

Published July 04, 2007 08:34 am - By Rob Malsom
Herald Sports Writer

THE KIRILA RACE TEAM of Greenville has really been having a great season and had a stupendous night at Lowe's Motor Speedway in Concord, N.C., on June 26.

TIDBITS: Racing Kirila brothers notch rare double win

By Rob Malsom

Herald Sports Writer

THE KIRILA RACE TEAM of Greenville has really been having a great season and had a stupendous night at Lowe's Motor Speedway in Concord, N.C., on June 26.

Gene Kirila won his first-ever Legends race, a 50-lap national qualifier at Shenandoah Speedway in Virginia on June 16.

Gene was racing against some of the top drivers in the eastern U.S. and the victory qualified him to race at the National Championships in Las Vegas in October.

At Lowe's Motor Speedway, both Gene and his brother Jesse Kirila won races at the Summer Shootout, which will be televised this fall on Speed Channel.

With racers visiting the Charlotte area from all over the country, the Summer Shootout is arguably the toughest racing for the Bandolero and Legends series.

Jesse, who is only 10, drove the No. 55 Bandelaro out front all night. He won his heat race, started on the pole for the feature and then held on for the lead.

Gene, 14, finished 2nd in his heat driving his No. 5 Legends car with a new sponsor — The Incredible Plastics, which is based in Warren, Ohio. In the 20-lap feature, he started in the outside pole position.

Following an hour delay for rain and lightning, Gene found himself 25th in a 26-car field on the second lap following a multi-car spin out due to the rain and wet track.

Gene then settled down and drove a breathtaking race over the final 19 circuits. He carved his way through the field, pulled up behind the leader with 4 laps to go and then took the lead on turn 4 of the final lap.

LMS officials are checking the track's history to see if they are the first brothers to win feature races on the same night.

ã Farrell High volleyball standout Chris Schuster is in Atlanta taking part in the 2007 USA Junior Olympic Boys Volleyball Championships at the Georgia World Congress Center.

Schuster, a District 10 second-team All-Star selection, is teaming with D-10 first-teamers Robert Cierniakoski, Josh Hobson, Joe Smith, Ben Wetsell and Chris Young and second-teamers Ben Wolff and Zach Beatty.

They are part of the 18-1 team out of the Tool City Volleyball Club that is being coached by Cambridge Springs assistant Jack Hobson. There are a total of 51 18 Club teams at the event.

The team started play on July 4 and will wrap up on Saturday.

Wilmington High athletes Chris Burns and Carnie Smith are candidates to be named the New Castle News Athletes of the Year.

Burns, a junior, is up for male athlete of the year. He was a 3-sport standout in football, basketball and track.

On the gridiron, Burns, who has already committed to Pitt, rushed for 1,347 yards and 18 touchdowns and registered 24 tackles and 3 interceptions. The 'Hounds went 14-1, won the D-10 Class AA title and bowed out to Jeannette in the PIAA playoffs.

In basketball, Burns bucketed 193 points (9.1 ppg.). In track, he took part in the sprints, relays and jumping event. He won the D-10 Class AA title in the 200-meter dash (22.93) and the long jump (21-3 1/2) and then took 2nd at the state meet in the long jump (22-0).

The other male candidates are Shenango's Rocco Colavecchia (football); Laurel's Corey Collins (football, basketball, baseball); New Castle's Anthony Harvey (football, basketball, track); Mohawk's Devin Macri (football, baseball); Ellwood City-Lincoln's Nick Nardone (football, basketball, baseball); Shenango's Luke O'Hara (football, basketball) and Mohawk's Matt Wier (basketball, baseball).

Smith, a 2-sport standout in softball and track, is up for female athlete of the year.

Smith set school records in the 100- (12.30) and 200-meter (25.97) dashes. She was 1st in the 100 and 200 and 3rd in the long jump at the D-10 Championships. At the PIAAs, she placed 2nd in the 100 (12.44).

Smith was the leadoff hitter and played center field for the 'Hounds' softball team. She led Lawrence County in hits (47), runs scored (33) and stolen bases (54). She hit .627 (47-for-75) and drove in 17 runs.

Smith, who was named Lawrence County's softball MVP by the New Castle News, led Wilmington to the program's first-ever District 10 title game and PIAA playoff appearance.

The other female candidates are Mohawk's Chelsea Brown (basketball, softball); Neshannock's Kacey Gibson (basketball, cross country, track); Mohawk's Ashlie Hennon (basketball, softball); New Castle's Kara Joseph (basketball, softball, volleyball); Union's Cameron Lewis (track, volleyball); Shenango's Caitlin Lombardo (softball, track, volleyball); New Castle's Jaleesa Sams (basketball, track, volleyball).