

Fennell, Greany

Anchor Rockland All-Decade Harrier

Brendan Fennell of Pearl River and Shelby Greany of Suffern were named Runners of the Decade and headline a group of 14 harriers chosen to the Rockland County Cross Country All-Decade Team.

A panel of coaches, officials and longtime observers of the Rockland cross country scene chose seven male and seven female runners from the years 2000-2009 to form the dream team. Panelists used the following criteria to guide their selections: performance in championship meets; head-to-head records against top competitors; consistency and durability; and times on major courses.

Programs and Teams of the Decade

Honorees were also selected for boys and girls programs and teams of the decade.

North Rockland Boys, coached by Barry Baloga (2003-2009) and Gene Dall (2000-2002), were tabbed as the boys program of the decade and the Red Raiders 2009 squad, which captured the New York State Federation championship, was lauded as the decade's top boys team.

Pearl River Girls, piloted by Dan Doherty, earned girls program of the decade laurels and the 2005 Suffern club, coached by Tom McTaggart, was hailed as the premier girls team.

Here is a closer look at the elite squad:



ROCKLAND COUNTY CROSS COUNTRY ALL-DECADE TEAM

BOYS RUNNER OF THE DECADE

Brendan Fennell, Pearl River: Fennell dominated the competition from 2000 to 2002, seizing three consecutive Rockland County and Section 1 titles. He won New York State Intersectional Class C crowns in 2000 and 2001 and placed third in 2002. At the New York State Federation championship – the state’s all-class, winner-take-all finale – he finished fourth, third and fifth, respectively. Fennell qualified twice for the Foot Locker Nationals, including a victory at the 2002 Northeast Regional in a Rockland record 15:32.7 for Van Cortlandt Park’s 5K course. He notched 12 invitational wins over three seasons, including two at the prestigious Manhattan Invitational. Fennell holds Rockland records for Van Cortlandt’s 2.5-mile (12:30.2) and 5K (15:32.7) courses, and ranks second at Bowdoin Park (15:56.4) and fourth at Bear Mountain (14:57.1).

GIRLS RUNNER OF THE DECADE

Shelby Greany, Suffern: A case can be made for Greany as the preeminent cross country runner in county history, male or female. She won an unprecedented five Rockland County and five Section 1 crowns in a row from 2004 to 2008. In the New York State Intersectional Class AA race, she finished second twice and fourth once. She placed second in the 2006 Federation meet and had three other finishes in the top six (fourth, 2005; fifth, 2007; sixth, 2008). She qualified for the Foot Locker Nationals a record four times, including a runner-up finish at the 2008 Northeast Regionals, and earned All-America status with a seventh-place finish that year at the Foot Locker meet. She is the fastest Rocklander at Bear Mountain (17:26.7), Bowdoin Park (18:27.7), and both the 2.5-mile (14:15.4) and 5K (17:37.7) courses at Van Cortlandt Park.

BOYS INDIVIDUALS

(In alphabetical order)

Mike Hickey, Pearl River: Hickey pocketed three successive titles at the Rockland County meet from 2006 to 2008, and also “three-peated” at the Section 1 Class B meet. His finest championship outing was a third-place finish at the 2008 New York State Intersectional Class B race. Hickey stands tied for third on the all-time Rockland list at Van Cortlandt (12:36.0) and sixth at Bowdoin Park (16:20.0).

Nick Hughes, North Rockland: Hughes put it all together in 2009, winning the New York State Intersectional Class AA title, North Rockland’s first individual state crown. He also swept the Rockland and Section 1 AA titles and placed fourth at the Federation meet to lead the Raiders to the team championship. As a junior he finished sixth in the state Class AA race. Hughes ranks fourth all-time among Rocklanders at Bowdoin Park (16:05.4) and tied for sixth at Van Cortlandt (12:41.6).

Carlos Jamieson, North Rockland: The 2003 Rockland County champion as a junior, Jamieson placed eighth at the New York State Class A meet and 11th in the Federation meet. He won the 2004 Section 1 AA title, was runner-up to teammate John Martinez in the County meet, and prevailed in his division at the Manhattan Invitational in a fast 12:46.7 over Van Cortlandt’s 2.5-mile course. He was County meet runner-up as a sophomore and ranks No. 5 on the all-time Rockland list at Bowdoin Park (16:09.1).

John Martinez, North Rockland: Martinez is Rockland’s only male All-America harrier, finishing 14th at the 2004 Foot Locker Nationals after qualifying with a seventh-place effort at the Northeast Regional. He was runner-up at both the New York State Class AA and Federation meets, the Rockland County champion and second-place finisher behind teammate Carlos Jamieson at both the Section 1 AA meet and his division at the Manhattan Invitational (12:47.1). As a junior, Martinez took ninth in the state meet and 12th at Federation. He ranks third all-time among Rockland runners at Bowdoin Park (15:57.7) and on Van Cortlandt’s 5K course (15:42.8).

Miguel Reyes, North Rockland: Reyes led North Rockland to a second-place team finish in the 2002 New York State Intersectional Class A race with a 13th-place performance, and followed that up with a 20th-place showing at Federations. He was fifth at the County and fourth in Section 1, and won his races at the Section 1 Coaches, Red Raider Run and Suffern Invitational.

