

Island Sports

Star NKHS senior runner almost played soccer

By Adrienne Downing

It is amazing to think about the possibility that Caitlin Crawford was almost not a member of the North Kingstown High School cross country and track teams.

Crawford, a senior, has anchored the team since she finished second at the cross country state meet her freshman year, but if two North Kingstown recreation track club coaches had not intervened, the Skippers would have been missing a very important part of their team.

"If it weren't for Dee LaMay and Charlie Breagy, I would be a soccer player today," Crawford explains.

Unlike some runners, the sport was not love at first sight for Crawford. After running during her sixth grade year on the Lawn school cross-country team, she tried out and made it onto the school soccer team.

"I really only ran to stay in shape for soccer, but my dad knew that I was a better runner and so he made me go to five practices with the track club."

She was still not sure about running after three practices and was fairly certain that she would not stick with it, when one event happened that changed her running history.

"I remember they had a track

meet where the kids could sign up for what events they wanted to run, so Caitlin went and signed up for the 1500," her dad, Stephen, explained. "They didn't have anyone else sign up for the event and so they didn't have it. We tried to get Caitlin to go down onto the track with the other runners, but she was happy sitting in the bleachers with us."

That was when LaMay stepped in.

"She came up and took Caitlin by the hand and told her to come with her and she would find something for her to run," he said.

Crawford ran in the 4 x 400 relay that day, went to those final two father-mandated practices and has been "hooked" ever since.

"I remember that day," LaMay said. "I love that kid, she is so amazing and it is really special in my heart that she has done so well."

Done well is an understatement when considering Crawford's accomplishments. She has had four top-ten state finishes in cross-country and she continues to set personal records for herself this indoor track season.

Recently, she ran a 3:03 in the 1000 meters at the Rhode Is-



Caitlin Crawford races to a tenth place finish in the Rhode Island state meet.

land state championships, which qualified her for the New England championships on Friday.

A personal record, a 4:51 in the 1500 meters, came at the URI invitational in January.

Her favorite moment this year, however, was her great perfor-

mance at the Brown cross-country invitational.

"I think sometimes people don't get it. Doing well at Brown is bigger than winning states. All the best schools from New Jersey, New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts, they are all there," she explained.

Although she has amazing running talent, coaches and teammates alike say her off-track contributions are just as important.

"When Caitlin joined the team, they were not very dedicated and she changed the attitude of the whole team," Keven O'Neil, cross-country head coach, complimented. "She makes everyone want to do the best they can do."

Teammate Monica Black credits Crawford with being a big motivator for the team.

"She has been the captain for the last two years and her leadership has been great. She really peps us up before races," Black said.

A very selfless runner, Crawford can sometimes be seen giving up the win in order to run alongside a teammate trying for a better time.

"She really is a good kid. She is all about the team, there is nothing individual about it for her," her mom, Nancy, added.

The team is exactly the reason

Crawford finds it so easy to be a team player. "I love this team, we are so close, like family. We are together seven days a week starting July first and we just get along so well," she said.

Crawford's running caught the attention of one of the top running universities in the country and unless something changes dramatically, she will be attending ACC powerhouse Wake Forest University in the fall.

Running is not Crawford's only strength. She has also set a high academic standard for herself. Currently holding a 3.75 grade point average, she ranks 17 out of 400 students in her class.

"I think that running makes me a better student," she explained. "It makes me be disciplined and gives me good time management skills."

For now, Crawford will finish out the indoor season and have a very short break before outdoor track starts in this month.

The Skippers will be savoring their last season with her and looking to celebrate with her one more time.

"It doesn't get any better than her. She has a drive like no one I have ever seen and I think her best races are still ahead of her," O'Neil concluded.

Teachers squeak past students in annual Lawn school hoop match

By Adrienne Downing

When there are two basketball teams, shouting fans, a band playing the ESPN theme song, a halftime shooting contest, and a mascot all in action, there must be something major going on.

This was the scene at Lawn Avenue School at a recent afternoon during the student-faculty basketball game.

The boys' and girls' basketball

teams combined to form one team and took on a team comprised of teachers and administrators.

The unique game format allowed for everyone to have playing time. The teams played five 4-minute periods and one 6-minute period. An elaborate white-board covered with teams and times kept everyone on track as to who was rotating into the game and when. During the 4-minute periods, the

teams were evenly mixed with boys and girls of all grade levels, but the eighth-graders were given some extra playing time and time to shine during the final 6-minute period.

The teachers came out strong in the beginning of the game and were not about give in and let their charges take the easy win.

Not to be outdone, the students looked tough and had mounted a 15-13 lead at halftime.

At one point, gym teacher and referee, Eric Bush, decided to get in on the action by taking an errant ball and shooting for the teachers. It is still not clear which team he was trying to help, the teachers by attempting the shot or the students by missing it.

After a lively back and forth second half, which featured Spanish teacher Micheala Onosko, in her helicopter beanie, the students

led by 1 going into the final period and it looked as though they were going to pull off the win.

The teachers, led by Jim "Kaveman" Kazinski, pulled ahead by 3 points in the closing minute of the game. Eighth-grader Ben Thompson sunk a shot and got

fouled with just 6 seconds remaining, giving the students a chance to tie the game and possibly send it to overtime. Thompson looked very sure of himself as he stood in for the foul shot, but it just wouldn't drop for him and the teachers took the 26-25 win.

Sailors enjoy warm weather

By John Horton

Frostbite sailors returned to East Ferry on Sunday. Sunny skies, light easterly winds and 35 degrees provided for a second straight good-weather weekend after weeks of being frozen out or blown out.

Racing is in Shellback dinghies that can capsize, so the 20/20 rule is used to decide sailing days. Over 20 knots of wind or below 20 degrees usually cancels the racing.

On Feb. 25, the race committee got as much of a work out as

the sailors. For the first race, the race committee of Dick Allphin and George Rice set up a windward-leeward course parallel to the Shoreby Hill beach in a light northerly wind.

After the first race the wind direction moved around to the east and then to the south by the time the fifth race got under way. Between races the committee had to go set a new windward turning mark and then create a new starting line to match. For the last two races the government buoy marking the channel to the marina was used as the windward mark.

Henry Siegal earned the "most improved" award for the day by winning a race and earning third for the day. John Quinn won overall with 8 points. John Horton was second with 15 points; Henry Siegal was third with 16; Joe Logan was fourth with 23; Doc Clarke was fifth with 24; Rob Salk was sixth with 25; and Terry Jones was seventh with 29.

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