

# New rule puts restrictions on athletes from Michigan

By Jon Spencer  
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**MANSFIELD** — Conspicuous by their absences during Friday's action in the 59th Mehock Relays were Galloway Westland's Darrell Hughes, the pre-meet favorite in the 3,200 meter run, and Remus (Mich.) Chippewa Hill's Bob Bailey, the defending pole vault champion.

Hughes' absence was a mystery, but Bailey was a late scratch because of a new rule in Michigan prohibiting schools from traveling more than 300 road miles for athletic competition or competing against teams that have traveled more than 300 road miles.

The Mehock limits entries to teams within 300 air miles of Mansfield. Canada and six states, including Michigan, are represented in this year's meet.

Relays director Doug Castle believes that some 20 to 25 remote Michigan schools that might normally have been here were forced to scratch because of the ruling.

"Michigan coaches will have to deal with the issue," said Castle. "Our meet will go on with or without them.

"My understanding from talking to some of the Michigan coaches is that (the Michigan high school athletic association) is trying to put the squeeze on private schools traveling to New York, Florida and places like that to play in holiday basketball tournaments.

"When Chippewa Hills called to back out, the coach said he didn't know how the rule would be interpreted and he feared ineligibility for his

team. Pulling out was the logical thing to do."

First-day frontrunner Toronto St. Michael's scored 24 points on the strength of runner-up performances in three relay events.

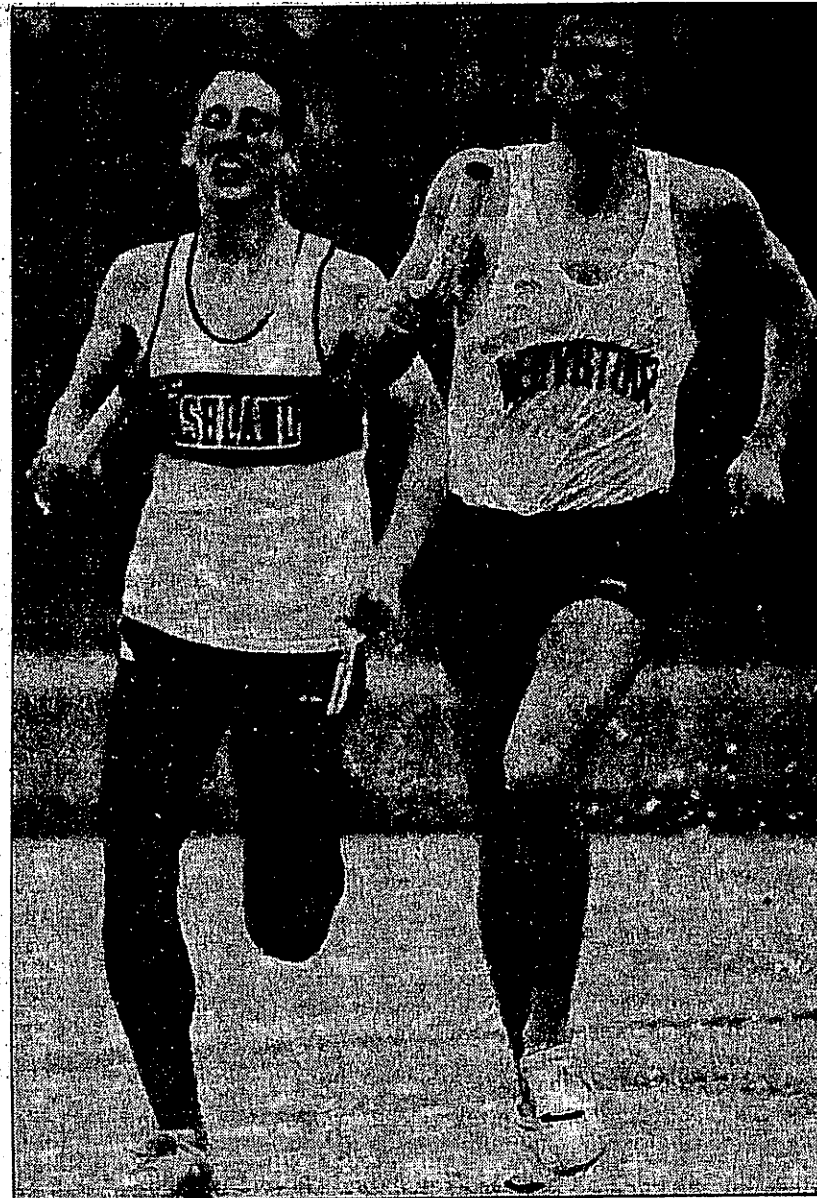
Even though St. Michael's shaved nearly three seconds off its winning time in last year's 4 x 800 relay, it had to settle for second place (8:02.0) yesterday behind Toronto Neil McNeil's winning quartet of Cliff Keane-Lettman, Dean Manning, Gary Fitzpatrick and Kevin Christiani (7:53.8).

St. Michael's also played the bridesmaid in the medley relay (800-200-400-1,600), losing to Chilli-cothe's Nathan Seeratz, Charlie Coppel, Jason Brown and Eric Puttman (7:44.1), and in the 4 x 1,600 relay, falling to Lancaster's Eric Clumb, Gary Dille, Todd Walker and B.J. Holland (18:44.8).

Ashland, the defending champion in the 4 x 1600 meter relay, finished seventh this time around. Twin brothers Aaron and Aric Fick were the only holdovers from last year's winning unit.

Defending champ Jeff Johnson of Cleveland Heights hurt an ankle and settled for fifth in the triple jump, with Pickering's Sam Davis (45-1¾) and Jason McKenzie (43-7½) taking first and second, respectively.

**GIRLS RELAYS** — Friday's action got underway with a pair of local girls races. Winning the 4 x 100 meter relay in 51 seconds was the Ashland foursome of Megan Snyder, Dina Smith, Jen Goschinski and Jan Hoverstock. Capturing the 4 x 800 relay in 10:17.5 was Mansfield Senior's Latoya Williams, Holly Robinson, Julie Van Harlingen and Suzanna Platner.



Ashland's Aaron Fick (left) runs the final leg of the 4 x 1,600 relay during Friday's Mehock Relays. (Photo by Brian Anderson)