Justin Romaniuk, Suffern: Coming off a stellar 1999 season in which he won the New York State Class A race, finished second at the Federation run and swept Rockland and Section 1 Class A titles, Romaniuk encored in 2000 with another big year. He racked up his third straight Section 1 A title, finished second in the County meet to Brendan Fennell, took fifth in the state Class A race and recorded a third-place showing at the Federation meet. Romaniuk then placed third in the Foot Locker Northeast Regional (ahead of Fennell’s fifth) to qualify for Foot Locker Nationals. He holds the Rockland record for Bowdoin Park (15:55.9) and ranks third on Van Cortlandt’s 5K course (15:43.7).

GIRLS INDIVIDUALS

(In alphabetical order)

Jaelyn Gaines, Pearl River: A consistent performer over three seasons, Gaines finished third in the 2002 New York State Intersectional Class C race after a pair of 14th-place efforts in 2000 and 2001. She was the 2001 Rockland County champion, a two-time Section 1 Class C titleholder, and County meet runner-up as a sophomore.

Sara Graney, Tappan Zee: Graney placed seventh in the New York State Class A race as a sophomore in 2005 and eighth as a senior in 2007. She won the Section 1 A race as a sophomore and placed second the next two years, and collected a pair of third-place finishes and one fourth in the Rockland County meet. She qualified for states as a freshman by placing fifth at Sectionals.

Vanessa McKay, Pearl River: McKay carried over her success from 1999 into 2000 and 2001. In '99 she was runner-up in both the New York State Class C and County meet races and won the Section 1 C race. In 2000 she won the County and Sectional titles, placed sixth in the state meet and 20th at the Federation meet. In 2001 she was second in both the County and Section 1 meets and again placed sixth at the state meet.

Kara McKenna, Suffern: McKenna teamed with Shelby Greany to form the strongest 1-2 punch of any Rockland girls duo. A two-time Rockland County champion and two-time runner-up (to Greany), McKenna also earned one Section 1 title and finished second three times. She finished fifth in both the 2005 New York State Class AA and Federation races, had 12th- and 14th-place showings at the state meet in 2004 and 2003 respectively, and took 15th in the 2003 Federation run. She missed making Foot Locker Nationals by one place in 2005, finishing 11th at the Northeast Regional. McKenna ranks second on the all-time Rockland list at Van Cortlandt's 5K course (18:10.0) and third at Bear Mountain (17:48.7), Bowdoin Park (18:48.1) and Van Cortlandt's 2.5-mile course (15:03.1).

Samantha Stadt, Pearl River: Stadt rose to the occasion twice in the New York State Class B championships, placing second in 2005 and seventh in 2004. She was also a two-time Section 1 Class B runner-up and finished third in the County meet in 2005 behind fellow All-Decade Team members Shelby Greany and Kara McKenna.

Megan Young, Nanuet: The youngest member of the All-Decade squad, Young captured the New York State Class B championship as a freshman in 2009, finished 10th in the Federation meet, 13th at the Nike Cross Nationals New York Regional and 38th at Nationals. She was also the 2009 Rockland and Section 1 B champ. As an eighth-grader Young placed third in the County and Sectionals and 14th at the state meet, and also made the state meet as a seventh-grader by taking fourth at Sectionals. She ranks second on the all-time Rockland list at Bear Mountain (17:38.1) and Bowdoin Park (18:45.9) and fourth at Van Cortlandt (15:05.9).

BOYS PROGRAM & COACH

North Rockland, Barry Baloga, Gene Dall: The Red Raiders annexed five Section 1 large-school crowns – including four straight from 2001 to 2004 – as well as four Rockland County championships and four runner-up County finishes. North Rockland claimed two second-place finishes in the New York Intersectional meet, in 2002 and 2009, and closed the decade in style with the state Federation championship in 2009. The Raiders also had three other top-10 finishes at the Federation: 10th in 2002, eighth in 2003, and seventh in 2008.

GIRLS PROGRAM & COACH

Pearl River, Dan Doherty: The first decade of the 21st century was simply a continuation of Pearl River's success from the previous two decades. The Pirates won all 10 Section 1 titles – extending their streak to 31 straight by 2009. They secured five County championships and finished second four times. At the New York State Intersectionals, they had three second-place finishes, four third-place showings and three fourth-place efforts, and at the Federation meet they posted four top-10 finishes: fourth in 2000, sixth in 2001, seventh in 2008 and 10th in 2004.

BOYS TEAM

2009 North Rockland team: Everything broke right for Baloga's harriers in 2009. They won the County championship with 21 points, the second-lowest total since 1970. They decimated a quality Arlington team at the Class AA Sectionals, 21-71. After finishing second to powerhouse Fayetteville-Manlius in the state Intersectional Class AA race, they rebounded the following week with a state Federation championship, the first in Red Raider history and only the fourth by a Rockland boys team. Nick Hughes was the Raiders' front-runner.

GIRLS TEAM

2005 Suffern team: Paced by Shelby Greany and Kara McKenna, the Mounties rolled to victory at the Rockland County championships, then dominated the field in the Section 1 Class AA meet, scoring 34 points to runner-up North Rockland's 90. Suffern finished third in the Eastern States championships, fourth in the highly competitive state Intersectional AA race, and put the exclamation point on the season with a third-place finish at the Federation meet, the highest placing of any Rockland girls team in the decade.