

MSTCA DIVISION 3 RELAYS

Marblehead girls get a leg up from LeDaisha Williams and Billerica boys enjoy a banner day at MSTCA Division 3 state relays

By [Matty Wasserman](#) Globe Correspondent, Updated January 21, 2024, 7:02 p.m.



Marblehead's Elise Burchfield was pleased with her high jump result. DANIELLE PARHIZKARAN/GLOBE STAFF

As LeDaisha Williams rounded the final turn of the girls' 4x400 relay — the final event of Sunday's MSTCA Division 3 State Relays — the weight of Marblehead's title hopes

rested on the senior's shoulders.

Trailing Westwood's Tea Pagnotti by a half-stride with 200 meters remaining, the packed Reggie Lewis Center crowd rose to its feet in anticipation. Williams's relay teammates, hovering at the finish line, braced nervously.

But there was one person whose confidence never wavered: Williams.

With a ferocious kick in the closing 100 meters, Williams overtook Pagnotti to notch a half-second victory (4:12.22). Williams's effort vaulted the Magicians (36 points) to a 1-point victory over Billerica, marking the program's first state relay championship in 20 years.



Girls run the 1600 sprint medley relay. DANIELLE PARHIZKARAN/GLOBE STAFF

“For most of the final lap, I just wanted to stay on [Pagnotti] and try to push her, and push the pace however I could. And I knew by the last 100 meters, I had one final kick

in me,” Williams said. “We had no choice but to come in first, and I just had to give it all I had.”

Marblehead also notched wins in the sprint medley relay (4:22.95) — with Williams — and the high jump relay, led by junior Elise Burchfield’s second-place finish (4 feet 10.25 inches).

“This was really a great surprise,” Marblehead coach Nolan Raimo said. “We came into this meet trying to send people to Nationals and focusing on individual relays, and I guess through that, just naturally, we won the meet. We didn’t really think this was possible.”



Billerica teammates help Ryan Leslie off the track after winning the Division 3 boys' 1,600 sprint medley relay. DANIELLE PARHIZKARAN/GLOBE STAFF

On the boys' side, Billerica (40 points) edged defending-champion Burlington (32) with victories in three events.

Billerica's banner day started with the quartet of Tyler Fortune, Jacob Peck, Judd Dorival, and Gryffin Bordeau setting school meet records in the 4x50-meter relay (22.23).

"We were not seeing a meet record in the cards," said Billerica coach Shaun Corum. "We knew it was going to be phenomenal, but there was a point where I actually almost didn't run our 'A' team. I almost used some of them in distance events instead — but, of course, happy now we stuck with it."



Burlington runners celebrate winning the first heat of the sprint medley relay. DANIELLE PARHIZKARAN/GLOBE STAFF

With the Indians' self-belief boosted by the early victory, star senior Ryan Leslie took the rest into his own hands. Leslie was handed leads headed into the final leg of both the sprint medley relay (3:37.81) and distance medley relay (10:49.38), and sealed victories in both events with dominant anchor performances.

For Leslie, who is ramping up for outdoor track after his stellar cross-country

campaign, success became more important as the possibility of a team victory came into focus.

“By the [distance medley], I could sense how close the team title was — so it wasn’t about a time, it was just all about winning,” Leslie said. “I didn’t want to go out too fast and blow up, so I just tried to stay as smooth as possible the whole way.”



Isabel Wheeler of Middleboro wins the girls' high jump. DANIELLE PARHIZKARAN/GLOBE STAFF



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