

The Putnam
Examiner
Sports
Covering Putnam County and Northern Westchester Sports

27-Year Itch Scratched!



**Yorktown Crowned
Section 1 Class
AA Champs for 1st
Time Since 1990**

RAY GALLAGHER PHOTOS

Jubilation was the order of the day last Saturday when members of the Yorktown High soccer team celebrated a 2-1 sudden death victory over White Plains when the fourth-seeded Huskers got the golden goal from Sergio Spinellio and saw Captains Mauricio Arango (red) and Ankit Patel (R), plus whaling Chris Guzman (9), Sean Boyle, Keegan O'Connor and the rest of the Huskers, hoist the Section 1 championship plaque for the first time since 1990. Yorktown advanced to Thursday's opening round of the state tournament to challenge Section 9 champion Warwick at Middletown High School (time TBD)... see Boys' Soccer Notebook

Sports

Grid Notebook

No.6 Somers vs. No.1 Yorktown: Down with the Sickness II

Reigning NYS Champion Tuskers to Meet Huskers in Friday's Title Rematch

By Ray Gallagher
Examiner Sports Editor
@Directrays

Everyone who's anyone along the Section 1 grid circuit is down with the sickness that will ensue this Friday night (7 p.m.) at Mahopac High School, the site of the Class A title tilt between reigning NYS champion Somers (7-2) and vengeance-seeking Yorktown (9-0), who will meet for all the marbles for a second-straight year after each escaped with narrow semifinal victories last Friday night.

The sickness will be highlighted across the bunches of Cornhusker green and Tusker red, illuminated by the infamous student bodies; 'The Crop' vs. 'Tusker Nation.' Consider this your warning: Get their early because this one features a lot more than just football.

It's DeMatteo vs. Rescigno, yet again; the Taconic commuter vs. I 684 travelers; it's one jacked up football town vs. another. It's the



RAY GALLAGHER/RICK KUPERBERG PHOTOS

Yorktown players leave the field after their 23-19 Section 1 Class A semifinal win over Rye last Friday.

muscle of Somers OL/DL Nick Gargiulo vs. the speed and brawn of Yorktown RB/

LB Brett Makar.

This is everything a football fanatic can sink their teeth into, and Mahopac will rock like it hasn't in nearly a year this after top-seeded Yorktown took care of business with a 23-19 win over visiting No.5 Rye, and No.6 Somers eked out a 10-7 win over No.2 host Our Lady of Lourdes.

The rematch features a title-starved Cornhusker club, which hasn't won it all since 1998, the last of four Section 1 crowns between 1993-98 against a Somers outfit poised to win its fourth title in six years.

Rescigno understands all too well that 1998 was 19 years ago, and nobody gets sicker at the reminder. Yorktown, which won state titles in 1993-94, earned a spot in the Section 1 final for the third year in

a row, but championship games haven't been kind to the Huskers, who, two years ago, were beaten handily by Rye. Last year, Somers ran roughshod over the Huskers en route to a state title after losing to Yorktown head-to-head in the regular season.

"I've got to figure out a way to ramp up this week's practices up to make them difficult and war like," Rescigno said. "We have to be ready for that because that's what Somers brings, a war! That's what we're in for."

Yorktown will go to war with General Makar leading the charge after carrying the ball 34 times for 201 yards and a score, plus two catches for 28 yards and eight tackles at linebacker, a sack and interception on the other side of the ball. His will to win and lead by example is a driving force, according to Rescigno.

"I've never coached a player like Brett in my life," the coach said of the senior captain. "The best part is the fact that his will to win is contagious and your team becomes like him and it's amazing to watch. Every kid on the team has taken on his will to win. You won't find a better group of kids throughout the section. You got kids fighting for each other throughout the week and scout teamers who will do anything to help this team win."

And that will to win nearly cost Makar as he chugged for extra yards in the fourth quarter, thus coughing up the ball, but Makar atoned for the infrequent flub on the final play of the game by intercepting a Rye Hail Mary pass in the end zone as time expired.

