

# Fast twins could run into spotlight this year

By **BRETT HONEYCUTT**  
Special Correspondent

Running in obscurity may sound a bit odd for two of Charlotte's top runners. But this is how it is for South Mecklenburg seniors Mike and Cliff Mauriello.

A year ago, they were both all-conference in the Southwestern 4A, all-region and all-Observer. They're also identical twins.

But even in the running community, the Mauriellos are about as well-known as Ericsson telephones were before the company's multimillion-dollar deal with the Panthers that put the company's name on Charlotte's NFL stadium.

For three years they have run in the shadows of former Charlotte runners Pen Peery of East Mecklenburg and Providence's Justin Niedzialek and Brian Lesesky. Even at their own school, other such runners as Josh Morgan, Daniel Stein and Chris Lowery have been featured.

But running isn't the only thing in their lives. They're both ranked in the top seven academically of their class of more than 500 students. They're heavily involved in their church youth group and enjoy going to athletic events.

"Academics have always come easy," Cliff said. "But I realized it wasn't going to be a cakewalk, because my sister was second in



M. Mauriello



C. Mauriello

her class (at South Mecklenburg), and she came home and worked till late at night."

But it was something their parents always stressed, along with their faith.

"Realizing and trusting in God, it keeps me focused on what is really important," Mike said. "It keeps me honest with myself. Trying to remember what happens in this life is important, but God should always come first."

And when they're not running, studying or involved in a church activity, the brothers like to spend some time at South Mecklenburg athletic events.

"Cliff wants to be a journalist (like his sister Mary Beth, who graduated from UNC Chapel Hill's journalism school in May)," Mike said. "Actually, he wants to be the next Dick Vitale. He gets a kick out of interacting with fans."

"Cliff goes insane; he goes crazy," Mike said. "That's why Cliff acts like Dick Vitale, because he gets into it with the fans."

So, with all these similarities — they're both smart, they're best friends, they look alike, and talk alike — how are they different?

"The only difference is (Mike's) more of an engineer and I'm more of a writer," Cliff said. "And really he's my best friend and I don't know what I'd do without him."

Oh, and one other thing.

"When I go out with my girlfriend," Mike said. "That's the only thing we don't do together. It's just been a privilege that Cliff's been my brother. It's like living with your best friend, except when he doesn't pay for gas and he's \$30 behind on gas payments."