

Excelling because of effort

High school athletes enjoy success of competition

By John Moriello and Walt Slater
Democrat and Chronicle

It's Aug. 6, 1988 at Sunnycrest Park in Syracuse.

McQuaid senior-to-be Brad Sumner gets boxed in on the second lap of the scholastic boys' 800 and is unable to outkick Bill Gathen of Colonie (Section 2 in the Adirondack Region) to the finish line. Sumner's time of 1 minute, 55.26 seconds is a personal best, but it's only good enough for an Empire State Games silver medal. It's also the first time he's lost to Gathen.

"Why'd I have to lose to him here?" Sumner asks. "I haven't won a big meet yet."

Now, it's June 10, 1989 at Baldwinsville High, just outside Syracuse.

Sumner already has won the boys' 800-meter title in 1:53.76. Now, he's on the track again as the anchor of the favored McQuaid 3,200 relay. Sumner trails the Section 2 runner — it's Gathen — by about 20 meters entering the bell lap.

Coming off the final turn, Sumner has closed the gap, but he's still a stride behind the Colonie senior.

"It reminded me so much of the Empire State Games," Sumner recalled last week. "That was the first thing that came to mind."

SPORTS EXCELLENCE

Gathen can hear the roar of the crowd and senses Sumner closing on his right shoulder. Gathen makes the textbook move, drifting off the rail until he's almost in lane 2. If Sumner is going to pass him in the closing strides, the McQuaid senior is going to have to veer right and lose precious hundredths of a second.

But no. Sumner breaks to the inside and gambles that there's enough room to squeeze by. There is.

He pulls even with perhaps 10 meters to go. They run together for only an instant before Sumner lunges ahead and takes the tape by a tenth of a second.

"I was as happy as can be," Sumner said. "I thought we didn't have a chance and then all of a sudden we won."

And he'd won at a big meet.

But this was merely another triumph in a big meet, because the Villanova recruit ran down the competition dozens of times in his senior season, making his way onto the pages of *Track & Field News*, *USA Today* and *Sports Illustrated* in the process. Sumner won the 600 in the state in-

door meet at Cornell with a national-record time of 1:19.56, outkicking Warren Nurse of Prospect Heights (1:20.8), and helped the Knights' second-place 1,600 relay set the Section 5 record (3:25.75).

The following day, he was first in the 800 (1:55.29), and the relay captured the title in the 3,200 (7:56.50) at the National Scholastic Indoor Championships at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md.

There would be a string of Section 5 indoor and outdoor marks, and a week ago he capped his scholastic career with first place in the 800 at the Keebler International Prep Invitational outside Chicago.

It was a fitting completion to Sumner's senior year and also marked the final event of the high school year.

Without ado, here's a final look:

Athletes of the year

Seniors: Sumner and three-sport star Courtney Romeiser of Red Jacket.

Juniors: Aquinas football/basketball star Alcindor Coleman shares the boys' honors with Greece swimmer Matt Monaghan. Three-sporter Sue Onze of Canandaigua is the girls' choice.

Sophomores: Swimmer Jeff Anthony of Victor and basketball/track

standout Holly Jones of Fairport.

Freshmen/junior high: Tennis player Marc Wurtzman of Brighton and East sprinter Zilla Higgs.

Other pairs of aces

Avoca boys' and girls' basketball: The Tigers brought two undefeated teams to the state tournament in Glens Falls. The girls lost to Haldane (Section 1) in the semis, but the boys completed a 28-0 season by beating Sugar Loaf (Section 9) in the Class D final, 66-61.

Sean Johnson and Sean Johnson: The East senior was the quarterback in football and the point guard in basketball. Each team was a sectional champ.

Romeiser and Hammondsport's Adrienne Shill, a pair of two-time All-Greater Rochester basketball players who'll attend Marquette on scholarship.

Pittsford Mendon juniors Nicki Bernard and Anne-Claude Pharamond, who split time in goal until late in the soccer season. Bernard, playing forward, scored the winner 6:39 into the second OT and Pharamond made several key saves to turn back Rockville Centre Southside in the state 'B' final, 2-1.

TURN TO PAGE 10E



Jamie Germano Democrat and Chronicle
Red Jacket's Courtney Romeiser is senior athlete of the year.



Reed Hoffmann Democrat and Chronicle
Dave Chaney, a scorer and scholar.

Pittsford's Chaney puts books ahead of goals

By Walt Slater
Democrat and Chronicle

If you're looking for the epitome of the student-athlete, a compound noun that far too frequently becomes an oxymoron, please observe Pittsford's Dave Chaney.

He's one of the most prolific lacrosse scorers Section 5 has ever seen and he hit the books with enough vigor to finish with a 91 average (100 scale) and earn admission to Harvard.

But few people ever achieve the blend of athletic and academic excellence Chaney has demonstrated. He'll enroll at Harvard intending to earn a liberal arts degree and continue lacrosse, in which he earned high school All-America status this spring with Irondequoit midfielder Paul Cantabene.

Cantabene chose the usual route and accepted a lacrosse scholarship at Loyola (Md.), but Chaney turned down offers from Maryland, Virginia

and Duke when he opted for the Ivy League.

"Education was my first consideration," Chaney said. "Lacrosse came second. You can only go so far in lacrosse. After college there isn't much you can do with it unless you want to coach."

Harvard isn't one of Division I's major powers, but the Crimson isn't a stranger to the top 10 rankings, either.

"I applied to most of the Ivy League schools," he added said. "I had the grades... they all recruited me for lacrosse but Harvard looked like the best place, overall. I just want to study what I like and probably go on to graduate school."

Chaney, a natural attackman who also plays midfield, wasn't born with a lacrosse stick hanging from one shoulder, nor did he hop out of the crib with a high grade-point average. Plenty of effort was required to achieve his accomplishments in the classroom and

on the playing fields.

"When I was in in (the) eighth grade, my coach asked me if I wanted to be a good player or an All-American," Chaney recalled. "And I said All-American. It was a dream back then... But last year it started to become a reality."

Long hours in the weight room paid dividends. A 5-9, 130-pound freshman became a 5-11, 180-pound senior.

"The weight lifting helps so much," Chaney said. "When I was a freshman, a lot of defenseman would push me around. Now, I can put equal pressure on them."

And more long hours of off-season drills that were part of Pittsford Coach Paul Wilson's 300 Club and Shot Club programs — players put in 300 hours of lacrosse-related activity and take 10,000 shots — elevated his skills.

A trip to one of Maryland's most prestigious lacrosse camps last summer

gave Chaney a chance to compare himself to many of the nation's most highly regarded high school players.

And a berth on the Western Region scholastic lacrosse team gave him "a look at the best players in the state." He had five goals in four games for the Empire State Games bronze medalist.

"Pittsford isn't really known for great lacrosse," Chaney admitted. "But once I got to the (Maryland) camp and the Empire (State Games), I realized I could play with the best."

He'll get the chance to prove it again next spring when he tries to land a spot in Harvard's lineup.

"I just want to try to get as much playing time as possible," Chaney said. "Harvard had a really mature team this year, so I don't think it'll be that hard to do... Their coach wanted to know what I preferred to play and I said attack. I love to score but I'll play anywhere as long as I get to play."