

USATF Cross Country National Championship 2008
Mechanicsville, Virginia
San Diego SoCal RoadRunners win four team titles!!!

Conditions were right for the **San Diego SoCal RoadRunners** at the USA Track & Field Junior Olympics Cross Country National Championships held in Mechanicsville, Virginia. The **San Diego SoCal RoadRunners**, a local youth cross country and track & field team represented the **San Diego-Imperial Association** and **Region 15** at the National Championships. Unlike the freezing temperatures experienced in Junior Olympics National events of previous years, temperatures on Saturday, December 13, 2008, seemed almost balmy in comparison as they hovered in the mid 40's with light winds.

Nearly 2000 youth athletes from around the country aged 8 to 18 battled against each other over the challenging course in Pole Green Park, a beautiful 232 acre wooded area in **Hanover County, Virginia**. These talented young runners were all vying for the boy's and girl's USA Track and Field (USATF) National Team Champion titles in 5 age divisions, namely, Bantam (10 and under) racing just under 3 kilometers, Midget (11-12) racing 3 km, Youth (13-14) racing 4 km, Intermediate (15-16) racing 5 km and Young Men/Women (17-18) also racing 5 km. At the end of the day, the **San Diego SoCal RoadRunners** captured **4 National titles** in **3 of these 5 divisions with the Bantam Boys, Bantam Girls, Midget Girls and Youth Girls** teams all winning the national crown. For the Midget Girls team, it was their 3rd straight National Championship title; however this year's win was a bit of a surprise and especially significant, since only two of the team members were returning "veteran" runners from last year. "All in all, this was a huge success for all our kids", said RoadRunners Head Coach, Mike Mena, of the results. "We are so happy for all of them."

This year's National Champions were:

Bantam Girls - Katherine Morales, Sarah Abrahamson, Hazel Groff, Catherine Garritson, Eva Bilange, Delaney Toth, Gabrielle Burns and Elizabeth Spiering.

Bantam Boys - Matthew Spiering, Spencer Dodds, Evan LeDesma, Burak Tufekci, Sam Hodges, Jarrod Garritson, Steven Abrahamson, and Jacob Aries.

Midget Girls - Anne Charles, Shelby Garritson, Emma Abrahamson, Helen Lopez, Halie Whitley, Quincey Hettinger, and Rachel Heisner.

Youth Girls - Kelly Lawson, Sarah Heisner, Catie LeDesma, Allison Meyers, Mariah Slack, Ellie Abrahamson, Andie LeDesma, and Morgan Mahlock.

Also running for the club in the Jr. Olympics were Derrick LeDesma, Frank Dejong, Kevin Burnard, Rebekah Bosler, Erin Green, Rachel Bosler, Bailie LeDesma, Ruben Millan, Lindsay Ward, John Garritson, Christopher Spiering and Scott Gisel (RBV).



Midget Girls Race

In addition to winning 4 team titles, sixteen members of the club earned **All-America honors** by finishing in the top 25 in their respective divisions: Katherine Morales (5th) and Sarah Abrahamson (15th), Bantam Girls; Matthew Spiering (3rd), Spencer Dodds (8th), and Evan LeDesma (19th), Bantam Boys; Anne Charles (2nd), Shelby Garritson (7th), and Emma Abrahamson (11th), Midget Girls; Ruben Millan (18th) and Christopher Spiering (25th), Midget Boys; Kelly Lawson (13th), Sarah Heisner (21st), and Catie LeDesma (23rd), Youth Girls; Scott Gisel (7th), Youth Boys; Maeghan Garritson (10th), Intermediate Girls; and Richard Garritson (4th) Young Men's division.

San Diego SoCal RoadRunners was founded by **Head Coach Mike Mena** in 1994. Over the years, the club has trained and mentored many youth athletes who have gone on to continued success in high school. This was very evident in this year's 2008 CIF finals as RoadRunner Alumni and former USATF All Americans, Chris Brewer, Brian Baker, Shanna St. Laurent, Collin Jarvis, Billy West, Jamie West (Rancho Buena Vista), Tiffany Duffy (Escondido), Erin Gillingham, Andrew Ward (Torrey Pines), Graham Hettinger (Vista), Sallie Privett (Coronado), Julia Yang (West View), Ana Mohammed-Zade (Rancho Bernardo), and Alex Fleischhacker (La Jolla Country Day) all advanced to the CIF State Championship Cross Country Meet in Fresno, CA.

If you would like more information regarding the San Diego SoCal RoadRunners Youth Running club, please visit their website at www.scr-rd.com.



SoCal RoadRunners at the National JO XC Championships