

**Power Memorial Academy
1974 Four Mile Relay**

On Tuesday, May 21st 1974, after dismissal from classes, Power Memorial Academy's Varsity Track coach, Brother John Bielen, drove his team in the school van over the George Washington Bridge. They were competing at the Jersey Relays, held at the St. Joseph's High School track in the small town of Metuchen. Unlike the Penn Relays, this was a crowd of dozens, not thousands. There were no photographers and no special area for news reporters to watch the meet, type stories or phone information to awaiting editors hoping to make the paper's late edition. This crowd consisted primarily of the competing athletes, their coaches, and their stopwatches. Perhaps a handful of parents and other onlookers dotted the stands watching as events took place.

Power Memorial was entered in the Four Mile Relay. They believed they had a good chance of winning. The Power quartet Arthur Stolba, Gerry Centrowitz, Maurice Weaver, and Brian Johnston had no thoughts about school records or records of any other type. Br. Bielen informed them of the meet the week before. There were no discussions with or among the athletes about target times. No pressure or expectations. Just run, you have a good chance to win. Now while Br. Bielen did not share thoughts of records with his athletes, in retrospect, it seems reasonable to think he believed a school record was within reach based on their previous individual performances. Who knows?

School records were hard to come by at Power, where people named Duchini, O'Brien, Colon, Centrowitz, Marsh, Barbary, and Lovett set a high bar. But that day in May 1974, the boy's main concern was whether Mark Belger and his Mephram teammates would be racing against them. There was an expected rematch between the two teams who provided a thrilling finish to the Distance Medley at the Penn Relays a few weeks before. The Power foursome scanned the track but there was no sign of the Mephram Pirates. It turned out the Long Islanders did not make the trip because the premier HS middle distance runner in the nation, Mark Belger, twisted an ankle the previous Saturday playing touch football at a track team picnic.

With the race underway, Power's first two legs, Arthur Stolba (4:25.8) and Gerry Centrowitz (4:21.7) opened a sizeable lead on the field. At this point, the race's outcome was not in doubt. With its two best milers still to come, Power Memorial would win. The question was how fast they would run. Maurice Weaver completed his four laps in 4:16.9 and the Penn Relays come-from-behind hero, Brian Johnston anchored in a strong 4:15.2.

When Brian crossed the finish line first, the boys were elated with their victory in a time of 17:19.6, ten seconds ahead of the second-place team. Shortly after the race, Marc Bloom, then editor of the NY State Scholastic Track & Field Annual approached. He told them, "Congratulations boys, you broke the NY State Four Mile Relay Record." The boys were stunned. They never thought about breaking the state record. Their goal was to win. Yet here they were, winners of the race and newly minted NY State record-holders. Their time was the 1974 US #1, earning their team Track & Field News All-American status, and it was an all-time US #5!

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While a few high school teams had run faster before them and a small bunch have gone faster since, their performance at the 1974 Jersey Relays has performed well against another time measurement tool: the calendar.

- In the spring of 2000, the British Milers Club (who maintain records about these kinds of things) had them ranked #10 on the World Junior Men's all-time list.
- In November 2005, Track and Field News listed them at #8 on the US High School all-time list.
- In April of 2020 Power Memorial's 17:19.6 was still inside the all-time US top 20, ranked at #18.
- All records are made to be broken. Power's New York State Four Mile Relay record stood for 32 years. In 2006 Fayetteville-Manlius ran 17:18.33 at the Nike Outdoor Nationals in Greensboro, NC to set the next state standard. Northport (LI) owns the current record, running 17:06.92 at the 2014 Brooks PR Invitational in Seattle, WA.

