

## Our Athletes

# All conference meet

## Saucier sets CCC record; girls win CCC West

By JOHN GORALSKI  
SPORTS WRITER

Every time that Andy Whyte looked up it seemed that a different Southington athlete was celebrating a school record. On Saturday, Jan. 30, Whyte was handling coaching issues and complaints as an official at the 2009 Central Connecticut Conference (CCC) championship meet while his Southington athletes exploded into the postseason.

### Indoor Track

The Blue Knights set a number of personal bests and four school records. Southington athletes broke one conference meet record, swept the top three spots in one event, and came away with their first indoor track conference title.

"It was amazing," said Whyte. "I probably have to credit that to the fact that I was so involved with the meet that I really couldn't do anything with them. It was great to see everybody laid back and relaxed, and they had a great day."

Erin Saucier led the



JOHN GORALSKI

Nicole Lulevitch, center, leaps a barrier in the 55m hurdle race.

scoring for the Knights, clearing 10 feet, 1 inch in the pole vault to set a new height record at the conference meet and break her previous school record (9'6"). Alisha Washer (8'6") edged Rhiannon Jacobs (8'6") by tiebreaker for second place as all three Knights set personal bests at the meet.

The Southington girls finished in eighth place out of 32 teams in four divisions, but scored 29 overall points to secure the CCC West division title.

"The girls were great. Not only did some girls score, but the others did well too," said Whyte. "We ended up winning our division, and that's a first in my 10 years of coaching. I've never been

able to say that one of my boys or girls teams was a division champ. I'm so proud of them."

Even the non-scorers set personal bests or school records. Nicole Lulevitch broke her own school record in the 55m hurdles (10.0) and finished 12th overall in the long jump. Amber Cunningham (5:58.17) broke six minutes in the 1600m for the first time in her career. The Lady Knights finished in the top 20 in two relays, and Isabelle Palumbo finished the 1000m race in 3:24.87.

"Neither the boys or girls team was going to be in contention for the overall title, so I told them to just relax and have fun," said Whyte. "I told them to go out and just try to

### 2009 CCC Championships



#### Meet records

- Erin Saucier, pole vault (10'1")

#### School records

- 4x800m relay, Boys (8:27.39)
- Erin Saucier, pole vault (10'1")
- Nicole Lulevitch, 55m hurdles (10.0)
- Ravin Walters, shot put (46'5")

#### All-conference

- Erin Saucier
- Pat Conaty
- Alisha Washer
- Rhiannon Jacobs



JOHN GORALSKI

Bryan Wilcox runs the third leg of the 4x800m race at the 2009 CCC conference championships in New Haven on Jan. 30.

break a couple of school records, which they did. I told them to get their times better to qualify for states, which they did. Just have fun, I told them. There's no pressure. Just

go out and do it. For the most part, that's what they did."

Bryan McGrane, Zach Albert, Bryan Wilcox, and Tim Brown set the record breaking pace with a third

place finish in the 4x800m relay (8:32.62) at the start of the meet. Pat Conaty (11'6") placed second overall in the

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# Lady Knight gymnasts beat South Windsor

By JOHN GORALSKI  
SPORTS WRITER

The vaulting area was harder than most, and the routines were untried and untested. The floor had no spring, and the gymnasts were rusty after nearly two weeks off from competition.

On Friday, Jan. 29, the Lady Knights had plenty of excuses but none were needed as they cruised past South Windsor by more than 12 total points.

### Gymnastics

"They did very well considering we were rusty," said Lady Knight coach Byron Knox. "The nice thing is that we [hit our vaults] on a hard surface. That was a big plus. That gives us a big indication of what we are capable of doing."

Toni Penta powered the Knights despite a nagging injury. The freshman led all gymnasts on vault (9.0), bars (9.1) and the all-around competition. Knox said that her performance was even more impressive considering the facilities and her sore ankle.

"For a freshman to step up and show that kind of leadership on the floor with no complaints is exactly what

we want to see," said Knox. "We're just happy to have her on our side. I think she's going to be a contender for the all-around by the end."

Katelyn Hyde competed in just three events, but led the Knights on beam (8.6) and floor (8.45). Southington competed just three girls in all four events, but they each placed in the top four.

Cassidy Chamberland

Jan. 29  
**Southington 136.45**  
**S. Windsor 122.6**

(33.7) finished second overall, and Amanda Miranda (32.3) finished fourth.

Knox said that, with a young team, all-around scores takes a back seat to the overall team score, and the Knights are coming along well.

"We're actually right where we should be," said the coach. "The focus this year is on the team title. In past years we would be trying to position girls for the all-around and trying to qualify for states. With the young team, it's not always conducive to sticking them out there all alone in the all-around. We're trying to find the best six athletes out on the floor, and that means

that we might not even have any all-arounds at the end of the year. It's all about team. We're trying to get the team in a position to win states."

So far, so good. The Knights improved to 3-0 overall.

To comment on this story or to contact sports writer John Goralski, email him at [jgoralski@southingtonobserver.com](mailto:jgoralski@southingtonobserver.com).

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