

The Putnam,
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Sports
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RAY GALLAGHER PHOTO

Mess With the Bull, Get the Horns!

Haldane RB Giachinta Rushes for 3 TDs, 218 Yards in Class D Title Triumph

Haldane senior RB Sammy "The Bull" Giachinta rushed for 218 yards and three touchdowns for the second-seeded Blue Devils in their 18-6 Section 1 Class D championship win over top-seeded Tuckahoe at Mahopac High School where he padded his lofty season-long stats to 143 carries, 1,297 yards and 18 TDs. The Blue Devils (7-1) knocked off the defending champion and captured their second section title in three seasons as their key seniors became the first two-time champions in school history, including Giachinta, who, over the course of four sterling years, has rewritten the school record book with 621 carries, 3,986 yards and 43 TDs... see Grid Notebook

Sports

Soccer Notebook

Somers Erupts in 2nd Half, Wins 2nd NYS Region 1 Title in 3 Years

State-Ranked No.3 Tuskers Rout Cornwall, 5-0; Haldane Girls Beats Millbrook in OT, Reach State Semis

By Ray Gallagher
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MIDDLETOWN -- Somers High soccer Coach Brian Lanzetta doesn't quite know how to explain it. Winning one NYSPHSAA Class A title two years ago in his rookie season was special, but to be just two wins away from a second state championship is simply mind-blowing to a third-year coach.

"I really don't know what to say about these kids and their effort and the position we're in right now," he said.

With a full week of practice to prepare, heal and rest, the Tuskers played a memorizing second half en route to a 5-0 blowout of Section 9 champion Cornwall in the NYSPHSAA Region 1 Class A championship last Saturday night at Faller Field on the sprawling campus of Middletown High School.

Somers sniper Lucas Fecci gave the state-ranked (No.3) Tuskers a 1-0 halftime lead on an assist from Evan Mazolla, and the second half was all Tuskers, as they improved to 18-4 and advanced to the state Final 4 to face state-ranked (No.1) Section 2 champion Queensbury (19-1) at Twin Towers Middle School in Middletown Saturday (12:30 p.m.) in the state Final 4.

The winner will face the survivor of Section 5 Brighton (No.4 in NYS) vs. Section 11 Amityville (No.2 in NYS) in the state finals on Sunday, November 11th (10:00 a.m.) at Middletown High School.

"I don't know how to explain this, I never in a million years thought I would ever win a state title," Lanzetta said. "It was always a dream of mine as a kid, so to get back at it again for this one, with a chance to win another, I'm just super proud of myself and my team. I feel like we worked really hard building the program and building the passion and bringing soccer

to my hometown really makes me feel good. I'm just happy and psyched for the kids."

The wind was ridiculous in the first half, but Somers had the wind at its back for the first 40 and scored first. The strong gusts died down considerably in the second half, keeping Cornwall from the benefit of wind-aided play. In the second half, Fecci (1G, 2A), Drew Lasher (2G), Ethan Cukaj (1G), Alex Maher (1G, 2A) worked a combination of set pieces that dazzled the sizeable crowd and blew the game open in a span of five minutes.

"The wind a factor in the first half, not so much in the second half," versatile Tusker junior Lasher said. "Wind was a major factor in the game. It was with us in the first half and against us in the second, so we kind of just played our balls, played our game and we ended up getting a win. Our keeper, Connor O'Donoghue, in the back keeps us up and tells us everything to do. Max Grell in the back helps us direct it to (Jon) Riina and Alex (Maher) in the midfield and with Fecci up top, man, we're on stoppable. We got to keep going, though, we're looking forward to the next game."

Cukaj started the stampede with a volley off a scrum from nearly 30 yards out with 24 minutes to go for a 2-0 lead. Maher got the next one before the Somers faithful took their seats, and Lasher added the last



RAY GALLAGHER PHOTOS

Somers senior M Alex Maher reacts to scoring one of his three points in 5-0 Region 1 championship win over Cornwall Saturday.

two tallies – all within five minutes -- for a 5-0 lead, featuring a series of set pieces the Tuskers had worked on all week.

"We had a full week of practice coming up to this game and basically for three out of the five days we were nonstop working our set pieces... corners, free

kicks and everything just making it perfect," said Maher, who was a bit player as a sophomore on the 2016 state champs. "We have put so much time and effort into this. It's incredible! When we were here first as sophomores I wasn't as big a

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Somers senior striker Lucas Fecci celebrates GWG in Tuskers 5-0 Region 1 title win over Section 9 champ Cornwall Saturday.



Somers' Ethan Cukaj (22) and Max Grell can't contain their emotion after Cukaj spotted Tuskers 2-0 lead in 5-0 Region 1 title win.