Addendum:

- Power Memorial set the NY State Four Mile Relay record three separate times: 1966, 1970 and 1974. The school narrowly missed setting the record four times. In November 1964, a Power relay anchored by Kevin O'Brien in 4:22.1 (which at the time was the fastest mile split in the meet's history) missed the state record by a mere five-tenths (.5) of a second at the Molloy Invitational, settling for a meet record of 18:16.9.
- The Jersey Relays produced fast times. Six teams broke into the all-time Four Mile Relay top 20 in 1974. That same day, Monmouth Regional ran an all-time top ten in the Sprint Medley (3:27.3) and went 3:17.4 in the mile relay. In the Two-Mile Relay, South Toms River ran 7:46.6 followed by Bergen Catholic 7:48.8 and Wingate (Brooklyn) 7:50.2
- At the 1973 Jersey Relays, Paramus Catholic ran 17:12.6 (4x1 Mile) for a US #1 and an all-time US (and NJ) #2. They were just a few tenths off the National Record set by Essex Catholic in 1966. Haddon Township finished second in 17:20.1 to set the South Jersey record. Archbishop Molloy finished third in 17:24.8 setting the New York State record Power Memorial would eclipse the following year.
- Power's 1974 NY State record was nearly short lived. Only two years later, at the 1976 Jersey Relays, Susan Wagner High School (SI) ran 17:21.6, chased by Archbishop Molloy 17:22.8. That same year South Eugene (OR) ran 17:06.6 to earn the US#1 slot, breaking their own national record (17:11.5) set in 1975.
- The current national high school record is 16:29.31 by Newbury Park (CA). That record will be broken someday too.

New York State High School Boys 4 x 1 Mile Relay Record Progression

St, Francis Prep	18:19.7	Relay Meet (Randall's Island)	06/08/1960
Sal Crispi (4:38.2), Tom Welling (4:38.8), Al Wittine (4:26.5), Joe Salerno (4:36.2)			
1960 US #2	All-Time #6	Coach Jim McHugh	
Holy Cross	18:16.4	Molloy Relay Carnival (or St. Francis Prep Relays)	04/08/1961
Richard Duggan(4:33.6), John Douglas (4:40.0), Richard Fennelly (4:33.6), Marty Ferko (4:29.2)			
1961 US #5	All-Time #7	Coach: Brother Walter Foley	
Power Memorial	18:04.6	Molloy Invitational (St. John's University)	11/15/1966
Mario Campo (4:27.0), Joe Barbary (4:37.5), Chancy Marsh (4:38.0), Rich Stewart (4:22.1)			
1966 US #	All-Time #	Coach: John Mulligan	
Archbishop Stepinac	18:02.6	St. Joseph's Regional Relays (Montvale, NJ)	1968
Jim Lonergan (4:42.6), Jim Donohue (4:39.0), Jim Schindler (4:19.6), Bob Curran (4:21.4)			
1968 US #5	All Time #NR	Coach: Joe Krebs	
Power Memorial	17:45.6	CHSAA Coaches Relays (St. John's University)	06/03/1970
Ed Walsh, Paul Barbary, Ray Naudain, Tony Colon			
1970 US #2	All Time #8	Coach: Brother John G. Bielen	
Archbishop Molloy	17:24.8	Jersey Relays (St. Joe's Metuchen)	05/22/1973
Gary Conroy (4:23.5), Marc Ogden (4:18.7), Matt Puletz (4:26.1), Tom Hummel (4:16.5)			
1973 US #4	All Time #7	Coach: Tony Perrone	
Power Memorial	17:19.6	Jersey Relays (St. Joe's Metuchen)	05/21/1974
Arthur Stolba (4:25.8), Gerry Centrowitz (4:21.7), Maurice Weaver (4:16.9), Brian Johnston (4:15.2)			
1974 US #1	All-Time #5	Coach: Brother John G. Bielen	
Fayetteville-Manlius	17:18.33	NIKE Outdoor Nationals (Greensboro, NC)	06/17/2006
Geoff King (4:23.0), John Heron (4:19.4), Owen Kimple (4:16.9), Tommy Gruenewald (4:19.0)			
2006 US #	All-Time #	Coach:	
Northport	17:06.92	Brooks PR Invitational (Seattle, WA)	06/21/2014
Justin Leopold (4:24.6), Tim McGowan (4:14.7), Jack McGowan (4:18.7), Mike Brannigan (4:08.9)			
All Splits based on video replay + e-mail from a spectator at the meet			
2014 US #1	All-Time #2	Coach:	

MEET RESULTS CONTINUED....