"We preach family and we had his back no matter what happened," Yorktown RB Brandon Meyreles said. "We were gonna fight to the finish."

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Yorktown DB Justin Comerford breaks up pass in Huskers' 23-19 semifinal win over Rye.

NWE/Putnam Examiner Grid Poll

No.1 YORKTOWN – I just can't see it going south for a third-straight year. I think 1998 is potentially a distant memory come 10:00 p.m. this Friday.

No.2 SOMERS – You boys in Tuskertown know I love y'all and I wouldn't bet more than a dime against ya, but Yorktown has to end its 19-year championship drought at some point, and if they don't do it this year I can't imagine when they will. That said, I'll hedge my bet: Last possession wins.

No.3 CARMEL – 2nd half against Clarktown South will long haunt these Rams, but I think they all would have

signed in blood for a 7-2 season, and the everlasting image of patriotism they displayed on a weekly basis, including their Week 9 romp of North Rockland.

No.4 MAHOPAC – When you turn a 3-6 2016 season into a 6-3 2017 campaign, you've done just about as much as you could to build for the future, particularly when you consider the late start the Indians got due to the untimely circumstances of replacing their coach in June.

No.5 PANAS – Judging from the final score, the Panthers' 56-6 season-ending loss to John Jay didn't quite mean much.



Yorktown Coach Mike Rescigno takes issue with one of several curious calls in Huskers' 23-19 win over Rye.

Sports

Grid Notebook

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Yorktown TE Alex Ujkaj hauls in game-winning TD grab from QB Tommy Weaver in Huskers' 23-19 semifinal win over Rye.

"No way I was going out like that," Makar said. "No way!"

The Garnets were in position for the Hail Mary on account of a last-second penalty called against Yorktown when the state-ranked (No.2) Huskers stormed the field with one second remaining as



Yorktown RB Brandon Meyreles breaks off chunk of yards in Huskers' 23-19 semifinal win over Rye.



Yorktown senior LB Brett Makar wrecked two dudes to make this sack in 23-19 Class A semifinal win over Rye last Friday.

Rye Coach Dino Garr had signaled for a timeout. The scoreboard clock read zeroes and the Yorktown bench rushed the field, but officials still imposed the head-scratching call. With the ball 15 yards closer to the end zone, the Hail Mary chances increased exponentially, but Makar rose above the masses to pick it off at the goal line.

"It took about 30 years off my life," Rescigno said if the waning moments. "It seemed like it would never end."

Rye took a 13-9 third-quarter lead and appeared to be stealing some momentum when Husker QB Tommy Weaver took over. The junior signal caller displayed touch and toughness throughout the second half, rushing for a 12-yard score and a 16-13 lead early in the fourth. Weaver, who ran for 90 yards and passed for 126, then found TE Alex Ujkaj for a feathery-soft 40-yard touchdown pass with 3:35 left.

"We're 9-0 right now and we feel like we've been overlooked the whole season," Makar said. "Every game we play seems like we're the underdog, and we just want the respect we deserve. Rye's a great program, one of the best teams in Section 1 and their Coach Dino Garr belongs in every football hall of fame there is, but our team just came out here and fought for Yorktown and this community. You know as well as anyone what this community deserves. I love this town and I wouldn't want to grow up anywhere else. I hope I can finish it for them."

"We're ready for Somers, bring it on," Makar added. "We went into last year's finals just happy to be there; hell, no, not this team. We're ready for four full quarters of hell. We're going to give it our all. I don't want this thing to end."



Yorktown LB Brett Makar doesn't bite on this move and stuff Rye for a loss.

SOMERS is ready to push on as well, the state-ranked (No.15) Tuskers having avenged a regular-season loss to No.12 Lourdes. Somers has RB Cameron Pepe thank for much of that after he rushed 35 yards off a slot jet sweep for the game's first score and booted a 37-yard field goal for the game's final points with 5:17 remaining. The Somers defense, which has held firm now for several games, buckled down from there. As a side note, Somers' special teams has really developed; including its kicking/punting game and returns.

