

Argyle Girls Breaking Up Due to Lack of Community Support

The young Argyle girl's cross country team was very special. They were the NY State Class D champions in both 2002 and 2003. They were second to Saratoga (the best high school girl's team ever assembled) at the NY State Federation Championships. They were nationally ranked as the second best team in the Northeastern US (behind Saratoga) and the 9th best team in the entire US ... and in fact, I seriously doubt more than two or three teams could have beaten them head-to-head in 2003. Argyle burst on the cross country scene in 2002 with a team of mostly seventh graders and won the State Class D Championship over two exceptionally good teams (Bronxville and Beaver River). In 2003, the top runners were four 8th-graders and a 10th-grader. To say the future looked promising is an incredible understatement. This was probably the best "small school" cross country team ever.

So what's caused the break-up?? ... Much of the information below was taken from newspaper articles in the Glen Falls Post-Star (Feb. 11, 2004) by reporters Will Springstead and Jason Rowe. Some additional information was received through personal communications.

Some background ... The Argyle girls were coached by Bob Lane who was the Argyle Elementary School principal. He recently resigned due to athletic issues. The top runner for the Argyle girls was Caitlin Lane, Bob Lane's daughter. Coach Lane had done a marvelous job in developing the running abilities of these young ladies since the middle of elementary school. Their running club, known as the Argyle-Lites, had won numerous USATF and other titles in both cross country and track.

High-level running programs are "year-around" projects. They require commitments for both cross country and track. Unfortunately, the Argyle School district is either unable (or unwilling) to fund a track program at the school. Argyle Superintendent Dr. Gena Cone confirmed there is no money in the budget to fund a track team. Last year, Argyle did have an outdoor track team; however, it was totally funded by parents and supporters. The parents were given the impression by the Argyle Board of Education that the track team would be funded this spring. According the Post-Star, "School board President Richard McClenning said he believes the track program actually was a club funded by parents and recognized by the school district. He said the school board never planned to convert the club into a regular varsity team." (From this statement, it appears Argyle was never going to fund a track team). Superintendent Cone said funding would be available for next year's cross country team ... some observers feel the level of funding is woefully inadequate for a team of Argyle's stature. ...Update sent by one of the parents to clarify the circumstances: They (the parents) did not ask the school for funding a track program ... they would have continued the track program under the same situation as last year ... but they were told by the superintendent there would be no team and there never was a track program.

This lack of support led to Bob Lane's resignation. His daughter is a gifted and highly motivated athlete who deserves the opportunities to train and compete at a high level

with other exceptional athletes ... and Saratoga is only a few miles away. Lane said he is renting a house in Saratoga Springs, and his daughter Caitlin will transfer to the Saratoga Springs school district "within the next week" (from the Post-Star).

From the Post-Star ... Lane said resigning was a difficult decision, but "everybody needs to do what's best for the kids. They all want opportunities that they don't have here," he said. "I'll remember how they've really been committed to the sport and how they really love it. They are runners through and through."

According to the Post-Star, Bob Vanderminden Jr., the father of eighth-grader Hannah Davidson, said his family also has moved to Saratoga Springs and that Davidson would be enrolled at Saratoga very soon. Vanderminden said Argyle's cross country and track programs never were truly accepted by the adults in the Argyle school community. "There has been a lack of support from the school board the whole time ... They've won two state championships, yet when you drive into town, there are no signs on the road, no banners in the gymnasium and no trophies in the trophy case. They are all great kids and they deserve better".

The exact status of other Argyle runners is uncertain as this is being written. Some transfers to the close-by Greenwich School district are possible ... some may be staying in Argyle.

This situation makes me incredibly sad ... The emergence of the Argyle girls was special. It's a shame the Argyle community did not support this team better. But the Argyle school district is no different than many other school districts. It amazes me at times how some schools refuse to adapt to the special circumstances of their students ... they expect the students adapt to them instead ... why can't it work both ways?