

is. We've just never been able to win the last two years. It didn't work. We were 17-0 and lost to Neptune in the

Knights in good company

North girls XC races into groups

By Justin Feil
Assistant Sports Editor

Christina LiPuma will welcome some company at the Group III state cross country championship Saturday at Holmdel Park.

The sophomore has been largely on her own for the past two seasons with the West Windsor-Plainsboro North girls team. A year ago, she was the lone freshman in the top seven for the Knights, and she has been the only sophomore to return to the team this year.

LiPuma has gotten used to pacing off other runners she knows or based on how she feels. She isn't fast enough yet to stay with Emily Scott, the North senior who won the Central Jersey Group III meet last week, but she's faster than the five behind her that include four varsity newcomers, including three freshmen.

"It's been hard," LiPuma said. "Since I'm injured, but sort of not, I'm floating around in the middle."

"It was different last year. During workouts and practices, I was holding onto the pack. During races, I would stay with people and leave toward the end of the race. This year, I kind of go. It's definitely different."

Gone from last year's team are Trish Reilly and Kelly Callahan, two significant graduation losses that seemingly hampered the Knight chances of returning to the Group II meet. But the Knights put together perhaps their most impressive performance of the year last week to grab the fifth and final qualifying spot at the CJ III meet and give LiPuma plenty of company among some of the state's top runners.

"We weren't sure we'd make it

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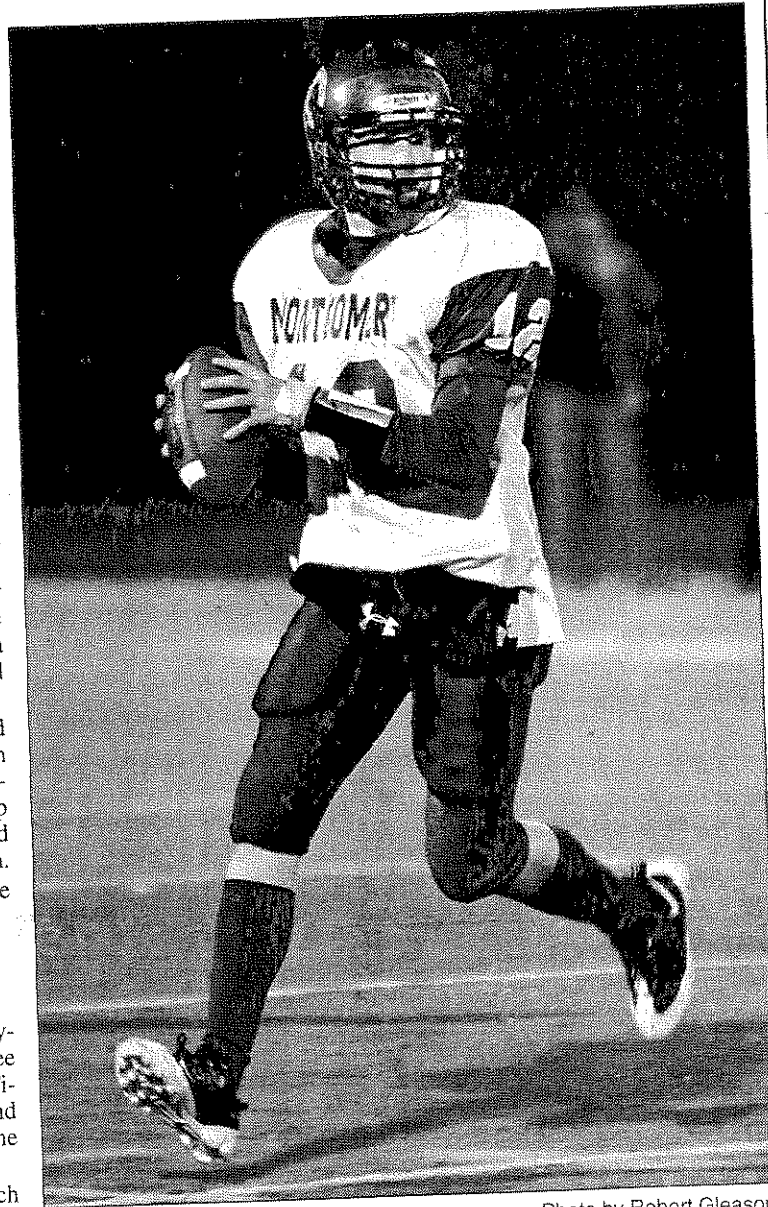


Photo by Robert Gleason

Montgomery High quarterback DJ Ruhlman and his Cougar teammates will face Howell in the Central Jersey Group IV playoffs tonight.

wick in the second week of the season.

"They're a real good team," Everette said. "We're going to need to have everyone healthy. The game plan will be to run Trevor (Barsamian) to soften up the defense and then we'll run Josh (Gordon) in there and hope he runs well. We'll mix in Michael (Olentine) passing the ball. We know we're going to have to mix it up on

offense and try to keep their defense off balance. We'll count on different kids and everyone is going to have to step up."

No. 8 WW-P North (6-3) at Middletown South (8-0) Central Jersey Group III

WW-P North is making the second playoff appearance in school history. The Knights last

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Playoffs open for football

Area foursome to play on road

By Bob Nuse
Sports Editor

For the first time ever, all four public school football teams in the Princeton Packet coverage area have qualified for the sectional playoffs.

All four teams — Princeton and West Windsor-Plainsboro North in Central Jersey Group III and Montgomery and WW-P South in Group IV — will play their opening round games on the road tonight at 7 p.m.

Here is a look at each of the four matchups.

No. 7 Princeton (7-2) at No. 2 Monroe (7-1) Central Jersey Group III

Princeton is back in the playoffs for the second time in three years. Two years ago the Little Tigers were a No. 7 seed as well and lost their opening-round game against Long Branch, 38-3.

This Princeton group is much more experienced, with 20 seniors on the roster. Many of those seniors were on the field for at least part of the last state playoff game.

"The kids realize that," Princeton coach Steve Everette said. "With 20 of them all working hard every practice they have really made it easy for us to coach. The offensive line and defensive line each go one way and we've been able to coach them. The play of the big guys up front was a big factor in us being able to beat West Windsor South."

Princeton will face a Monroe team that has won six in a row since a 23-21 loss to East Bruns-