

[Mohawk Trail caps successful season at MIAA Nordic Ski Championships \(PHOTOS\)](#)

Garrett Cote, Staff Writer, Greenfield Recorder Published: 02-14-2024 6:37 PM

WOODFORD, Vt. — It was a beautiful day for one final ski meet.

After a winter with very little snow made things challenging for skiers, the MIAA Nordic Ski Championships were finally held at Prospect Mountain Ski Area on Wednesday.

On the boys' side, Mohawk Trail, which co-ops with Hampshire Regional, grabbed eighth place with 154 points and Amherst finished 11th with 168 points.

Newton South's 22 points earned them first place, as Mount Greylock's (second, 28 points) run of three consecutive state titles ended. Wellesley, Wahconah and Concord Carlisle rounded out the top five.

Vincent Gauthier led the Warriors with a time of 22 minutes, 28 seconds, good for 33rd place, and teammate Augustus Niswonger sailed in right behind him at 22:30 to take 34th.

Gauthier, a senior, only had one goal in mind for the day: beat Niswonger, several years his junior.

"I went into it really wanting to beat Augustus [Niswonger]," Gauthier said of the friendly battle. "He's younger by a lot, but he's been beating me these last couple of races. So for my last race, I really wanted to get him. After the big steep hill, I went into those trails out there just hauling to lengthen out that glide. I laid it all out there and it was great."

Adam Muller (39th, 22:41) and Curtis Casey (54th, 24:07) also cracked the top 60 for Mohawk Trail.

For Amherst, its 11th-place finish was paced by Calvin Miller's 28th-place time of 22:02. Ian Burns (36th, 22:32), Julian Camera (50th, 23:39) and Peter Nedeau (64th, 24:37) rounded out the Hurricanes' top performers.

Wednesday marked the last meet of Camera's high school career. He admitted he's ready for the next step, but also noted he'll be sad to miss out on the next couple of years, because Amherst is in good shape to be competitive – led by Miller and Burns, who are both freshmen.

"A little bittersweet," Camera said of the final meet. "It felt good to be able to push myself the whole time, just telling myself this is my last race and to give it all I got. But I'm for sure going to miss it, it's gonna be sad missing the future fun that these guys are gonna have."

The Amherst girls Nordic ski team didn't just feel like underdogs all season long – they *were* underdogs.

Often overlooked given the geographical location, the Hurricanes were ready to display their talents on the biggest stage.

While most teams have a couple of standout skiers and that's it, Amherst has a sizable group of very strong ones that always place well – and that was the case again on Wednesday afternoon.

The Hurricanes (75 points) placed seven skiers inside the top 60, the most by any of the 19 teams, to finish second in the state to complete their fantastic winter season. Only state champion Mount Greylock (70) edged out Amherst. Concord Carlisle (third), Newton South (fourth) and Lincoln Sudbury (fifth) rounded out the top five.

“We felt like underdogs this season,” Amherst captain Addie Mager said. “We have never really won anything or done well, so this was definitely a nice way to end the year for us.”

Mager (35th, 27 minutes, 33 seconds) was one of those seven in the top 60. Leading the way for the Hurricanes was River Wolaver (25:30) and Ella Workman (25:34), who finished back-to-back at 11th and 12th place, respectively. Elizabeth Sawicki was close behind in 18th place (26:02), then Isla Cusick (34th, 27:23), Mager and Zoey Candito (36th, 27:40) crossed the line next to one another.

The close grouping has helped Amherst do as well as it has in 2024, according to head coach Nat Woodruff.

“They did fantastic, and the crew is such a tight pack that on any given day, if one of them drops back then another one fills their spot,” Woodruff said. “We’ve been consistently strong the entire season and I think the same thing was true today. The top skiers of some of the other teams were ahead of us, but we have a great group in the middle that always helps us score well.”

Heading into Wednesday, the skiers on Amherst knew they had a legitimate shot at a state title. The Hurricanes had won a handful of Berkshire League meets throughout the year, and their rugged training had prepared them for any conditions Prospect Mountain had to offer.

But even with the lofty expectations, nobody cared to talk about them. Instead, the team took the laid-back approach and let their practice habits take over – that way the tension of a high-stakes meet was released.

“We tried to not put pressure on ourselves or the team, because if we did that, we didn’t wanna be let down or psych ourselves out,” Candito said. “I think that helped us out and the hard work we put in throughout the season showed with how we did today.”

Especially during seasons like this one where there hasn’t been much snow, residing in Hampshire County is certainly a disadvantage when the majority of teams that compete at states are coming from the Berkshires or out east.

Elsewhere, Mohawk Trail, was the only other local team to compete on Wednesday. The Warriors finished in 11th place on the girls’ side with 178 points.

Charlotte Niswonger (26:17) turned in a team-best time to finish in 22nd place, while Anya Read (28:16) and Corinne Some (28:28) crossed the line in 43rd and 46th, just a couple minutes later. Sadie Mahon-Moore (30:11) finished in 71st, improving vastly from last year's state race – where she ended up doubled over after the finish line.

“Last states race, I crossed the finish line, collapsed and started sobbing,” Mahon-Moore said. “So my goal was to just not do that this time. And I didn't. I'm a lot stronger this year, and we've been doing a lot of vigorous training going up hills. I felt strong on those. I passed quite a few people and got passed only once, so that was cool.”

Source: <https://www.recorder.com/MIAA-nordic-skiing-championships-at-Prospect-Mountain-mohawk-trail-closes-out-season-54054708>