

Local athletes help track club win a national championship

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Members of the Potomac Valley Track Club, led by Craig Chasse (middle front row) gather after winning a national championship meet. | (Photo by Hannah Phillips/Potomac Valley Track Club)

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A number of local athletes helped the Potomac Valley Track Club (PVTC) win the USA Track & Field national indoor masters championship meet, based on combined scores from men's and women's participants.

The club, consisting of athletes throughout the metro area, won with a 500.5 point total in a four-day competition in Chicago, which included 123 teams and 1,176 athletes. The national crown was the club's fifth in 12 years.

In the men's competition, PVTC finished second in the team standings and the PVTC women were third.

The squad was led by organizer and athlete Craig Chasse, who has been the longtime head coach of the Madison High School cross country and track and field teams.

Club members were chanting "dynasty" as the results were being announced during the awards ceremony.

Individual trophies were awarded to the top three finishers in each event.

Potomac Valley participants earned 21 individual first-place gold medals, and four relay teams finished first.

Gold medal winners were led by Arlington's Penelope Inges in weight throws. Other winners were Inocencio Cantu, Tami Graf, Rose Green, Carlton Marshall, Ken Moss, Robert Paulen, Curtis Smith Jr., Teran Wakefield and Robert Walde Sr.

The four winning relays were Mary Lowe Mayhugh, Hannah Phillips, Robin Moon and Mary Gucinski in a women's 4x400-meters race; Chasse, James Samiec, Patrick McGinley and Art Klein in a men's 4x400; Chasse, Scott Werber, Albert Arcand and Bob Weiner in a 4x800; and Chasse, Samiec, Werber and Curtis Smith in a 4x200.

Club members praised Chasse for organizing the lineups to earn maximum points.

"We give athletes of all abilities the opportunity to be part of a national championship by mixing ages in relays to maximize points and encourage people to train for new events," Chasse said.

Meet officials said the competition was the most highly competed and closest in recent memory, with the team results undecided until the final event.

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