Somers is simply doing what Somers does at this point in time; taking nothing for granted and putting preparation -- under prodigious Coach Tony DeMatteo -- ahead of everything. "The mindset in the locker room is when we lost those two games in the regular season everyone wrote us off, so technically we aren't supposed to be here," stalwart Tusker DE Jack Gilroy said of the Tuskers, who have now avenged regular-season losses to Lourdes and John Jay CR. Gilroy was a major factor, exploding for six tackles, including three for loss, and pair of sacks. "So why not keep winning and keep proving people wrong. Obviously, Yorktown



Yorktown DB Nick Campanaro makes tackle in Huskers' 23-19 win over Rye.

is a great team, who has a lot to play for, but everyone around Somers knows the meaning of this game and how big it'll be. We're ready!"

Who won't?



Yorktown LB Brett Makar rises above all to pick off Hail Mary pass attempt by Rye on game's final play.

Sports

Boys Soccer Notebook

Yorktown Snaps 27-Year Championship Drought in 2-1 Win

Spiniello, Carbone Score for Huskers, Who Advance to Region 1 Semis

By Ray Gallagher
Examiner Sports Editor
@Directrays

Imagine a harrowing 27-year itch. Imagine the need to scratch it, the yearn to reach it. Fancy being the Yorktown High soccer team, which hadn't scratched its championship itch since 1990 when then-kids like Jeff Schwartz, Adam Selkin, Rick Capellini, Willem Koetse, Colin Johnson and Ricky Fawcett were parading the championship plaque about town.

Somewhere, those six, their former teammates (whose names elude me) and venerable former Coach Bill Robertson, were smiling last Saturday when Yorktown middle Sergio Spiniello's game-winning goal hit the post and bounded in, resulting in a 2-1 overtime victory against White Plains to win the Section 1 Class AA title at Lakeland High School last Saturday (the first boys' soccer championship since 1990, Class B).

It was the third Section 1 finals appearance for Yorktown in four years, one coming in Class A. The fourth-seeded Huskers (15-4-1), who also knocked off No.1 Arlington, 1-0, in the semis, advanced to the NYSPHSAA tournament on Wednesday (TBA) at Middletown High School against Section 9 champion Warwick, which defeated Monroe-Woodbury 1-0 in overtime.

"This is just a phenomenal feeling for these kids," Yorktown veteran Coach Ed



Yorktown's Timmy O'Callaghan, Alex Kaczor and Sean Boyle see ball hit nothing but net in Huskers' 2-1 OT win.



Huskers Alex Kaczor and Sean Boyle react to game-winning goal in Huskers' 2-1 OT triumph in Section 1 Class AA final last Saturday.

saved, but it bounded to the foot of Joey Carbone, who deposited the easy equalizer in the 74th minute, touching off a madcap celebration and fueling hope.

"I have to give it all to my team," said Spiniello, who watched his older brother,



Yorktown's Sean Boyle and Alex Kaczor give chase to Sergio Spiniello after his goal gave Huskers 2-1 OT triumph in Section 1 Class AA final last Saturday.



Yorktown captain Ankit Patel (L) is ready to congratulate airborne Joey Carbone after his equalizer fueled much hope in Huskers' 2-1 OT title win.

Polchinski said. "We've been planning on this since the beginning of the year. We just never give up. We are resilient, and I'm so proud of them. They trust each other and worked so hard for this and we came out on top, thank God. We made some adjustments against a great team and they worked out on our behalf."

Trailing No.6 White Plains 1-0 at halftime, Polchinski tinkered with his formation, switching from a 4-4-2 to a 4-3-3 and then to a 3-4-3 in an effort to generate more offense. Spiniello was the benefactor, moving forward and delivering. First, Spiniello fired a shot from the right wing, which was initially

Marcello, lose a pair of finals. "We went down early in the second half, but we never stopped pushing and we got the W in the end. My brother was here twice and lost, but he led his team here his junior year, and I knew if I could score I could



Cornhuskers scratched 27-year itch by ending championship drought in 2-1 OT win over White Plains.



