

MycentralJersey.com (Courier News) Track: Plainfield sprinters excel at sectionals

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BERNARDS—One has long legs and a blazing finish. The other is shorter with a super explosive start. If you could combine them together?

“Oh, man,” said Plainfield track coach Jason Edwards with a laugh. “I’ll be an Olympic coach.”

The two seniors did just fine on their own merit. Friday, Plainfield’s Alistar Aaron and Jason Cission Jr. finished first and second in the 100-meter dash at the North II Group IV NJSIAA sectional at Ridge High School. The two-day meet, which includes the North II Group III section, concludes today. The top six finishers in each event advance to next week’s group championships.

Plainfield has a long tradition of super sprinters. Edwards, who’s the nephew of former longtime Cardinals coach Ron Upperman, had success in the late 1990s at the school. Now, he’s leading the latest generation, which also includes junior Nahseem Woodward who placed seventh Friday.

Both runners had a PR last week at the Union County championships in winning gold and silver in the same order. Friday on a hot day, their times were slower—Aaron won in 10.96 and Cission took second in 11.05.

“The good thing about them is they compete at practice and they compete at the meets,” Edwards said. “And that’s good to have some fast people next to you every day.”

During a practice earlier in the week, Edwards had them race beginning with different start positions such as laying on their chest and popping up, or on their back and turning over. It was meant to keep things fun and have them compete. Even before the race, they had some friendly jostling.

“Even some of the teams asked us right here when we were lining up, ‘Why are you guys trash talking to each other?’” Cission said. “It’s

not so much that we're bullying each other. It's we're pushing each other. You know, making jokes. Having fun. It's about running, but at the same time we want to have fun while we're doing it. We want to do something that we love doing. It just brings us closer."

Cission stands at 5-foot-6 and was a running back for Plainfield. He went out for track as a freshman almost as a chore to stay in shape. He said he's grown to love track, even more than football. Aaron, who is in the 6-foot range, strictly does track, and Edwards said he gained attention by filling in as a sophomore on a relay team with a good anchor finish.

"I'm always happy to see my teammate win," Cission said. "Even if he beats me all year, as long as I know I'm competing and I'm getting better, I have no problem with him beating me. We're both working hard."