NEW JERSEY RELAYS, METUCHEN, NJ, MAY 21- On what Harry Gaffney describes as the "Fastest track around" a state record was broken and numerous other fast times turned in.

Gaffney, a Xaverian senior, showed what a fast track can do. He anchored his mile relay to second place in an unbelievable 47.9! The team of James Rallis(51.2), Joe Duncan(50.3) Bob Murach(48.9) and Gaffney combined to a 3:18.3 clocking, the best in the CHSAA this year.

Power Memorial was not even the favored team in the 4-mile relay, never mind being considered to get the state record in the event. Yet, the foursome of Arthur Stolba(4:25.8) Gerry Centrowitz(4:21.7), Maurice Weaver(4:16.9) and Brian Johnston(4:15.2) put it all together on this night to run away from the field on the second leg. When Johnston hit the tape, the watches read 17:19.6, which is under Molloy's state record set in this meet last year. This race had great depth- seven teams finished under 17:40.0!!! Molloy, anchored by Mark Ogden, and Loughlin, anchored by Tim Behr, placed 6th and 7th respectively. RESULTS: SPRINT MEDLEY REL

1. Monmouth 3:27.3; 4. Farrell-(Oehm; Capano; McBride; Daly 1:53.5)-3:32.3
 4-MR-1. Power 17:19.6 (state record, old record 17:24.8 by Molloy in 1973); 2. Roselle Cath 17:29.1; 3. Bergen Cath 17:34.4; 4. Msgr Bonner 17:39.3..6.
 Molloy-(Greishaber 4:23.8; Rurrill 4:29.6; Conroy 4:25.9; Ogden 4:20.3)-17:39.6; 7. Loughlin-(Ostolazaga 4:29.3; Chris DiVetta 4:28; Al Paris 4:24.1; Behr 4:18.6)-17:39.9.....

880R-1. Clinton 1:27.5..... HEATS-Power (Everett, Rivera, Feliciano, Little)-1:30.7; Xaverian-(Gaffney, Grinnage, DeFonzo, Galetta 21.2)-1:30.7.....

MILE REL-1. Monmouth 3:17.4; 2. Xaverian 3:18.3;..... 480 SHR-1. Rahway 59.3.. HEATS- Xaverian 62.7; Molloy 64.8..... SHOT-2. Navetta, Molloy 55-2 3/4//.8. Stuart, Molloy 53-10.....

HJ-1. Richardson, Columbus 6-6; 2. Schilling, Molloy 6-6.... 2-MR-1. Toms River South 7:46.6; 2. Bergen Cath, 7:48.3; 3. Wingate 7:50.1.....

1974 Outdoor List

FOUR MILE RELAY

- 17:19.6 Power Memorial, NYC, NY
(Stolba, Centrowitz, Weaver, Johnston)
- 17:29.2 St Joseph, Metuchen, NJ
- 17:30.6 Lees Summit, Mo
(Dennison, Housley, Peniston, Hawthorne)
- 17:31.2 South, Eugene, Ore
(Martin, Gustafson, Surface, Dougherty)
- 17:34.4 Catholic, Roselle, NJ
(James, Chobin, Klacik, Conlin)
- 17:36.4 Bergen Catholic, Oradell, NJ
- 17:39.4 Monsignor Bonner, Drexel Hill, Pa
(Maylish, Genther, Nicholson, Weber)
- 17:39.6 Archbishop Molloy, Jamaica, NY
(Grieshaber, Averill, Ogden, Conroy)

HIGH SCHOOL BOY'S ALL-TIME TOP 10s

(as of November 15, 2005)

Symbols: +=converted mark; i=indoor mark; (A)=mark made at altitude over 1000m (affected events only); y=mark made at yard distance.

Classes: **=soph; *=junior; all others are seniors (***) are frosh, but there are none on this list).

For far deeper lists, split into indoor and outdoor, and inclusive of more events, buy a copy of High School Track from [Jack Shepard](#).