Cornhuskers bask in glow of their 2-1 Section 1 Class AA title win over White Plains Saturday.

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Yorktown F Nick Maratos came oh so close but is denied in Huskers' 2-1 OT title win.

compare to him, so I hope I did. Now it's on to states, baby, let's go!"

Husker G Mauricio Arango, who finished with eight saves, made an incredible 1-on-1 save to keep the hope alive and he stood tall in OT behind a stout defense of Sean Boyle, Paul Duffy, Rocky Bujaj, Shane Dahlke and Spiniello. The Huskers have thrived, due, in part, to a team-oriented approach, but Arango

and M Ankit Patel, have been the leaders of the pack.

"This is the topper, the top of the top," said Arango. "Nothing get better than this. We've worked four years for this, and this 100% for the town and all the guys that played here before us. I just can't put it into words. I'm on top of the world. We've been in this position before where we had to fight back, just recently in the quarterfinals against Scarsdale, and we came back and won in overtime, so we stay composed and we know what we have. We just kept plugging away and we're taking the chip home. This is by far the No.1 moment of my career."

Against Arlington (15-1-1), Timmy O'Callaghan, a sophomore midfielder, provided the goal to lift state-ranked (No.23) Yorktown to victory, which avenged a controversial 1-0 loss to the Admirals in the 2015 section final. Arango finished with 13 save for the spotless sheet against what has clearly been the top program in Section 1 the last decade. O'Callaghan, on offense, and Dahlke, on defense, each gave the Huskers a lift against the Ad's, ranked No.3 in NYS.

"Mauricio was unbelievable," Polchinski said. "He's a true leader and a great goalkeeper. He's a great team guy and communicator. He allows no letdowns in practice and the way we



Yorktown G Mauricio Arango looks to heavens as teammates follow after Huskers knocked off top-seeded Arlington in semis last Thursday.



Yorktown players bum rush the stands, much to the delight of The Crop after winning Section 1 Class AA title via 2-1 win over White Plains.



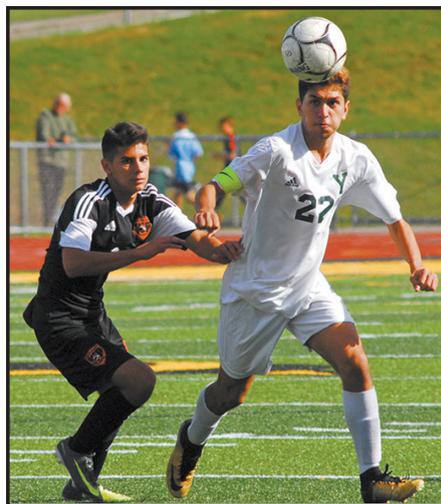
Yorktown hero Sergio Spiniello watches his game-winning goal in Huskers' 2-1 OT win in Section 1 Class AA championship.



Yorktown players display their Section 1 Class AA title plaque to Huskers fans and The Crop for first time since 1990.

practice and play is a testament to my two captains, Mauricio and Ankit (Patel). There are 29 guys on this squad who give it everything they've got, and that's what you need to get where we've gone and hope to keep going. It's a team effort and we're a family."

The family hopes to survive Warwick and advance to the regional championship against Section 4 champion Ithaca at the Wright National Soccer Campus in Oneonta on Saturday.



Yorktown senior M Ankit Patel forces issue in Huskers' 2-1 Class AA title win over White Plains Saturday.

NWE/Putnam Boys' Pitch Poll

No.1 Yorktown – Huskers (15-4-1), ranked No.23 in NYS, are the kings of Section 1 Class AA for the first time ever, but why stop at that. Every win from this point forward is historical.

No.2 Somers – Tuskers (15-3), ranked No.14 in NYS, are not the club you'll want to bet against next year; not with all Coach Lanzetta returns. That said, the former defending NYS champion Tuskers will rue their lost opportunities in that 2-1 quarterfinal loss to Nyack, who is said to be much better than anyone gave them credit for. See their 2-1 championship loss in OT to Byram Hills for proof. P.S. Byram Hills knows soccer, eh?

