

Dunston gets plenty of help

By RAY BALDWIN
Sentinel Correspondent

Greg Dunston has done it again. For the 12th consecutive year, the Woodward track coach planned, organized, and directed Montgomery County's biggest invitational track meet, the Woodward Relays.

"I ran high school track in Western Pennsylvania and we had a big meet called the W.P.I.E. Relays. When I came here, I thought it might be nice to start a meet like that," Dunston said, explaining his reasons for initiating the massive event.

Dunston, a math teacher at Woodward, started the meet during his second year at the school. The following year, he started a Woodward Relays for cross country runners, held in the fall each year.

Dunston said it takes a "good two months work to organize the meet." However, he is not without help.

"A lot of kids who used to run for me come back as officials," Dunston said. "One boy — I guess he is a man now, he's 27 — helped me build the steeplechase and he comes back every year to run it.

"Al Bellman (track coach in Kennedy) helps me with the seeding, my wife types up all the results, and the kids on our team design the program," Dunston added.

One reason Dunston receives so much support is that the meet is the highlight of the season for many athletes. It provides many schools who otherwise would not have the opportunity to compete in the large invitational meets with a chance to taste the excitement of big-time track. Also, since all the events are relays, runners who do not see much action during the course of the season have a chance to compete against the county's best.



A jump, a victory, a smile

Beth Hanlon, part of the Sherwood duo that broke the high jump record at Saturday's Woodward Relays, has a big smile as she leaves the pit following a successful jump. Beth teamed with her sister Jenny to total 10-0, breaking the record of 9-11 set two years ago. The Hanlons were eight inches better than their closest competitors.

Sentinel Photo by Pamela S. Hinden

This year, everyone again cooperated with Dunston; everyone, that is, except Mother Nature. It rained, hard most of the time, almost all day.

The wet conditions brought the turnout down from a high of 28 boys teams last year to 23 boys teams and 21 girls teams.

"The hard core track teams don't leave," Dunston said. "The ones who don't have a good chance of winning, or who are on the fringes, tend to leave."

Dunston was quick to add, "My kids don't leave because they don't have any other choice. If I have to be there, so do they!"

The weather did not hinder the athletes as much as it did the spectators. In the past years, the bleachers would be filled and the crowd would spill onto the hills

surrounding the track. This year, only a handful of diehard fans braved the elements and paid the admission fee.

"We pay for the meet by charging admission," Dunston said. "We don't make any money on team entry fees. We keep them low and use all of them to buy awards."

Dunston purchases \$1,200 worth of awards and that is one reason that the meet is so popular among local athletes and coaches.

"A lot of coaches tell me they really enjoy coming," Dunston said. "It's close to home, there are a variety of awards and a lot of people can participate."

Although some have pushed the idea of expanding the meet to include more teams, Dunston feels it is large enough as is and

he has no immediate plans to increase its size. He is content to limit the entrants to mostly Montgomery County public and private schools.

One private school in particular was glad that it attended. Good Counsel dominated the meet, placing among the top three in 12 of 15 events, winning five. The Falcons amassed meet record 108 points to claim the boys team title. St. Albans was a distant second with 53 points. Blair was on point back in third, followed by Whitman and Landon.

For the girls, it was Churchill — again. The Bulldogs totaled four firsts, including a meet record in the triple jump; two seconds and four thirds as they compiled 84 points for their third title in four years.

Whitman registered a distant second with 66. Woodward and Walter Johnson were next, with Magruder and Howard tying for fifth.

JCC sponsors benefit tourney

The second annual benefit mixed doubles tennis tournament, sponsored by the Jewish Community Center, will be held from 1-5 p.m. May 23 at Woodmont Country Club.

After the tournament, there will be a cocktail party from 6-7:15 and a buffet dinner at 7:30.

There is a minimum \$100 per person donation required. Registration is limited and must be done prior to April 25.