Mill Creek Park in Willingboro.*

*Cherokee's Steve Burkholder, Matt McCarroll and Josh Perez all posted top 10 finishes as the Chiefs captured team honors with a meet low of 51 points to edge runnerup Lenape (61) and Shawnee (63).*

*Shawnee's David Forward captured the individual championship for the second season in a row in 16:12, edging teammate Connor Herr (16:21). Burkholder placed third in 16:27 while the Chiefs' McCarroll (17:04) and Joe Perez (17:05) finished eighth and ninth respectively.*

*Cherokee is ranked No. 2 in the Top 20 while Shawnee follows at No. 3 and Lenape at No. 4.*

### *State rankings*

*In a poll of cross country coaches from around the state that appears on the web site NJRunners.com, Haddonfield ranks second to Christian Brothers Academy. The Bulldawgs and CBA will surely settle this score in the upcoming state Meet of Champions at Holmdel Park on Nov. 21. No other South Jersey team is listed in the web site's state top 10.*

*In individual rankings on the same site, Haddonfield's Vitez has earned the No. 6 spot overall with a top time of 15:41.50. Shawnee's Forward (15:52) is eighth, Paul VI's Mike Rankin (15:52.10) is ninth, St. Augustine's Fanz (16:01) is No. 14, Shawnee's Herr (16:06) is No. 22 and Triton's Rob Rawls (16:08) is No. 25.*

*West Windsor-Plainsboro North brothers Joe Rosa (15:04) and James Rosa (15:16) remain the Nos. 1 and 2-ranked runners in the state. Reach Gus Ostrum at [gostrum@gannett.com](mailto:gostrum@gannett.com)*

---