

Sumner right on track after football 'conversion'

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"There was a gradual realization that his real potential was in track," McQuaid Coach Bob Bradley said. "When he made the state meet, that gave him a little incentive to try spring track. He ran :50.7 in the (400 meters) outdoors, and that was when he decided he could do more."

Sumner also decided to move up, and add the 800 to his repertoire.

"The idea of having a piece of a state championship in the (3,200) relay got me going that way," Sumner said.

That mission was accomplished last June, at Baldwinsville, when he teamed with fellow junior Romanowski, and seniors Chris Cusack and Chris Adin to record a 7:50.16, two seconds off what was then the nation's top clocking.

Sumner's other outdoor accomplishments included sectional Class AA championships in the 400 (:49.0), and 800 (1:56.6), and an 800 win at the Section 5 Meet of Champions. His personal best in the 400 dropped to :48.8, a time that equals the Section 5 record for a hand-timed race.

Last August, Sumner placed third in the Amateur Athletic Union Junior Olympics senior boys' 800 (1:56.70) at Lawrence, Kan., one week after he established an outdoor personal best (1:55.26) while finishing second in the Empire State Games scholastic 800.

Sumner opened his senior year by winning the New York Jesuit cross country championship in his first full season in the sport. During the winter, he set four individual sectional records, and established the nation's fastest scholastic 1,000-meter (2:27.32) and 800-meter (1:55.29) times of the 1989 indoor season.

He managed to perform an unprecedented indoor feat on Feb. 25, at the University of Rochester — Sumner won the Class A sec-

tionals 600 (1:22.6), 1,000 (2:37.5), and 1,600 (4:27.1).

"I'm not sure anyone's ever tried it before," Bradley said. "To run a 1,000, then come back for the 600 with short rest, then have your longest race last . . . That anybody could take that triple on, and win it, amazed people. And he almost made it look easy."

Sumner's individual goals for the outdoor season include a sub-1:50 clocking in the 800, and breaking the 48-second barrier in the 400.

"I like the 800 (better)," Sumner said. "It's just too much speed, and really nothing else (in the 400) . . . in the 800, there's more strategy, more possibilities."

But his biggest goal isn't a personal one. It's to combine with Romanowski, Jason Fahy and Mickey Scott, also of McQuaid, to win the 3,200 relay at the Penn Relays in Philadelphia this month.

"The Penn Relays is really something we've been looking toward," Sumner said. "Winning it is something we've been thinking about since last year. That's the highlight of the season for me. You get a chance to run against a lot of the top teams in the country."

He teamed with Romanowski, Cusack, and Adin to place fifth there in 1988.

Sumner also will run the individual 1,500 at the Penn Relays. Bradley thinks he has to chance for a Section 5 record.

"He'll have to go 3:58.9 to do it, but he has a (4:02.74) indoors, so he should be able to do it," Bradley said.

"It isn't one of my favorite races," Sumner acknowledged. "It's probably the only time I'll run it."

He also may compete in a few 1,600-meter races once the outdoor season begins. Bradley calls Sumner "probably my best runner from the 400, all the way up through the 3,200."

"What really strikes most people about him is that he's so strong. He just seems to be stronger than other runners. He really works at it . . . and the thing that really distinguishes him from other runners is that he really likes to race. A lot of runners get so uptight about competition that they don't enjoy it that much, but he really likes to race. Brad has that extra dimension; he is a great competitor."

SUMNER'S RECORDS

McQuaid senior Brad Sumner holds, or shares nine Section 5 track records:

- **600 yards (indoors):** 1:12.88, 1989.
- **600 meters (indoors):** 1:19.56, 1989 *
- **1,000 meters (indoors):** 2:27.32, 1989.
- **1,500 meters (indoors):** 4:02.74, 1989.
- **1,600-meter relay (indoors):** Scott Romanowski, Jason Fahy, Mickey Scott, Sumner, 3:25.75, 1989.
- **Sprint medley relay (indoors):** Scott Romanowski, Chris Cusack, Chris Adin, Sumner, 1988.
- **400 meters (outdoors):** :48.8, 1988 +
- **Distance medley relay (outdoors):** Romanowski, Cusack, Adin, Sumner, 10:22.4, 1988.
- **Sprint medley relay (outdoors):** Romanowski, Steve Branca, Justin Berko- Boateng, Sumner, 3:33.00.

* State and national record.
+ Hand-timed, shared with Phil Hoey, Pittsford, 1980.

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