No.3 Mahopac – Indians (7-9-1) were very competitive this season but they lose quite a bit to graduation.

No.4 Lakeland – Hornets (10-3-2) played every team in Class A as tough as you could when you factor in the injury bug that bit them.

No.5 Brewster – Bears (11-6) are in full rebuild mode with all they lose to graduation but this was a stellar campaign given their soccer history.

Sports

Girls Soccer Notebook

Putnam Valley, Somers Knocked out in Sectional Semis Tigers Defeat Hastings in Quarters, Tuskers Drop Tappan Zee



Putnam Valley's Lindsey Cohen (L) and Morgan Winogradoff push on in Tigers' Class B quarterfinal win over Hastings.



Somers' Megan Dineen takes on a pair of TZ players in Tuskers' 3-1 quarterfinal win.



CREDIT

Somers M Karlene Kurtz dictates play in Tuskers' 3-1 quarterfinal win over TZ.



Putnam Valley's Morgan Winogradoff makes her move in Tigers' Class B quarterfinal win over Hastings.



Somers' Danielle Cucchiarella had an assist in 12-4-1 Tuskers' 3-1 quarterfinal win over TZ, but Somers was bounced in semifinal loss to Rye.



Somers F Alex Pittman scored twice in Tuskers' 3-1 quarterfinal win over Tappan Zee last Wednesday.



Put Valley's Catherine Mazza gets hug from Coach Deegan after Tigers' quarterfinal win over Hastings, but the historical run ended when the Tigers were convincingly defeated by Irvington in the semis.



Putnam Valley's Danna Jadan hits a header in Tigers' Class B quarterfinal win over Hastings.



Sports

Field Hockey Notebook

Undefeated No.1 Lakeland to Meet No.4 Somers in Class B Semis

By Tony Pinciario

The LAKELAND varsity field hockey team usually takes control of a game with its quick-strike offense, erupting early and often against the opposition.

With a high-powered offense it is easy for Lakeland's defense to get overlooked. However, Lakeland's defense is as staunch as Lakeland's offense is potent.

Lakeland showed just how outstanding its defense is as it propelled the Hornets to the 2016 New York State Class B title.

While Iroquois and Garden City somehow found a way to contain Lakeland's offense in the 2016 state final four, it was the defense that lifted the Hornets to a pair of 1-0 victories. As a result, center back Mia Lennon was named the most valuable player.

Even though Lennon graduated, and is playing at Albany, the current quartet of Julia Papanicolaou, Julia Cummings, Brianna Madison and Kiera Wax, along with goalie. Cassie Halpin, have continued Lakeland's stingy ways.

Lakeland has allowed only four goals this season. This does not bode well for SOMERS, who Lakeland hosted in a Section 1 Class B semifinal, last night (Monday). Lakeland (18-0), the top seed, will play the winner of No. 2 John Jay-Cross River-No. 3 Rye, in the championship game, Wednesday, 5 p.m., at Pace University in Pleasantville.

Lakeland defeated both Rye and John Jay-Cross River, 8-0, during the regular season defeated Somers, 3-0, despite playing poorly, according to Coach Sharon Sarsen.

Somers took care of business against Byram Hills in the opening round, but not without a tongue-lashing from the powers



Somers' Emma Kittredge pushes up field in Tusker playoff win over Byram Hills last Wednesday.



Lakeland's Caroline Cahill and the Hornets have made short work of playoff foes en route to Monday's semifinal against Somers.

that be. The Tuskers clearly needed better focus if they are to contend with Lakeland.

"I think that our defense has the best communication and that helps us be successful because it always puts us in the right place to win the ball," center mid Kelsey McCrudden said. "Last year, Mia winning the MVP at the state final four was amazing. Our defense doesn't get the recognition it deserves because the offense gets all of the recognition."

The often-used sports' cliché states that offense wins games, but defense wins championships. Lakeland is following the defense's lead.

Papanicolaou, who played sweeper last year, is the center back with Julia Cummings at sweeper. Madison and Wax play on the right and left side.

