

Solomon's big leap forward

■ St. John the Baptist triple jumper spreads knowledge & success

BY JOSEPH STASZEWSKI
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Even when it wasn't his turn, Amire Solomon walked purposefully to the jumping pit.

His St. John the Baptist teammates would barely have a foot out of the sand when they began seeking his advice and his critique of their performances last Saturday during the Hispanic Games at the Armory.

With eager eyes and a contagious smile, Solomon provided them with a few technique tips and plenty of encouragement.

"He's really taken over on the jumping phases and teaching them the steps," coach Dave Wood said.

Solomon is one of the state's premier triple jumpers and is also long jumping on a regular basis this season. He was quick to mention that he and all of the team's jumpers set personal bests this year.

So does he want any credit? Solomon laughed and said, "I'll take a little bit."

It was not long ago that the senior had very little knowledge of the events. Late in the spring of Solomon's sophomore year, Wood took the former basketball player onto the school track to teach him the jumps' steps. They did a few beginner drills and exercises on the grass before Wood told Solomon to try the triple jump for real.

Solomon jumped 37 feet from the same board as the team's top jumper at the time.

"I never saw such a natural middle step," Wood said. "Most people struggle and they hear 'bump, ba bump, bump.' With him it was 'bump, bump, bump.' That's not supposed to happen like that. I'm supposed to teach [them] this stuff."

Solomon reached 39 feet by the end of his sophomore season. Last winter, Solomon jumped 45-5 at the CHSAA State Qualifying meet with his competitors lining the runway

and the rest of the league cheering him on. He finished 11th at the state indoors meet and 10th outdoors. Solomon is currently the state's second-ranked triple jumper after a leap of 46-7 at the Bishop Loughlin Games in December. Steve Crouse of Colonie (Section II) is ranked first (48-8½). Solomon's season goal is 50.

The 6-6 Solomon is not the first in his family to excel in the triple jump.

His uncle, Leroy Solomon, 51, was a triple jump champion at Taft High School in the Bronx and went on to Houston University and CCNY. He is the assistant track and field coach at Lehman College and worked privately with athletes like Glenn's Gabriela Baizer, last year's state champion in the triple jump.

"I did know he was [a triple jumper], but I didn't know about the event," Solomon said. "I knew he was good at track, but I never really asked what it was. As soon as I found out we started working together."

During the season they train once a week and worked together twice a week over the summer. Lately his uncle has been showing Solomon how to run into the board so it is a continuation of his running and how to better separate the jump's three phases. "I've perfected my hop phase, but I'm still working on my step phase, which is the middle phase," Solomon said. His uncle teases him about wishing they had started earlier.

"I think he would have jumped three to four feet more than what he is jumping right now," Leroy Solomon said. "He showed me that kind of ability."

The rest of the St. John the Baptist jumpers have also benefited from Solomon's time with his uncle. What he learns he passes on to them.

"I tell him to do that because that will make him learn," Leroy Solomon said. "He will know the stuff that stuck with him."

Plenty has.



St. John the Baptist senior Amire Solomon has leaped in the standings to become the state's second-ranked triple jumper.

Runner of the week

Sarah McCurdy, Bay Shore Sr.

McCurdy beat out an impressive field in the 800 meters, including Hempstead's Charlene Lipsey and North Shore's Brianna Welch, at the Hispanic Games last Saturday, winning in 2:12.40. Last night she anchored a victorious 4x400 relay team that qualified for the Millrose Games with a time of 4:02.18 at the Armory.



PHOTO BY ERROL ANDERSON

On Saturday, Bay Shore's Sarah McCurdy won 800 meters in 2:12.40.

Newsday's Top 10 BOYS

1. Farmingdale
2. Baldwin
3. Valley Stream Central
4. Longwood
5. Brentwood
6. Half Hollow Hills West
7. St. John the Baptist
8. Kellenberg
9. Lynbrook
10. Bellport

GIRLS

1. Bay Shore
2. East Meadow
3. Garden City
4. Northport
5. Uniondale
6. St. John the Baptist
7. Shoreham-Wading River
8. Kellenberg
9. Lynbrook
10. Sayville

Best views

Check out our guide to the best places to watch each winter sport.

NOTEBOOK

Liers look to go distance at Armory

BY MARCUS HENRY
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Anyone attending the Archbishop Molloy Stanner games at the Armory on Saturday will be in for a treat, particularly in the distance races. Several of Long Island's top female distance runners, including Suejin Ahn (Ward Melville), Erica Cirino (Cold Spring Harbor), Brooke Johnson (Shoreham-

Wading River) and Kim Moran (Bay Shore) will be participating in the 3,000 meters. The girls mile will have a strong Long Island presence also as Maddie Adams (Garden City) and Christine Johnson (Longwood) figure to have an impact.

Kyle Merber (Hills West) and Giovanni Signoretti (Smithtown West) will lead the way in the boys mile, while Charlie

Donnelly of Chaminade and Brendan Connell from Smithtown East are expected to have a strong showing in the 3,200.

■ Weekend summary

Oceanside senior Debbie Pearsall has been on a nice streak, winning the shot put at two of the last three Nassau crossover meets. On Sunday, she came in first with a toss of 32-7. On Dec. 28, she

won with a toss of 31-3.

Mount Sinai's Janet Mellor had a fine showing at the Suffolk crossover meets on Saturday, winning the 55 meters (7.3) and the 300 (41.7). She also anchored the winning 4x400 relay team. Levittown District's Lucia Montefusco set a meet record in the sophomore invitational mile in 5:15.96 at the Hispanic Games at the Armory on Sunday.