

Andover takes last title

By KAT HASENAUER CORNETTA

BRAINTREE — For the seven boys gymnastics programs that gathered at Braintree High last night for the state championship, this was not a goodbye. This was a lesson in resiliency.

With the MIAA no longer sanctioning the sport after this season, this title will be the last official one — a disappointing fact of life for the dedicated gymnasts.

"I'm going to keep going," said Lowell junior Christian

Bueno, who placed in two events. "I don't care what the MIAA says. I will go find a way to do it on my own if I have to. I know I won't have to though, because I have my team backing me up."

The Red Raiders will field a program in the future regardless of the MIAA's stance. With 42 boys active on the team, head coach Samnang Hoar says they would hurt students by not continuing.

"We have every intention of keeping it going," said Hoar. "Our AD is behind us. We have so many kids who didn't know what gymnastics was until they got to the high school, and

now they love it and I can't take that away from them."

The sport's popularity at Lowell may only grow, given that the team finished in second place.

"It's really all on the kids," said Hoar. "They had a goal in mind. They put a lot on their own shoulders and they practiced really hard."

Andover's Brian Manning continued his dominant senior campaign, winning all six events and the all-around title with 55 points. But Manning was more proud

of his team's first state title since 1970.

"Last year I was focused on me, trying to win an individual state title," said Manning, who narrowly missed the state crown last year. "It was all about my team this time. I wanted to bring the state title back to Andover."

The Golden Warriors' first rotation included strong tumbling. Most of their routines mounted with a front tuck, and included interesting side passes. Manning's 9.1 exercise closed the rotation for Andover with some of the most difficult tumbling of the meet, including a roundoff back handspring

double twist closing pass.

Manning's parallel bars routine earned a 9.0 and had the crowd enthralled. He completed a pike to handstand back to pike, then a straddle to a plank to another handstand, finishing with a twisting dismount. Later, his 9.8 layout Kasamatsu vault set a state record in the event.

It was on still rings, Andover's final event, where Manning proved his mettle. Throwing one of the most

difficult routines ever done at a Massachusetts state meet, he powered through some strength moves. "I was telling myself I could do it," said Manning. "That was the hardest routine I've ever put together."

Andover recorded 164.5 points, comfortably in front of Lowell (150.4) and Burlington (149.8).

Burlington's Evan Burk took second in the all-around with 40.5 points,

buoyed by an extremely clean parallel bars routine, including a handstand with a change of grip held for several seconds. He won the state's Senior Gymnast of the Year award as well. Lowell senior Xuyen Tran (38.2) took third, placing in five out of six events.

Manning will most likely be competing for either Ohio State and Penn State next year, but he hopes that his fellow gymnasts keep

the sport going.

"It's definitely a dying sport, but I'm trying to bring it back. I want to see them compete again," said Manning. "I want to see people doing gymnastics."

The seven programs represented intend to keep the sport active and gather for a state meet next winter.

As Braintree head coach Rich Ellis proclaimed during the awards ceremony: "We'll be back."

MIAA STATE GYMNASTICS

(At Braintree High)

BOYS

TEAM
1. Andover, 164.5; 2. Lowell, 150.4; 3. Burlington, 149.8; 4. Attleboro, 141.3; 5. Newton South, 123; 6. Newton North, 111.9; 7. Braintree, 111.6.

ALL-AROUND

1. Brian Manning (Andover), 55; 2. Evan Burk (Burlington), 40.5; 3. Xuyen Tran (Lowell), 38.2; 4. Matt DePippo (Attleboro), 34.8; 5. Nick VanAlfen (Braintree), 33; 6. Gabe Bibuld (Newton North), 28.4; 7. Evan Abreau (Braintree), 26.9.

By JOE REARDON

Olivia Lantz likens dipping under the 5-minute mile mark to being alone on a frozen pond with the ice cracking all around.

The talented Manchester Essex sophomore certainly made a splash into the cold water last night at the Division 4 championships. Racing on the fast Reggie Lewis Center oval, Lantz sprinted away from a strong field to capture her specialty for the second year in a row with a meet record time of 4 minutes, 58.39 seconds.

