

Track stars shine in Hub City

Organizers confident
Moncton can land National
Track League event

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The sun beamed down on the Hub City Track & Field Classic as athletes gave it their all at the state-of-the-art Stade Moncton 2010 Stadium.

A sea of onlookers cheered athletes on and came out to support the sport that, before last year's IAAF world junior championships, was far from mainstream in the city.

A big winner of the night was Ontario Justin Warner, who won the men's 100 metre with a time of 10.82. He said the track was "nice and fast," and is next off to Halifax and Toronto to compete before gearing up for the world's in Korea.

Warner may have won, but he had tough competition from hometown favourite Michael LeBlanc.

"This was a lot of fun. It was great to have the opportunity to run in front of my family and friends in my hometown," said LeBlanc.

The Riverview native posted a time of 10.74, but came in third behind Alberta's Bryan Barnett's 10.72. He said his performance left "something to be desired."

The athletes all faced some strong opposition from the wind, which was against them at a rate of .27 metres. Second-place Barnett was troubled by the resistance.

"It was a great competition and a great track, but I wish the wind was behind us and nature would co-operate," said Barnett.

"But there was a good turnout. We just needed to catch up with the wind."

Another big winner of the night was American Jamie Nieto, who tied Mark Dillon of Toronto for the high jump title. Among Nieto's most recent accomplishments is a U.S. Indoor Championships fourth-place finish and a U.S. Outdoor Championships bronze medal for 2010. Nieto was happy with his performance.

"This track was beautiful and this was an awesome time," Nieto said.



Moncton's Genevieve Lalonde (left) runs in the women's 800m event of the Hub City Classic.

The high jumper got the crowd clapping for him as he attempted extra jumps.

"It was just such a nice track, so I went for it," Nieto said.

While Nieto didn't reach his target, he was happy with his work nonetheless. He will next stop in Halifax and Toronto to compete.

In the final event of the night, the women's 800-metre run, Moncton local Genevieve Lalonde came in with a time of 2:38.88.

Lalonde had previously finished third-place in the 1,500 at the Canadian track and field championships in Calgary and was out of her normal distance with this shorter run.

Canadian runner Karine Belleau-Beliveau won the race with a time of 2:04.71. The Mont-real native was touted as an up-and-comer in the 800 metre division and really brought it home last night.

But perhaps no one was happier about

► See KELLER, D6



American Jamie Nieto soars during the men's high jump event at the Hub City Classic.

Keller places second in 1,500 metre

► Continued From D1

the outcome than Marc Lalonde, one of the event's key organizers.

"It went great. The competition was superb. I was worried about the weather. But the wind did happen and that made a huge difference," Lalonde said.

But despite the weather, Lalonde thinks the city may be on track for its part in a new National Track League. The Classic was held in a bid to get "put up for consideration" for a spot.

"It's highly unlikely we won't be part of the national track league," he said. "Everyone was very pleased with the athletes, the support and the good crowd. We ran on budget, we got the community excited and the athletes performed well," said Lalonde.

The event seemed to solidify the idea to Lalonde that the sport is growing larger in Moncton.

"I saw a lot of regulars, and a lot of people I've never seen. There was a mixture of the core group and new faces. There's new interest and carried on interest," said Lalonde.

But after all this, Lalonde still says these events are supposed to help and inspire kids to get involved.

"When you want to develop sports you need a facility and volunteers who help find ways to make it happen," Lalonde said.

"We need to inspire by bringing track and field home. This inspires kids to join and kids who are already involved to excel," he says.

"This is all part of a parcel to develop sports and individuals here in New Brunswick."

Hampton's Adam Keller was the top New Brunswick performer of the night.

Keller, who recently finished 15th at the Canadian championships in Calgary, placed second in the 1,500 metre run.

American Matthew Elliot won the races in a time of 3:44.83.

Keller was second in a time of 3:46.46 while Michael Del Monte of Toronto was third with



Racers line the track during the men's 1,500m event of the Hub City Classic track meet last night.

a time of 3:47.60.

Jean-Marc Dolron of Moncton's 02 club finished seventh, Nick MacMacKinn of Saint John was ninth and Lee Wesselius of Moncton's ASSEA club wound up 10th.

Pascal Desjardins of Chaleur was seventh in the men's 100-metre with a time of 12.27.

Nadine Frost of Charlotte County finished sixth and her sister Lyllia was eighth in the women's 800 metre.

Phylcia George of Ontario took home the women's 100-metre hurdles title with a time of 13.09.

Nikkita Holder also of Ontario, was second in 13.18, followed by LaVonne Idlette of the Dominican Republic with a time of 13.51.