

# BREAKOUT PERFORMERS

BY MIKE ANDERSON

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All rankings are per MileSplit, as of Jan. 12. Names listed in alphabetical order.

## VALENTINA DeVIVO

Plainview-Old Bethpage JFK, Sr.

She is trending upward in the weight throw after topping out at 39 feet, 6  $\frac{1}{4}$  inches last indoor season. This winter, she has already thrown the weight 42-9, which ranks 16th in New York State and third on Long Island.

## OLIVIA DiGAETANO

Connetquot, Sr.

The Temple commit has built off a strong All-Long Island cross country season. She ran the 3,000 meters in 9 minutes, 57.48 seconds last outdoor season, but she has already cut down on that by over eight seconds. Her 9:49.23 from The Armory Hispanic Games ranks second in the state.



Connetquot's Olivia DiGaetano has cut her time down eight seconds.

## CIARA HUNTE

North Babylon, Jr.

She showed promise as a sophomore, throwing 33-11  $\frac{1}{4}$  in the shot put last indoor season. However, she never reached 33 feet the rest of the winter and only surpassed 30 feet once in the outdoor season. Now, she is back on her game, as she threw 34-10  $\frac{1}{2}$  at the Molloy Stanner Games on Jan. 11 to earn New York's No. 16 ranking.

## MADDIE LAEZZA

Eastport-South Manor, Jr.

After breaking out in the fall to become Newsday's Long Island Runner of the Year in cross country, she is once again breaking out as a distance runner in track and field. She was previously a sprinter and never ran anything over 600 meters. However, her cross country season has led to a full-on conversion to distance runner. Her first-ever attempt at the 1,000 registered a 2:56.44, which ranks eighth in New York.

## ARIANA MADEIRA

Friends Academy, Fr.

She is another runner building off a fall that earned a Newsday All-Long Island cross country selection, as she was a member of the second team. After running the 600



Hills West's Abigail Oyeleye is fourth on L.I. in the triple jump.

meters in 1:38.13 last indoor season, she has become an elite runner in the event. She ran 1:35.3 on Jan. 9 to claim the state's No. 7 ranking.

## ABIGAIL OYELEYE

Half Hollow Hills West, Soph.

She flew 35-4 in the triple jump as a freshman during the spring season. She has gained another foot and half-inch this winter, having flown 36-4  $\frac{1}{2}$  on Jan. 4. That distance ranks 18th in the state and fourth on Long Island. She has formed an elite duo with junior Jasmin Joseph, whose 38-3 jump is tied for third in New York

and first on Long Island.

## VICTORIA PARIS

Longwood, Sr.

It may seem counterintuitive to say that a Newsday All-Long Island track and field selection is breaking out, but that is absolutely the case from an indoor track perspective. After all, it was in the outdoor events where she thrived. Indoors, she tried the 55 hurdles just once and ran 9.61, which ranked 216th in the state. This winter, she looks more like the spring version of herself, as her 8.12 in the 55 hurdles is the second-best time in the state.



Savannah Stephenson has excelled in her Baldwin indoor track debut.



Connetquot's Luna Valencia has added more than 4 feet to her hurl.

## NATALIE RIVERA

East Meadow, Sr.

Long Island is a hotbed for the nation's best racewalkers. She finished the 1,500 racewalk in 7:23.55 on Dec. 30 at the North Shore Invitational, which ranks second in the country, only trailing Port Washington senior Samantha Benson-Tyler. The time is 10.7 seconds faster than her previous personal-record of 7:34.25 from last spring.

## SAVANNAH STEPHENSON

Baldwin, Jr.

She has flourished in her first varsity season of indoor track after only running for her club

team last indoor season. As a club runner last year, she ran a 7.68 seconds in the 55 meter dash. Now as a varsity runner for Baldwin, she is down to 7.14, which ranks fifth in the state.

## LUNA VALENCIA

Connetquot, Sr.

Perhaps the most improved thrower on Long Island, she threw the shot put 34-7  $\frac{1}{2}$  on Dec. 29 after topping out at 30-5  $\frac{1}{2}$  last year across both seasons. The four-foot, two-inch improvement this early in the season has her ranked 18th in New York and third on Long Island in the shot put.