

St. Mary's, New London girls to be well-represented at state meet

By ED FOX
Staff Writer

BROOKLYN, Ohio — Both New London and St. Mary's Central Catholic were in the hunt for the Class A regional track and field title Saturday.

Kirtland, with firsts in the final two events, emerged as the champion with 56 points while New London took fourth with 37 followed by the Panthers with 34 and South Central nabbed sixth with 28.

The Panthers will be sending three individuals and two relays to state while New London qualified two individuals and the same number of relays.

Meanwhile, South Central had a double winner in senior Molly Woodruff who doubled in the 1600 (5:20.4) and 800 (2:19.72).

New London's Laura Mench, a sophomore, claimed the only other first by a *Register* area competitor when she prevailed in the long jump with a leap of 16-9½.

Much of the Panther scoring came in the distance events as the 3200 relay team of Kerry Kennedy, Jenny Link, Monette Chill and Debi Young took second in 10:02.19 while Young was third in the 1600 with 5:30.5 and Kennedy nabbed fourth in the 3200 with 12:17.59.

Also, St. Mary's qualified one other relay and one individual. Senior Toni Wierzba was third in the 200 with 26.17 and joined with Missy Bowers, Jackie and Jennifer Olsen for third in the 400 relay at 51.15.

"We're taking eight to state and that's the most ever. I think the second place finish by the 3200 relay really got us going. It was just a great way to start the finals. It was good to see the three seniors (Link, Chill and Kennedy) make it to state and Deb's kick (2:26 for her 800

split) really got us second place," said Panther mentor Mike Opfer.

"Our seniors have seen both the good and bad times and it's nice that they've been rewarded for their hard work. Also, assistant coach (Larry) Fox has really put in a lot of time with them and it is evident with their performance today.

"I just can't say enough about Toni. As a sophomore, it was her goal to make it to state in an individual event and she's done it. Not only is she going in the 200 but she's also part of the 400 relay. She even ran in cross country last fall to get ready for this and it's just great to see her do well," added Opfer.

New London qualified a pair of relays and one other individual to state.

They finished second in both the 800 and 400 relay. In the 800, Mench, Kathy Brady, Dawn Burton and Kim Smith combined for a 1:47.23 while Smith, Mench and Brady were joined by Jackie Matthews for a 50.67 in the 400. Also, Melissa Harris was fourth in the 1600 with a 5:31.1.

In all, Woodruff will be going to state in three events as the South Central senior teamed with Sheila Kilbane, Wendy Baker and Julie Walcher for third in the 1600 relay at 4:09.28.

Three other Firelands Conference schools, Plymouth, Norwalk St. Paul and Monroeville, qualified individuals to state.

Plymouth, which will also be sending its 3200 relay, qualified Jenny Adkins who was fourth in the 800 at 2:26.54. Also, she teamed with Susan Helms, Jenny Chase and Kathy Welker for third in the 3200 relay at 10:02.7.

For St. Paul, Paula Poole will be returning to state after taking runnerup honors in the 3200 at

11:57.05 while Monroeville's Tonya Good was third in the same event at 12:06.26.

There were several others who just missed qualifying.

Placing fifth were Amy Lavengood of New London in the shot put at 35-11, St. Paul's 3200 relay in 10:15.69, New London's Jackie Matthews in the 100 low hurdles at 16.93, Panther Toni

Wierzba in the 100 at 13.22, South Central's Sheila Kilbane in the 300 low hurdles at 49.22 and New London's Laura Mench in the 200 at 27.26.

Claiming sixth were the Panther 800 relay in 1:48.65, Monette Chill of St. Mary's in the 800 with 2:30.09 and New London's Kim Smith in the 200 at 27.33.