Lantz's time was a personal best, marked the first time she's broken the magical 5-minute barrier and bettered the 5:02.69 record of Bromfield great Ari Lambie set in 2002.

"It's like breaking the ice and now you're in the water," said Lantz with a smile. "I was hoping to get the win, but I was really focusing on my time. It really helped to have that competition behind me and they pushed me a lot."

Newburyport sophomore Nick Carleo also defended his title in the mile, pulling away from Norwell's Owen Wiggins with 200 meters left in 4:25.03.

"I was trying to stay as relaxed as possible," said Carleo. "My goal was to do what I did."

Carleo's win set the tone for the meet as Newburyport took the boys' title with 46 points to defeat

MIAA DIV. 4 TRACK CHAMPIONSHIPS

(At Reggie Lewis Center)

BOYS

Teams: 1. Newburyport, 46; 2. Old Rochester, 44; 3. Weston, 42; 4. Cardinal Spellman, 31; 5. Auburn, 27; 6. Whitinsville Christian, 24; 16. North Reading 24; 8. East Bridgewater, 20; 9. Norwell, 19; 10. Seekonk, 18½.

55:1 Trenton Garlington (Archbishop Williams), 6:72; 2. Kevin Facey (Burke), 6:73; 3. Dominic DiCarlo (Auburn), 6:73.

55 hurdles: 1. John Braga (North Reading), 8:12; 2. Wycliffe Penny (New Leadership), 8:15; 3. Ryan Bahar (Ipswich), 8:30.

300: 1. Romeo Grey (Mashpee), 35.69; 2. Dan Donohue (Old Rochester), 36.10; 3. Daniel Solano (Whitinsville), 36.25.

600: 1. Joe Luongo (Austin Prep), 1:23.12; 2. Patrick Griffin (Bromfield School), 1:23.61; 3. Jason Dimmick (Sutton), 1:24.48.

1,000: 1. Mike Wyman (Old Rochester), 2:36.97; 2. Tanner Picklus (East Bridgewater), 2:38.46; 3. Sawyer Uddike (Newburyport), 2:39.58.

1 mile: 1. Nick Carleo (Newburyport), 4:25.03; 2. Owen Wiggins (Norwell), 4:26.16; 3. Paul Maurais (Hopedale), 4:26.38.

2-mile: 1. Matt Herzig (Weston), 9:32.87; 2. Price Day (Bromfield), 9:49.41; 3. Sam Bradford (Bedford), 9:52.31.

4x200: 1. Old Rochester, 1:34.54; 2. Weston, 1:35.97; 3. Ipswich, 1:36.08.

4x400: 1. Whitinsville Christian, 3:32.13; 2. Cardinal Spellman, 3:34.16; 3. Sutton, 3:34.38.

4x800: 1. Norwell, 8:24.37; 2. Newburyport, 8:32.83; 3. Uxbridge, 8:33.37.

High jump: 1. Nathan Conway (Auburn), 6-4; 2. Matt Norton (Cardinal Spellman), 6-2; 3. Trevor Lewicki (Holyoke Catholic), 6-0.

Long jump: 1. Craig Shytle (Weston), 21-10½; 2. Kurt Robakiewicz (Nipmuc), 21-3; 3. Nathan Conway (Auburn), 20-6.

Shot put: 1. Nate Robitaille (Seekonk), 54-3½; 2. Steve Preston (Newburyport), 52-6½; 3. Perry Mroz (Amesbury), 49-0½.

GIRLS

Teams: 1. Ursuline, 62; 2. Narragansett, 38; 3. Old Rochester, 35; 14. Oxford, 28; 14. Uxbridge, 28; 6. Notre Dame (W), 27; 7. Ipswich, 24; 8. Weston, 18; 19. Mahar, 16; 19. Norwell, 16.

55:1 Emily Dawidczyk (Oxford), 7:33; 2. Ally Saccone (Old Rochester), 7:47; 3. Carol DiMaiti (St. Mary's), 7:50.

