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## Press Release



### ***Riverviews' Cross Country Teams are headed to Hershey!***

*Submitted by Coach Palma Ostrowski*

From the start of the year, we talked about 3 meets that would define the season. The Raiders passed the first two tests – duals at Shadyside and Indiana - with flying colors and claimed section championships in the process. How would they do in the third – the WPIAL championship meet? Two different races – two gutsy performances - two exhilarating results.

#### **Girls: It's not easy being one of the favorites**

The girls came in to Thursday's WPIAL meet rated 3rd in the final Milesplit pre meet ranking. They were 1 of 5 legitimate state contenders for the 3 state spots that were to be decided among the 37 single A girls teams represented at Coopers. Not having any "mudders" this year, the coaches worried all week about all the rain that was forecast for Wednesday.

However, that fear quickly got transferred to a concern over wind as 22 mph gusts were about to hit the Ladies at multiple points along the challenging Coopers course.

The Lady Raiders ran their typically smart race, allowing the other teams to lead up to "the Flag". By the end of the first mile, Molly in the top 10, Erin, Jenna, and Izzy in the top 25, Mere in the top 50, Maddie in the top 70 and Gretchen (top 100) had all put themselves into reasonable position between Laurel (2nd) and Neshannock/Eden (4th/5th). However, Neshannock's top 3 (3rd, 10th and 23rd) weren't going away as we had expected and all of a sudden in the third mile, the coaches felt vulnerable and needed a typical strong Raider finish. The Ladies obliged. Despite being worn out by the conditions, they maintained their high placings.

9. Molly      16. Erin      19. Jenna      23. Izzy      56. Mere      58. Maddie      86. Gretchen

And while we weren't quite good enough to steal that 2nd place trophy from Laurel (101 pts), the Lady Raiders (115 pts) defeated Neshannock (133 pts) and secured the 3rd spot. The girls are headed to Hershey! Release the "kisses"!!!!

## Boys: "So you are saying there's a chance"

This wasn't "last man on earth" sort of stuff, (perhaps more like McFarland??) but to understand the magnitude of what the boys accomplished on Thursday, you have to look at the pre-race predictions from all of the XC experts. As shown in last week's update, Milesplit predicted the Boy Raiders in 6th, a full 58 points behind the 3rd place seed. But what became clear as we "white-boarded" at the team dinner on Wednesday night, was that for each of the 5 teams that RXC was likely competing against for the 3rd and final state spot (OLSH, Northgate, Shenango, Avonworth and Vincentian), there was a plausible scenario that we could match up and beat any one of them. Admittedly, the Coaches believed that it was highly unlikely that we could beat each of those 5 teams on one day. Good thing Dan Fawcett and the boys didn't share that (dis)belief.

After accepting the section championship plaque at the 12 Noon ceremony, and after spending a better part of 2.5 hours in the tent (some interesting things going on in there – and we thought only the girls liked to cuddle together), it was time for the boys to warm up and race. The boys seemed confident and focused – and when the gun went off, they proved it.

A typical Raider 1st mile: smart, controlled running. (makes the Coaches very proud). Ben B put himself into medal contention (15th), Mikey put himself into Individual qualifier contention (27th); Fawc paced Taber and Ryan (45th, 46th and 48th) with Sean and Laz looked to provide insurance (both safely in the top 100).

After 1 mile, the standings for the 3rd spot read:

3. Shenango	160
4. Northgate	179
5. Riverview	181
6. OLSH	214
7. Avonworth	215

The 2nd mile gave a lot of hope: Ben B and Mikey moved up 3 spots to 12th and 24th respectively (very hard to do against the elite runners); Taber, and Fawc worked together: Tyler pushing the uphill and Fawc pushing the downhill. Dan gained 12 spots, while Tyler improved 8 spots! Sean and Laz also gained 2 spots each. After 2 miles, we had moved up to 4th:

3. Shenango	156
4. Riverview	171
5. Avonworth	185
6. Northgate	205
7. OLSH	212

The third mile was sheer guts (parents – you have raised some tough kids). Tyler gained 4 more spots, Sean got 5 and Ben B made up 12 seconds and 3 places, even passing Ngate's 1 for 9th place *after* the castle. Ryan, Fawc and Mikey stayed strong and held onto to enough spots as every single point proved to be crucial. A great race – Coach Stuart confirmed that it was close, but honestly, the coaches, weren't sure about Shenango #4 and we thought we came up a little short.

**Upon further review:** 30 minutes post-race, results were accidentally released on-line despite not being "official" and our athletes were all over it. But was the celebration premature??

3. Riverview	162
4. Shenango	162
5. Avonworth	163
6. Northgate	214
7. Shadyside	254

3 teams each within 1 point for the 3rd qualifying spot!! It was so close that coaches from Riverview, Shenango and Avonworth were called to a special meeting with the lead WPIAL official who explained:

- 1) The officials went to the video and reviewed the first 100 finishers to confirm chip accuracy
- 2) The video confirmed the point total listed above leaving Avonworth 1 pt shy of Riverview and Shenango.
- 3) That left a tie between Riverview and Shenango.
- 4) Ties are broken by the 6<sup>th</sup> man; in this case Sean Sliben's 74th place finish was higher than Shenango's Ty Kent's 99th place finish
- 5) RIVERVIEW IS GOING TO HERSHEY!!

Mission complete!! All that was left were hugs, more "kisses" and media interviews. Way to go Raiders!!! You earned it!!