

DIOCESAN NEWS

Elmira Notre Dame runner sets state record



Karin von Voigtlander/Staff photographer

Huddle gives a thumbs-up sign to an encouraging spectator after winning the 3,000-meter run.

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

Elmira Notre Dame's Molly Huddle capped a brilliant high-school career with a record-breaking performance at the state track and field championships, held June 7-8 at Rush-Henrietta Senior High School near Rochester.

Huddle, a senior, set a new state record in the 3,000-meter run, posting a time of 9 minutes, 21.37 seconds on June 7 to place first in both the Class C-D and federation (overall) categories. The previous state record of 9:25.72, set by Christine Curtin of Mepham High School in Long Island, had stood for 20 years. Huddle's historic run also eclipsed her previous personal best of 9:30.6.

She followed up her victory in the 3,000 with a second state title — again in Class C-D and overall — in the 1,500 meters on June 8. Her time was 4:27.04, just missing the Section 4 record of 4:27.0.

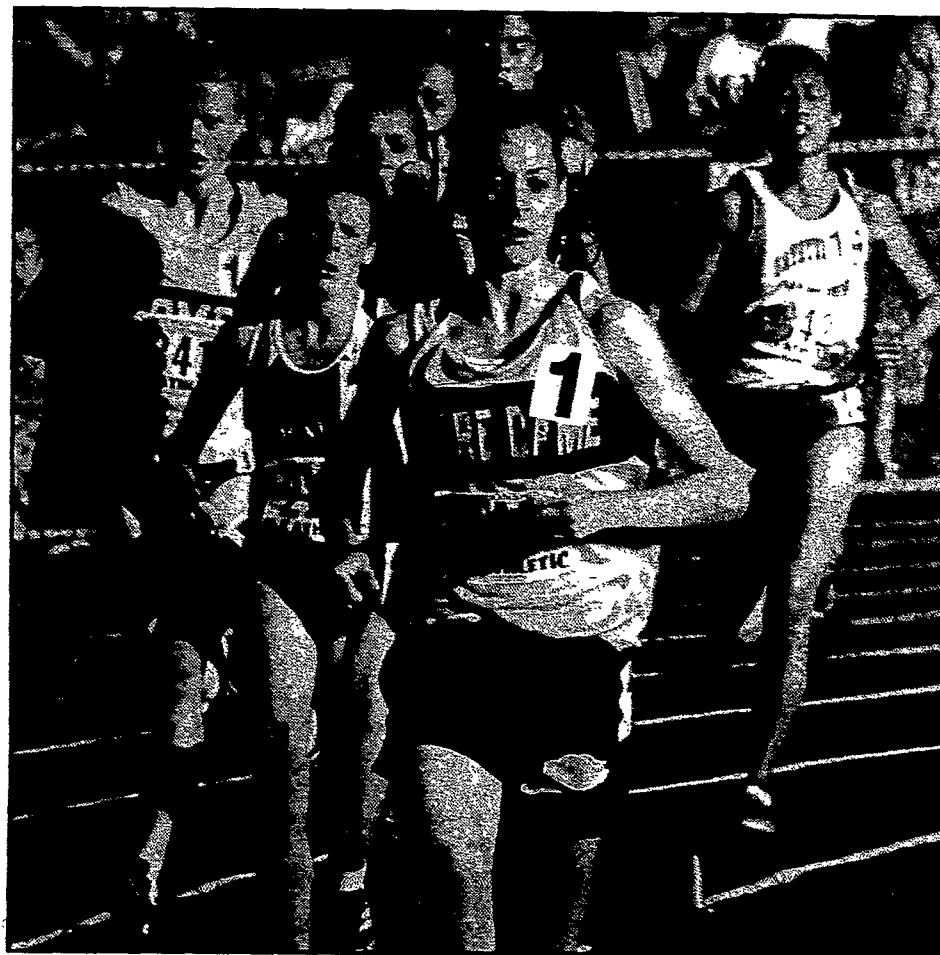
Another Elmira Notre Dame student, Andy Cloke, earned a fourth-place finish in

the Class C-D boys' state meet by posting a time of 1:58.64 in the 800-meter run on June 7. The boys' championships also took place at Rush-Henrietta.

Among other Catholic high schools in the diocese, Aquinas Institute featured two athletes with top-10 finishes at the state meet. Cassandra Bryant turned the trick twice, completing the 200 meters in :27.37 on June 7 to finish seventh in girls' Class B, and running the 400 meters in 1:01.94 on June 8 to place 10th. Meanwhile, AQ's Ryan Brennan ran the 400 hurdles in :58.87 on June 7 to place fifth in boys' Class B.

Huddle — who is heading to the University of Notre Dame this fall on a running scholarship — concluded her high-school career with numerous state championships. She was the defending champ in both the 3,000 and 1,500, with times last year of 9:43.4 and 4:34.21, respectively.

Huddle's other state title came this past fall when she placed first in Class D, as well as the federation, in her only year of high school cross-country competition. She went on to place second at the Foot Locker



Elmira Notre Dame senior Molly Huddle leads the pack in the 3,000-meter run at the New York State Public High School Athletic Association Track and Field State Championship June 7 at Rush-Henrietta Senior High School. Huddle won the race and set a new state record.

Northeast Regionals and fourth at the national championship.