55 hurdles: 1. Ally Saccone (Old Rochester), 8:44; 2. Emily Dawidczyk (Oxford), 8:47.

300: 1. Amy Piccolo (Ursuline), 41.30; 2. Merissa Wright (Ursuline), 42.43; 3. Tiffany Tenney (Mahar), 42.79.

600: 1. Amy Piccolo (Ursuline), 1:36.16; 2. Krista Webb (Narragansett), 1:36.74; 3. Merissa Wright (Ursuline), 1:37.80.

1,000: 1. Jane Clark (Notre Dame-W), 3:00.94; 2. Maddie Wolfe (Ursuline), 3:02.65; 3. Brooke Hansel (Lunenburg), 3:02.70.

1 mile: 1. Olivia Lantz (Manchester-Essex), 4:58.39; 2. Sarah Saccone (Archbishop Williams), 5:04.27; 3. Renee Capps (Narragansett), 5:10.10.

2-mile: 1. Erin Dietz (Bedford), 10:41.13; 2. Anna Capps (Narragansett), 11:29.48; 3. Janelle Solvietti (Arlington Catholic), 11:33.81.

4x200: 1. Uxbridge 1:48.41; 2. Weston 1:48.52; 3. West Roxbury Academy 1:50.88.

4x400: 1. Notre Dame (W) 4:12.28; 2. Ursuline 4:12.37; 3. Ipswich 4:17.80.

4x800: 1. Narragansett 9:34.60; 2. Lunenburg 9:59.42; 3. Hopedale 10:07.27.

High jump: 1. Emily Cahill (Uxbridge), 5-4; 2. Rebekah Sargent (Norton), 5-6; 2. Julia Witt (Notre Dame-W), 5-0.

Long jump: 1. Emily Dawidczyk (Oxford), 17-8½; 2. Amy Piccolo (Ursuline), 16-9; 3. Danielle Griffin (Norwell), 16-6½.

Shot put: 1. Sabrina Silva (Mahar), 40-0½; 2. Emily Murray (North Reading), 36-11; 3. Gaelin Farrell (Narragansett), 35-1½.



HERALD PHOTO BY TARA CARVALHO

HORSING AROUND: Andover's Joseph Aronov competes on the pommel horse at last night's final MIAA boys gymnastics state championships at Braintree High.

runner-up Old Rochester (44) and Weston (42).

In one of the most anticipated events of the meet, phenom Ashley Piccolo of Ursuline Academy shot into the lead of the 600 and turned away challenges from defending champion Danielle Griffin of Norwell and Narragansett's Krista Webb for a decisive 1:36.16 win. Webb was second in 1:36.74 and Piccolo's teammate, Merissa Wright, clinched third in 1:37.81.

Piccolo didn't want to give up the lead to the hard-finishing Griffin.

"I didn't want to have to get around her," she said. "I tried to go slower on the second lap so I had some-

thing left, but the competition was too good for that."

The 300 was never in doubt as Piccolo sprinted away for an easy 41.3 victory. Wright was a strong second in 42.43.

Piccolo was the catalyst of Ursuline's team win (62 points). Narragansett was second (38) and Old Rochester third (35).

Emily Dawidczyk of Oxford won the 55 dash in 7.33 while Old Rochester's Ally Saccone was second in 7.47. The finishes were reversed in the 55 hurdles with Saccone coming away with the gold in 8.44 and Dawidczyk in second at 8.47.

"Neither of us had our best race," Saccone said af-

ter the hurdles. "We'll have to wait until next week (all-states). There was a lot of pressure and I knew she was very tough."

Dawidczyk went on to beat a deep field in the long jump with a leap of 17 feet, 8½ inches.

Erin Dietz of Bedford lapped the field in the 2 mile and came away with personal best with a quick 10:41.39, the second-fastest time in the state this season to Julie McConville of Hingham (10:27).

Austin Prep's Joe Luongo won the 600 in 1:23.12, and Weston's Matt Herzig was never challenged in the 2 mile, running away to a 9:32.87 victory.