

Island Sports

Islanders give all to NK cross-country team

By Adrienne Downing

Pure teamwork is what it took for the North Kingstown High School boys' cross country team to pull off a spectacular win over South Kingstown on Sept. 18.

The team suffered their first league loss in 10 years against Chariho on Sep. 10, and they knew going into their second match that the Rebels were to be tough competition.

"We didn't lose against Chariho, they beat us. They had an outstanding race that day," head coach Paul Tetreault said. "But, we rebounded very well against South."

The Skippers top three runners, Mitch Leveille, islander Nate Wigton, 15:08, and Craig Johnson finished in first, second and fourth places respectively. Conor McCloskey from South Kingstown edged Johnson for third place, but NK received strong finishes from Travis Crocker and Zach Sites-Rudland, their number four and five runners, to secure the 28-29 victory.

Leveille and Wigton both broke the previous course record of 15:12 on the way to the win.

Other Jamestown harriers who contributed to the win were: Will Spahr, 18:02; Dylan Vogel, 18:41; Drew Matley, 19:07; Dan Hansen, Romil Patel, and Casey Brown.

Wigton noted how he and Matley have run together since middle school and that they are the only two upperclassmen from Jamestown on the team.

"Drew is really essential on the team because he is such a good example of being a team player. He is a model for conditioning and staying in shape," he said.

The captain also commented on the potential for the young team.

"Will Spahr is a hidden talent that we need to tap into," Wigton said. "The freshmen on the team are incredibly strong. They remind me of my freshman team. We kept building on that strength and won



Nate Wigton leads the pack in a dual-meet against South Kingstown and Coventry. NK won the meet by one point over the Rebels.

Photo by Adrienne Downing

a state championship my junior year and I think they have the capability to do the same thing."

Tetreault said he expected big things from Wigton this year and the senior captain has not disappointed him.

"This team has Nate's signature all over it. He is such a boisterous, out-going, happy kid, and his teammates really look up to him," the coach said. "He is very social and he knocks down walls rather than builds them."

Wigton's bold approach is also an asset to the team and the coach.

"Nate is very blunt in a good way. He gives the guys advice that really helps them. It is almost like having an assistant coach out there," Tetreault said.

The coach said he knew the first day Wigton ran with the team that he was going to be special.

"The first time he came out to captain's practice, before his freshman year even started, he went out and didn't back down from any-

one. Here he was, this freshman, and we had some pretty good runners on that team, and he ran like he was a member of the varsity team," Tetreault said. "He is one of the most mentally tough kids I have ever worked with in 25 years of coaching. I am just enjoying the moment with him this year. I really don't want to see him go."

Tetreault was pleased that the team came together for the win over the Rebels, but said there is room for improvement

"We are a little off of our trademark of really tight pack running. The biggest job is to get the middle group to run close together and I saw some of that against South, so I see some progress in the learning curve," he said.

The pack running is an effective tactic, especially in close races, for displacing runners on competing teams, causing them to finish later and therefore accumulate more points.

"We don't want the fastest runners to slow down, but we need the other runners to pack in behind the leaders to hold off the other teams three, four, and five runners. The younger runners need to have a breakthrough race to see that it works very well," the coach said. "It is difficult to get young kids to take a risk. They want to stay in their comfort zone."

The entire team will have an opportunity to stretch their comfort zone on Saturday when they face East Greenwich and Bishop Hendricken in the Ocean State Invitational.

"I think right now East Greenwich is the team to beat, so it will be a good indicator for us of where we stand," Tetreault concluded.

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