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Whereas Huddle thrived in individual competition, her schoolmates from Elmira Notre Dame came close to winning a state team title. The Crusader softball squad reached the state Class C semifinal round, but was edged 5-4 by Pembroke of Section 5 on June 8 in Uniondale, Long Island. ND's final record for the 2002 season was 22-5.

Notre Dame jumped out to a 4-0 lead over Pembroke after one inning, but the Dragons scored two runs in the fourth inning and two in the fifth to tie the game

before adding the winning run in the bottom of the seventh. Pembroke went on to fall to Mechanicville of Section 2, 4-2, in the Class C title game played later on June 8.

This year marked Notre Dame's third consecutive trip to the state Final Four. The Crusaders had advanced to the semifinals with a 4-0 victory over Sandy Creek in a quarterfinal game held June 4 at the State University of New York College at Oswego. ND got all its runs in the first inning and stayed in control behind the pitching of Lisa Meck, who threw a three-hit shutout. Earlier this spring, the Crusaders won their fourth straight Section 4 Class C crown.

Obituaries

Sister V. Woerner; longtime teacher at Nazareth Academy

Sister of St. Joseph Victoria Woerner, whose tenure at Nazareth Academy lasted some 45 years, died May 20, 2002, at the St. Joseph Convent Infirmary. She was 84 years old.

Sister Victoria entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1940 out of Rochester's Holy Redeemer Parish. She was a graduate of Nazareth Academy and Nazareth College, and earned her master's degree in 1951 from St. Bonaventure University where she majored in English and education.

She taught for two years at St. Agnes High School, then began her lengthy service at Nazareth Academy. She taught for 39 years and then stayed on at the all-girls' high school for another six years before moving to the SSJ motherhouse where she served in the religious resource center.

In addition to her skills in the classroom, Sister Victoria was a noted seamstress who delighted in color and fabric print.

Her funeral Mass was celebrated May

22 at the SSJ motherhouse chapel, with Father Paul Tomasso serving as celebrant and Msgr. Emmett Murphy and Father Bruce Ammering assisting. Interment took place at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery in Rochester.

Sister Victoria is survived by her brothers, Edward (Mary) and Raymond; niece,

Lorraine (Andrew) McGowan; nephew, Stephen; grandnephews and grandnieces; and her sisters in the Congregation of St. Joseph.

Contributions in Sister Victoria's memory may be made to St. Joseph's Convent Infirmary.

Mike Latona

Sister LaPergola, SSJ; native of Elmira

Sister Rose Regina LaPergola, who served in the Sisters of St. Joseph for more than 70 years, died March 19, 2002, at the St. Joseph Convent Infirmary. She was 91 years old.

Sister Rose Regina was an Elmira native who entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1931 out of St. Anthony Parish. She ministered from 1933-43 at St. Mary's Boys' Home in Rochester; from 1943-56 at the SSJ motherhouse infirmary and St. Ann's Home in Rochester; and from 1956-65 as housekeeper at Corpus Christi, St. Ambrose and Holy Rosary convents, all in Rochester.

Her longest tenure was at St. Joseph's Hospital in Elmira, where she was a pastoral care assistant from 1965-81. She continued as a volunteer at the hospital until

retiring to her order's infirmary in 1996.

"Sister Rose Regina will be remembered for her loving, cheerful smile and her generous sprinkling of holy water," wrote Sister of St. Joseph Marie Michael Miller in a recent edition of the St. Joseph's Hospital newsletter. Sister Miller is administrator of the hospital's skilled nursing facility.

Sister Rose Regina's funeral Mass took place March 22 at the SSJ motherhouse chapel, with Father Bruce Ammering serving as celebrant. Interment was at St. Peter and Paul Cemetery in Elmira.

She is survived by four nephews and their families, and her sisters in the Congregation of St. Joseph.

Contributions in her memory may be made to St. Joseph's Convent Infirmary.

Mike Latona

Amelia Laspesa; church organist

Amelia J. Laspesa, who served as organist for more than 30 years at St. Patrick's Church in Mount Morris, died May 3, 2002, at Highland Hospital in Rochester. She was 84 years old.

Mrs. Laspesa was a lifelong member of St. Patrick's. She graduated from Mount Morris Central High School and was married for 30 years to her husband, Natus, who died in 1978.

According to her daughter, Lauren Sherner, Mrs. Laspesa originally played the organ at the former Church of the Assumption in Mount Morris, where her sister — Assunta Laurino, who died in 1979 — served as organist for 43 years. Eventually, an opening came up at St. Patrick's and Mrs. Laspesa began her long and dedicated tenure there. She played for church events well into her mid-70s, and also played the piano for productions at the former St. Patrick's School.

Sherner said her mother and aunt "flip-flopped (assignments) for each other whenever they had to. Both had full-time jobs but were never paid for being organists, and never wanted to be paid." Sherner added that her mother, a long-time nurse at Craig Developmental Center, would often be late to work if she was playing the organ for a funeral or other special Mass.

Along with her musical involvement, Mrs. Laspesa was devoted to Marian activities and was good friends with numerous priests.

Mrs. Laspesa's funeral Mass was held May 6 at St. Patrick's Church, with Father George Okoth serving as celebrant. Interment was at St. Patrick's Cemetery in Mount Morris.

She is survived by her daughter as well as a son, David (Sally) Laspesa; two grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

Mike Latona