

**CHEROKEE'S CONOR JACOB, ROBERT POPLAU, NICK KUENKEL, PATRICK DITMARS
WIN MEET OF CHAMPIONS 4-BY-8 WITH #3 TIME IN SOUTH JERSEY HISTORY!!!!!!!**

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Senior **Conor Jacob**, juniors **Nick Kuenkel** and **Robert Poplau** and senior **Patrick Ditmars** finished the season with a monster 4-by-800 performance at the 54th annual Meet of Champions Thursday at Franklin Township.

Cherokee ran the 3rd-fastest time in South Jersey history, 2nd-fastest time in meet history and 17th-fastest time in state history and won the MoC 3,200-meter relay for the second year in a row. [Correction: actually the 2nd fastest time in South Jersey history, with Willingboro at Penn Relays in 1983 being the fastest.]

The Chiefs ran 7:41.17 and finished 15 meters ahead of Toms River North, which was 2nd in 7:43.17 – the 5th-fastest time in meet history and an Ocean County record.

Jacob led off in 1:55.74 and gave Cherokee a slim lead over Toms River North at the first handoff. Kuenkel extended the lead with a 1:55.70 split, Poplau held the lead in what was now a two-team race with a 1:55.91 split and Ditmars ran away from North with a 1:53.82 anchor leg.

Toms River North was the top seed with 7:49.61 at sectionals, but Cherokee ran 7:51.85 without Ditmars. Cherokee won the MOC last year in 7:54.34 with the same four runners.

The only faster time in meet history was recorded by River Dell, which ran 7:40.57 in 2016 with the Daly twins, William and Colin, who both went on to run for Notre Dame.

Cherokee is the first school to win consecutive Meet of Champions 4-by-8's since the race was added to the meet in 2010.

The only faster time[s] in South Jersey history [are Old Bridge's 7:40.43 at 2017 Greensboro Nationals] [Correction: Old Bridge is not in SJ] is Willingboro's 7:40.98 at the 1983 Penn Relays.

The previous fastest 4-by-8 by a South Jersey school at the Meet of Champions was 7:43.57 by Haddonfield's Austin Stoner, Jack Wood, Greg Pelose and Chris Goings.

Here's a look at the All-Time Meet of Champions Top-10:

7:40.57 ... River Dell], 2016
7:41.17 ... Cherokee, 2023

7:42.34 ... Old Bridge 2015
7:42.59 ... Morris Hills], 2016
7:43.17 ... Toms River North
7:43.46 ... River Dell], 2015
7:42.95 ... Bergen Catholic], 2014
7:43.57 ... Haddonfield, 2015
7:44.09 ... Ridgewood], 2014
7:44.46 ... Ridge, 2019

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And here's the All-Time New Jersey Top-20:

7:31.60 ... Morris Hills, 2009
7:32.00 ... Ridge, 2022
7:34.67 ... Christian Brothers, 2012
7:35.87 ... St. Benedict's, 2018
7:38.48 ... Ridge, 2019
7:39.06 ... Ridge, 2021
7:39.32 ... Pope John XXIII, 2012
7:39.36 ... Old Bridge, 2015
7:39.54 ... Colts Neck, 2005
7:39.57 ... Ridgewood, 2014
7:39.5h ... Trenton, 1978
7:40.43 ... Egg Harbor Twp., 2017
7:40.57 ... River Dell, 2016
7:40.71 ... Pleasantville, 2013
7:40.99 ... Willingboro, 1983
7:41.13 ... St. Benedict's, 2019
7:41.17 ... Cherokee, 2023
7:41.27 ... Lawrenceville School, 2010
7:41.84 ... Hopewell Valley, 2018
7:42.59 ... Union Catholic, 2010