

Amherst indoor track attempts to break school records

by **PATRICK J. NAGY** Reporter
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Sweet Home's Jacob Hagen has already qualified for the Section VI Championships in the 3200.
Photo by Patrick McPartland

There are plenty of reasons why Amherst Central's boys and girls indoor track teams should have successful seasons.

The girls team returns senior captains Celia Alterio (aiming for school record in 1000 meters) and Arielle Januszkiewicz (qualified for New York State Championships last year in 3000) as well as junior Sarah Lister. The boys team features senior Willie Jones (leads Western New York rankings in high jump) and junior Dave Szymkowiak (gunning for school records in 1000 and 1600).

Girls

Coach Bob LaFauve said Januszkiewicz should have a shot at states this year in the distance events. Lister is an all-purpose runner who is using the indoor season to take a run at the school's outdoor 400 intermediate hurdles record, he added.

Brenna Symoniak, who is coming off a state meet appearance in cross country, and Naysa Watson, a likely qualifier in the 300, lead a strong group of freshmen runners.

Boys

LaFauve said Jones should also challenge in the triple jump, where he'll be joined by senior David Robinson-Gault. Junior newcomer Deshawn Hough has been a quick study in the hurdles, LaFauve added.

Among the freshman, 300 sprinter Joe Calato looks the strongest, he said.

Senior Andy Wong is the team captain.

Sweet Home

Strong distance runners highlight Sweet Home indoor track this winter.

Jacob Hagen, Ryan Poley, and Megan Niblock, who all qualified for the New York State Championships in cross country this fall, hope to carry their success into the indoor track season, said Sweet Home coach Christine Couvutsakis, who will be assisted by Byron McKinney.

Hagen has already qualified for this year's Section VI Championships

in the 3200. He also runs the mile, 1000 and 600. At last year's sectionals, Hagen placed fourth in the 1000 and 1600. He was second in the 1000 (2:45.8) at Saturday's meet at Lancaster.

Poley primarily runs the 3200.

Niblock has qualified for sectionals in the mile, 600, triple jump and 1000. She also runs a good 1000. She placed sixth in the 600 at last year's sectionals.

Other Sweet Home boys to look out for are junior thrower Andrew Hopkins, junior high jumper and hurdler Dan Miranda and sophomore newcomers sprinter Matt Cross and jumper Nick Cavaleri.

As of this writing, the boys' 4x800 relay is ranked second in Western New York. Hagen and Poley are set members. The other two spots are a work in progress. Ryan Hughson and Tim Heavern ran with Hagen and Poley in the team's first meet. Poley, Hagen, Heavern and Mike Bakowski were second at Lancaster in 9:03.1.

The girls team also features freshmen triple jumper Rebecca White, who was third in the event on Saturday with a leap of 28-4½, and mile runner Katie Niblock and sophomore shot putters Brittany May and Meg Land. All are new to the team.

Couvutsakis sees the 1600,, 3200, 1000, 600 and the boys' 4x800 as the team's best events.

"It's too early to tell, but I would like to qualify the distance runners - Hagen, Poley and Megan Niblock - possibly Miranda in the hurdles and Hopkins in the shot put (for sectionals)," she said.

"They're a young team and are hard workers," she added. "I see a lot of potential in the upcoming years."