

# SPORTS FEATURE

## McQuaid grad shoots to track down Olympic berth

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

PHILADELPHIA — When someone breaks the four-minute-mile barrier and doesn't gloat over the accomplishment, you know he's setting his goals high.

Such is the case with former McQuaid Jesuit track star Brad Sumner, who was clocked at 3:59.11 in the mile at the Penn Relays in April. Although this was his first mile below 4:00, Sumner was more concerned about only placing second in the race.

"(The time) really isn't a big deal," Sumner said. "It shouldn't be, if you're trying to compete at a national level."

Striving to be the best in the nation is a longstanding practice for Sumner. A 1989 McQuaid graduate, he still holds the national indoor high-school record of 600 meters, which he set in one minute, 19.56 seconds while winning the New York state championship at Cornell University in 1989. Sumner also won a national title in the 800 that year and ran on 1988 and 1989 national champion 3,200-meter relays for the Knights.

Sumner continued his high success level at Villanova University, where he was a full-scholarship runner and seven-time All-American (indoor and outdoor) before graduating in 1993. He won three individual Big East Conference titles and ran the third leg for the Wildcats' 3,200 relay national champs in 1990.

These days, the 24-year-old Sumner is looking to take on the world: for the next 12 months, he'll be gearing for a spot on the 1996 U.S. Summer Olympics team.

Sumner admits his schedules put him "constantly under pressure. You have peak days and valley days, wondering why you ever do it when you see other sports where guys are getting millions of dollars."

But the down moments never last too long, he added. The solutions: "Family, friends, and a good race or workout."



Provided photo  
An Olympic berth in the 1,500 run is a strong possibility for McQuaid and Villanova alumnus Brad Sumner.

He showed his ability to compete on an international level by placing third in the 800 meters at the Pan-American Games in Argentina this past March. Yet for the Olympics, Sumner is focusing on the 1,500 meters.

Sumner now trains with the LaSalle University track team; the Explorers' head coach, Charles Torpey, serves as his personal trainer.

As he prepares for the Olympic trials early next summer, Sumner tries not to dwell on the odds of his making the Summer Games in Atlanta next August.

"My coaches try to emphasize just competing, and don't worry about the rest. I'd like to look at running certain times, reaching certain levels and beating certain people," Sumner commented.

His high-school coach, Bob Bradley, supports Sumner's goal of being one of three U.S. athletes in the 1,500.

"Brad has a great opportunity to be the sleeper in the field," said Bradley, who still keeps in close touch with Sumner. "He has the strength and the speed, and he is a fierce competitor."

Between now and the Olympic trials, Sumner's activities will be filled with training and a part-time job at an athletic-footwear store. The former Penfield resident — who resided in Waverly and Elmira before moving from the Southern Tier in 1980 — plans to stay in the Philadelphia area at least through 1996. However, his local ties have remained intact through his engagement to Fairport native Tasha Woodward, who ran on two national-champion women's cross-country teams at Villanova. They're getting married in Philadelphia Sept. 15.

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### Correction

The final line of a story on page 8 of last week's *Catholic Courier* was inadvertently omitted. The complete final sentence should read:

"If he does that, he's certainly going to be a joy to watch."

We regret the error.

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