

SPORTS

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SPORTS SPOTLIGHT

LEGION BASEBALL

Post 440 streak snapped

The Newton Post 440 American Legion baseball team saw its three-game win streak snapped in painful fashion on Monday night as Billerica hit a two-run, walk-off home run for a 3-2 triumph at Shawshen Tech.

The loss came on the heels of three straight victories as Newton rallied from down 7-3 for an 8-7 walk-off victory against North Chelmsford last Thursday, rolled to a 16-4 victory against Reading on Friday and beat Malden, 6-3, on Sunday.

Newton sits at 11-8 with one make-up game left in the regular season. Post 440 will begin play in the Chairman's Cup tournament early next week.

Hector Coscione pitched four innings of shutout relief against North Chelmsford as Newton rallied in an attempt to keep its

David Hoff hopes

TRACK & FIELD

Newton duo on Nationals tour

Martin, Prior to compete in Jr. Olympics in N. Carolina

By Scott Souza
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WALTHAM - Starting this fall, Newton track and field athletes Clare Martin and Jared Prior will be competing on opposite sides of town as part of the Newton South and Newton North programs, respectively.

This week, however, both are representing the Waltham Youth Track Club at the Junior Olympic National Championship in Greensboro, N.C.

Martin, the recent Brown Middle School graduate who will be a freshman at South High this fall, will run the 1,500 in her first trip to Nationals as a track athlete after previously competing in cross country. Prior, who will be a sophomore at North, will be making his fourth appearance at a national meet, but his first with the WTC after previously going independently

and with a contingent of North High teammates.

Both said during a practice at Waltham's J. Lee Gould Track last week that they were taking high hopes with them to North Carolina.

"My goal is to get sub-5 minutes in the 1,500," said Martin, who will run in the 13-14 girls division of the 1,500 meters after winning the event at the Region 1 Championships in New York two weeks ago.

"My other goal - which is a bit of a stretch - is to make it to the final race of the 1,500 meters. Only the top 12 qualify. I know it's going to be really hard to do. But if I run a good race, I might just be able to move on."

Prior, who helped North to the Division 1 Eastern Mass. and All-States championships with his performance in the long jump this spring, was also eyeing a possible spot in the 15-16 boys national

finals with a good jump after also taking first at the Region 1 final in New York.

"It's a very deep meet," he said. "There are a lot of jumpers doing much better than I am. I have started to really appreciate the importance of when I execute. That's what I want to go down there and do. I've been fouling a lot of jumps, and to get in the finals down there I will need to have a big jump."

Prior joined the WTC last year at the urging of his older sister, Kayla, who was both a member of WTC and the All-State champion North girls track and field team a year ago.

SEE TRACK, B5

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Newton's Clare Martin trains last week in Waltham for the Junior Olympic Nationals 1,500 meters to be held this week in Greensboro, N.C. WICKED LOCAL STAFF PHOTO / ERIN PRAWOKO

TRACK

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"It helps a lot that she did it," he said. "It's pretty much why I'm here. Before I started doing track, she was nagging a lot that I should try track. So I started out at the middle school. Then when I realized I wanted to be serious about it, I started coming here when I got to the high school just to get the technical stuff down."

"I first jumped 20 feet in eighth grade. I thought that I did that without yet being super special in form. So I thought track was my sport."

Martin joined the WTC as a cross country runner and recently branched out to track as she looks forward to doing distance races at South High next year.

"It's nice doing track because you can always try different events," she said.

"If you're a distance runner, you can do the 800, 1,500, 3K, whereas in cross country you have a specific distance, and you have to do that. So it's nice to get some variation."

With temperatures expected to be hovering near 90 degrees with high



Newton's Jared Prior warms up for a workout at Walnutam's Leary Field last week in advance of this week's Junior Olympic Nationals where he will long jump.

WICKED LOCAL STAFF PHOTO / ERIN PRAWOKO

humidity in Greensboro this week, Martin knew she would be looking at a much different scene than she did during the Junior

she said. "It's going to be faster. There's definitely going to be different tactics. In cross country, it's all about the wilderness and what's your footing on the grass or the dirt. In track, it's all about running in the pack. "You have to use your strategy and not start out too fast even though other people may start out fast. You can't let that change your game plan." Less than a month after she returns from North Carolina, where she will run for WTC president and North girls track coach Joe Tranchita, she will trade in her WTC uniform for that of the Lions, where she will run for South cross country and track coach Steve McChesney.

"It's weird because he's my coach now," she said of Tranchita, "and next year we'll be rivals."

The Newton athletes were two of the WTC's 25 national qualifiers from the Region I meet. Newton's Adrianna Batista, Orenna Brand, Max Hernandez and Rose Teszler also competed in New York. The Junior Olympic Nationals began Monday and conclude on Sunday. *Scott Souza can be reached at 781-398-8006 or ssouza@wickedlocal.com.*