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High School Top Performer - Week 4: Jon Vitez (boys cross-country), Haddonfield

By [Jim Lambert/For The Star-Ledger](#)

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JON VITEZ, HADDONFIELD Senior, 5-8, 115

JUST THE STATS: Vitez won the Eastern States Championship race in a school-record 12:25.6 over 2.5 miles at the 37th Manhattan Invitational last Saturday at Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx. Vitez's time was the third-fastest of the day among the seven varsity races and places him No. 12 on New Jersey's all-time list for Van Cortlandt.

REACTION: `` The race on Saturday was bittersweet. Our team was disappointed with how we finished (second behind CBA and Fayetteville-Manlius of New York), but at the same time I was thrilled to have won individually. To run 12:25 on that storied course is incredible. People have been running there forever and the history really allows you to put your run in perspective."

WHAT DOES WINNING THE EASTERN TITLE MEAN: `` Winning the title was a great accomplishment for me. I have had my ups and downs in my high school career, but Saturday was one of the highlights. To be able to come away with such a prestigious title means so much to me."

THOUGHTS ON HADDONFIELD-CBA BATTLE FOR N.J. SUPREMACY: The teams have split two meetings this season after Christian Brothers of Lincroft won the latest meeting last Saturday. `` Saturday was dissapointing for us, but it will make us hungrier for our next race. CBA is a very good team and frankly, I wouldn't want it any other way. If we were a shoo-in for the M of C title it would take away the thrill of the season. To win the title we will need to be our very best on Nov. 21, and winning the title wouldn't be the same if we had had it locked up the whole season. To be the best, you have to beat the best, and right now CBA is the best. Hopefully it's a different story at the end of the season. But whatever the case, the M of C will be a heck of a race."

CAN ANYONE BEAT IN THE STATE BEAT THE ROSAS: `` The Rosas (juniors Joe and Jim of West Windsor-Plainsboro North) are in great shape and right now are the two best runners in the state, and I think the two best runners in the nation. 15:04 (Joe's time to break the Holmdel Park course record) is an unbelievable time, and 15:16 (Jim's time at Holmdel isn't shabby either. When M of C rolls around, they will almost certainly be the favorites, but that is why they run the race. I will go out there and give it all I have and if they come away with the win, so be it. But I'm not ready to hand them the title just yet."

BIGGEST GOAL: `` Our team goal is first and foremost to win M of C. Anything after that for us in bonus. Hopefully we will be able to make it to Nike Team Nationals, but the main focus is on the state meet. As far as my goal goes, I just want to score as low as possible and help the team win."

NEXT RACE: The Colonial All-Star meet next Thursday.

FAVORITE COURSE: "I have always enjoyed running on Holmdel. For us South Jersey folk, going up there is a big deal, and whenever you're up there you know it's important. I also enjoy it because there is nowhere to hide when you're running it. Either you have it that day or you don't, and the bowl is going to be waiting for you either way."

PERSONAL BESTS ON TRACK: 800 - 2:01. 1,600 - 4:15. 3,200 - 9:14.

SUMMER TRAINING: "All our guys knew what was at stake, so everyone was excited to train hard for the upcoming season. When I was home, there were always people to run with. Even when I went to the beach, odds were someone was down who I could run with. Our top guys go to camp every summer, and this year we went to the Hawk Harrier, which is run by the St. Joseph's (Pa.) coach Mike Glavin. It was a great week of training, because teams like West Windsor North, Germantown Friends (Pa.), Union Catholic and Paul VI (of Haddonfield) all went."

BREAKOUT RACE: "I never had a true breakout race, but if I had to pick one I would say the Haddonfield Invitational last spring. I ran 9:14 for 3,200 which was a seven-second PR for me and a huge confidence booster going into sectionals, states, and M of C."

GREATEST MOMENTS: "My sophomore year when I won the Group 2 states individually and the team won as well. Our team really ran well that day and I thought we had a real good shot at M of C the next week. In track, this past spring when we went 1-2-3 in the Group 2 1,600 was pretty awesome, and following it up with a team Group 2 title capped off a great weekend."

FAVORITE MOVIE: "Good Will Hunting."

FAVORITE TV SHOW: "Entourage."

FAVORITE FOOD: Pizza.

FAVORITE MUSIC: Classic Rock.

FAVORITE SUBJECT: Math.

FAVORITE ATHLETE: Jimmy Rollins.

SUPERPOWER: "It would be pretty cool to be able to fly and travel anywhere I want."

OTHER INTERESTS: "When I'm not running or hanging out with my friends, I like playing tennis, and I live for the intramural basketball season at our high school."

DID YOU KNOW: Vitez's nickname is Boo and his brother, Tim, ran on Haddonfield's cross-country team. "The nickname came from when I was young. My parents called me Boo when I was still in a crib, and then my brother and sister called me it. It kind of stuck."

COLLEGE PLANS: "Last weekend, Colin Baker and I took an official visit to North Carolina. This weekend, I am going to Princeton, and the weekend of the 31st I am going to Georgetown. I would also say I am considering Columbia, Notre Dame and Harvard."