"We all work really hard to keep the ball out of our defensive end," McCrudden said. "Our defense plays year-round so the four have gotten so close and comfortable working together that it has helped them gel really well."

Along with being a shut-down unit, Papanicolaou, Cummings, Madison and Wax also excel at moving the ball up the field, quickly, which then ignites the offense.

Following a first-round bye, Lakeland faced district rival and eighth-seeded Panas in a quarterfinal game and came away with a 9-0 victory. It was Lakeland's 14th shutout of the season.

Julianna Cappello, Jenna McCrudden and Papanicolaou each scored two goals. Cappello collected two assists and Kelsey

McCrudden and Papanicolaou had one apiece. Alexa Ryan, Emily Kness and Kelsey McCrudden also had goals.

Prior to playing Lakeland, Panas opened sectional play with a 2-1 victory over ninth-seeded Edgemont in a first-round game. Taylor Reilly and Olivia Moyer, assisted by Danielle Merante, scored in the first half. Goalie Madison Maddocks made 11 saves.

PANAS finished the season with a 9-7-2 record and a third consecutive sectional trip and third straight year with a playoff win.

"I told the girls that I was proud of them for what we accomplished together, this season, and that they exceeded my expectations that I had set for them," Panas coach Andrew

Tripaldi said.

"We started four sophomores with no previous varsity experience and a first-year goalie, and we were able to finish the season with an overall record of 9-7-2."

Tripaldi will graduate six seniors, all of whom started with him when he became the coach.

"We will be graduating six seniors who had a big part of what we were able to

accomplish this season, in particular, Danielle Merante," Tripaldi said. "Danielle has had quite the field hockey career as she has scored 63 goals with 18 assists. What doesn't show up in the stat sheet is how great of a teammate Danielle is, as she worked with the younger girls during the off-season and season, moved to a new position for her senior year all to put the team first.

"As her coach, I am proud of everything she has accomplished and thankful for all her hard work and dedication to the program. Danielle along with the five other seniors all started with me since my first day, as head coach and I want to thank them and wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors."

PUTNAM VALLEY qualified for the Section 1 Class C Championship and was seeded ninth. The Tigers drew eighth-seeded Albertus Magnus and came away with a 2-1 loss.

Putnam Valley coach Rebecca Gherardi said Albertus Magnus scored two goals in the first half, but junior Ciara McGinty scored with 7:24 remaining in the game.

"Even though they scored the two quick goals, it didn't get us down and we kept plugging away," Gerardi said. "Danielle Cunningham helped to keep the pressure on while we were on attack and she was also back on defense. The girls played hard and played to the last whistle. I am so proud of the season the girls had. With each year, our record improves. We graduate three seniors in Ava Espineira, Joanna Pelc and Taylor Simpson. These three girls contributed each differently and will be missed next year."

Somers, seeded fourth in the Section 1 Class B Championships, opened with a win over No. 13 Byram Hills. The Tuskers went on to overcome No. 5 Nanuet, 3-2, as Erin Clark scored the 45 seconds remaining in the sudden-victory, 10-minute overtime



Somers' Haley Dineen makes her move in Tuskers' playoff win over Byram Hills.



Standard-Setting Putnam Valley Ousted in Class B Soccer Semis



**All
Good
Things
Must
End**

RICK KUPERBERG PHOTO

The third-seeded Putnam Valley Tigers had plenty of cause for celebration this season -- as (L-R) Catherine Mazza, Isabella Dedvukaj, Lindsey Cohen and Maddie Deegan did in their 2-0 quarterfinal win over Hastings last Tuesday -- before falling to eventual runner-up No.2 Irvington, 5-0, in last Friday's Section 1 Class B semifinal. Magnus won the crown, 3-2, over Irvington. The Tigers (15-2), who appeared in two sectional finals during the less competitive "spring seasons" of 2005-06, advanced further than any PV soccer team has during an ultra-competitive fall campaign, which included all Section 1 Class B schools... See Girls' Soccer Notebook