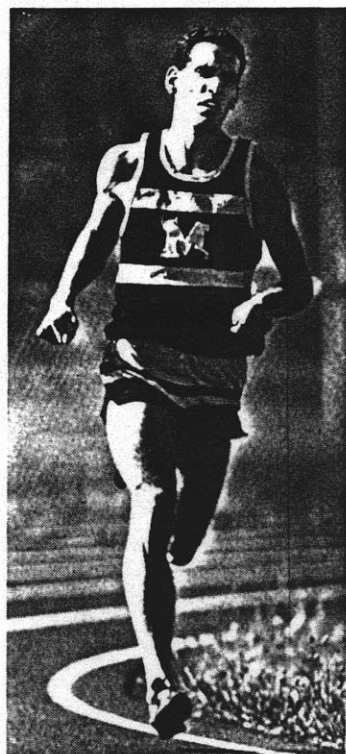


Brad Sumner
McQuaid Jesuit H.S.

1989
Gannett Rochester
Newspapers

Local Amateur
Athlete of the Year

By John Moriello
Democrat and Chronicle
Sports Writer



Brad Sumner didn't need to hit the tape first that Saturday afternoon last June in Baldwinsville.

The McQuaid senior had already received a scholarship offer from the storied running program at Villanova University and his resume was full of victories that would leave little doubt as to the identity of the most accomplished middle-distance runner in area high school history.

There was the U.S. scholastic record of 1 minute, 19.56 seconds in the indoor 600-meter run last March in Ithaca and the national indoor 800 championship one day and 250 miles later. A victory in a nationally prestigious outdoor 800 in Illinois would come in mid-June.

But, on this day, Sumner's performance went beyond the record book. He showed a determination to succeed that elevates outstanding young athletes beyond the reach of good ones. He won a race that any number of spectators that day regarded as a lost cause.

Trailing a Colonie runner by 15 meters to start the final leg of the 3,200 relay at the New York State Public High School Athletic Association championships, Sumner patiently reeled in the leader during the bell lap, made a risky move to the inside on the homestretch and nipped Bill Gathen at the tape.

The irony was as startling as the comeback. It was Gathen who had tagged Sumner with an upset loss 10 months earlier at the Empire State Games.

The state meet performance, which gave McQuaid a winning time of 7:54.91 seconds, was the climax of a magnificent season for Sumner, who won the individual 800 earlier that day in an unchallenged 1:53.66.

A week later, he journeyed to the Keebler International Prep Invitational in Elmhurst, Ill., to beat an international 800 field with a time of 1:50.76, breaking his own Section 5 record while becoming the first area scholastic runner to finish first in either of the nation's two big post-season invitationals.

The target of every competitor he faced while running anything from the 200 to the mile, Sumner was a consistent winner who finished his McQuaid career with five sectional records in individual events and four more as a part of relays.

Now, he represents Villanova and runs on the track named after Jumbo Elliott, one of the most recognized and revered names in American track. There are new goals, new challenges. So, too, are there new opportunities to show the determination that's made him a champion. And the 1989 Gannett Rochester Newspapers Local Amateur Athlete of the Year.