4 x MILE

17:06.6	South, Eugene, Oregon	76
17:10.7+	McCullough, The Woodlands, Texas	86
17:11.7	South, Eugene, Oregon	75
17:12.2	Essex Catholic, Newark, New Jersey	66
17:12.6	Paramus Catholic, Paramus, New Jersey	73
17:13.2	Lompoc, California	73
17:15.0	Clairemont, San Diego, California	71
17:19.6	Power Memorial, NYC, New York	74
17:20.0	Haddon Township, Westmont, New Jersey	73
17:20.8+	South, Eugene, Oregon	82



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Men's Junior 4 x 1 Mile

16:56.8	British Milers' Club (UK)	5	BMC	Oxford	10 Jul 93	(Justin Swift-Smith 4:09.1, Eddie King 4:13.5, Simon Saxby 4:13.4, Daniel Furnidge 4:20.8)
17:06.6	South Eugene HS, Eugene, Ore. (US)			Eugene, Ore.	7 May 76	(Dirk Lakeman 4:16.9, Chris Nielsen 4:19.7, Bill McChesney 4:11.8, John Gustafson 4:18.2)
17:10.7	McCullough HS, The Woodlands, Tex. (US)	1	Woodlands, Tex.	Tex.	1 Mar 86	(Danny Green 4:22.5m, Scott Cramer 4:18.9m, Shawn Barnes 4:14.7m, Eric Henry 4:08.6m)
17:11.7	South Eugene HS, Eugene, OR (US)	1	Axeman R	Eugene, Ore	9 May 75	(John Gustafson 4:20.5, Bill McChesney 4:17.6, Steve McChesney 4:19.4, Chris Nielsen 4:14.6)
17:12.2	Essex Catholic HS, Newark, NH (US)	1		Highland Park, NJ	Jun 66	(Jim McLoughlin 4:23.9, Art Martin 4:18.0, Fred Lane 4:14.8, Marty Liquori 4:15.5)
17:12.6	Catholic HS, Paramus, NJ (US)	1		Elizabeth, NJ	22 May 73	(___ Quinn 4:24.2, ___ McDermott 4:17.9, ___ Carney 4:15.6, Tom Coheeney 4:14.9)
17:13.2	Lompoc (California) HS (US)	1	Mt. SAC	Walnut	27 Apr 73	(Jim Schankel ___, ___ Fabing ___, ___ Gilmore 4:14.2, Terry Williams ___)
17:13.9	British Milers' Club (UK)	1	BMC	Watford	11 Jun 97	(Louis Wells 4:19.1, Paul Fisher 4:20.6, James Thie 4:13.9, Neil Speaight 4:20.3)
17:15.0	Clairemont HS, San Diego, Ca (US)				9 Jun 71	
17:19.6	Power Memorial HS, New York, NY (US)	1	Jersey	Rel	May 74	(___ Stolba ___, ___ Centrowitz ___, ___ Weaver ___, ___ Johnston ___)



All-Time U.S. 4-Mile Relay List

📅 April 27, 2020 👤 sjtcaweb

17:04.55 ... Ogden (Utah), 2016
17:04.61 ... Great Oak (Calif.), 2016
17:06.6 ... South Eugene (Ore.), 1976
17:06.92 ... Northport (N.Y.), 2014
17:10.7 ... McCullough (Texas), 1986
17:11.7 ... South Eugene (Ore.), 1975
17:12.2 ... Essex Catholic (N.J.), 1966
17:12.6 ... Paramus Catholic (N.J.), 1973
17:13.2 ... Lompoc (Calif.), 1973
17:15.0 ... Claremont (Calif.), 1971
17:16.12 ... Highland Milford (Mich.), 2013
17:17.45 ... Stillwater (Minn.), 2013
17:18.3 ... Fayetteville-Manlius (N.Y.), 2006
17:18.81 ... Nathan Hale (Wash.), 2014
17:19.03 ... Gig Harbor (Wash.), 2014
17:19.3 ... Royal (Calif.), 2006
17:19.42 ... Collegiate (N.Y.), 2007
17:19.6 ... Power Memorial (N.Y.), 1974
17:19.69 ... West Windsor-Plainsboro North (N.J.), 2018
17:20.14 ... Christian Brothers Academy (N.J.), 2019
17:20.1 ... Haddon Township (N.J.), 1973
17:20.21 ... Haddonfield (N.J.), 2010

<https://sjtrackblog.com/2020/04/27/how-haddon-townships-south-jersey-four-mile-relay-record-has-stood-for-47-years-and-the-full-s-j-4xmile-top-50/>

New Jersey Relays

May 21, 1974

880 Relay

trials

Everett 22.8

Rivera 23.7

Feliciano 22.9

Little 21.3

total: 1:30.7

Finals: Rivera 23.3

DNF

4 Mile Relay

1st Place- State Record- school record

Stolba 64, 2:12, 3:19, 4:25.8

Centrowitz 61, 2:07.5, 3:15, 4:21.7

Weaver 61, 2:07.5, 3:12.5, 4:16.9

Johnston 59.5, 2:04.5, 3:11.5, 4:15.2

17:19.6

Farks Department Meet

May 21, 1974

440 Relay

Hewitt 12.2

Cramus 11.6

Flores 11.8

Johnson 11.4

total: 47.0

2 Mile Relay

Jennings- 60.2, 2:04.8

M. Ryan 59.2, 2:04.0

Dobrolski 69.2, 2:02.2

Fiorentino 63.3, 2:07.7

8:17.9

Suffolk Meet

May 28, 1974

Distance Medley

3rd Place

Johnston 60.4

2:05.5

3:10.2

Maseda 52.0

Centrowitz 58.0

2:00.0

Weaver --

2:06.6

3:13.3

4:17.0

total: 10:19.2

1 Mile Relay

5th Pl.

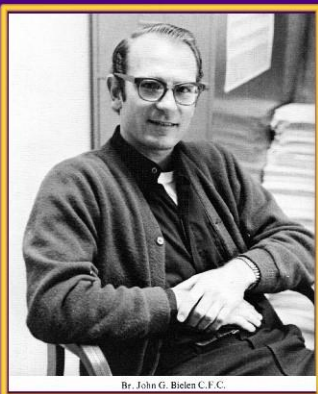
Haden 53.5

Little 49.7

Feliciano 51.8

Rivera 50.8

total: 3:25.8



POWER MEMORIAL ACADEMY

New York State Record

4 Mile Relay 17:19.6

May 21, 1974

Track & Field News

1974 US # 1

All-Time US # 5

Bible of the Sport



Arthur Stolba

4:25.8



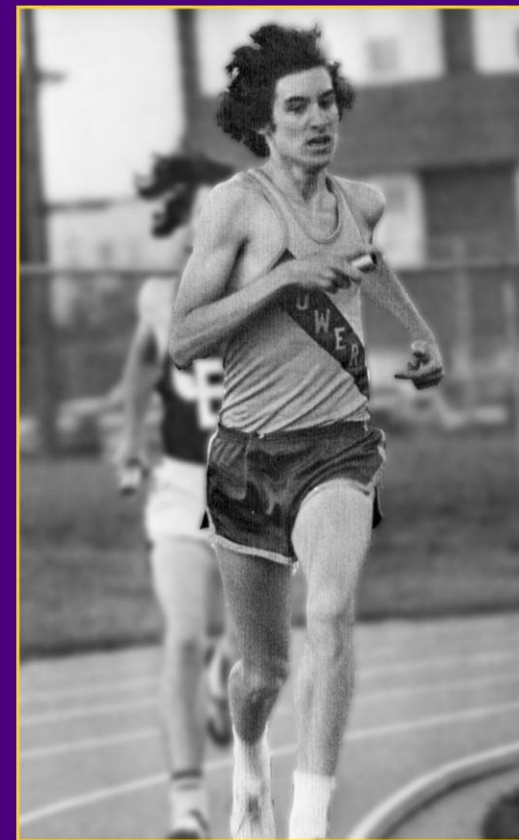
Gerry Centrowitz

4:21.7



Maurice Weaver

4:16.9



Brian Johnston

4:15.2