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Somers M Andrew Lasher heads one forward in 5-0 Region 1 title win over Cornwall.

part of the team as I am now. I was living in my brother's (Jack) shadow a little bit, but now this is our year and it just feels amazing.”

The Somers defense was amazing, too, as O'Donoghue, Grell and company were in total command, hardly threatened throughout the night.

“(Cornwall) wanted the wind and they wanted to play kickball,” Lanzetta said. “I don't know if you heard, but I was screaming ‘keep it on the ground’ after we scored. I told both assistant coaches the second half is going to benefit us because we play on the ground. We don't play this kick and run stuff. If you look at all our



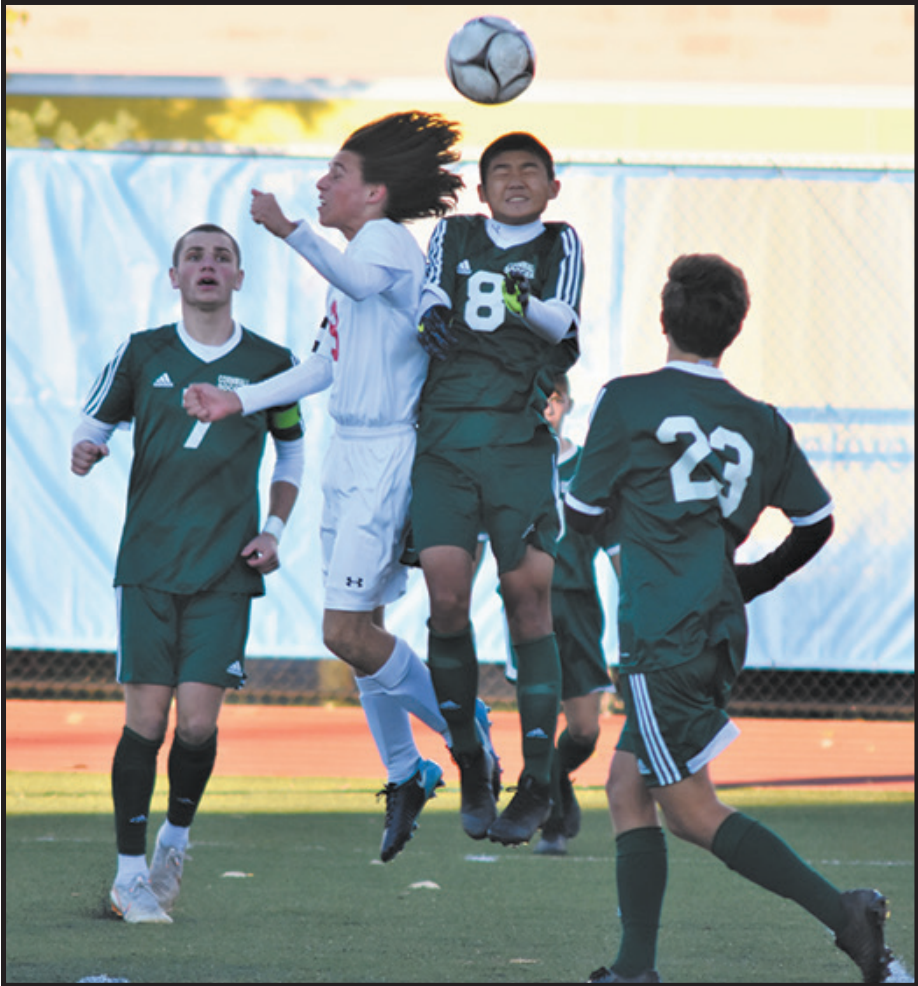
Somers' Andrew Lasher and Max Grell (19) get some hang time to celebrate Lasher's goal in 5-0 NYS Region 1 title win over Cornwall Saturday.

goals you know we build and we play possession. They do everything the right way. I was looking forward to the second half. I made them believe the wind was not going to hurt us, it was going to help us. Our sets were crisp tonight. We call it Napoli and it worked for us last time at regionals, so we ran again and we're going to keep running until some team figures out how to stop it, but it works. We practiced it at practice all day yesterday.”

The quick-strike Tuskers had another week to rest, prepare and get fully healthy as they seek an unprecedented second state title in three years.

HALDANE will face Section 2

champion Stillwater in the NYSPHSAA Class C girls' semis Saturday (3 p.m.) after posting a 3-1 double overtime triumph of Section 9 champion Millbrook. Lili Westerhuis was the hero, tying the game with six minutes remaining to force OT and then snapping the tie in the extra session. Jade Villella added an insurance marker for the eight-time reigning Section 1 champs. G Abigail Platt notched five saves for the Blue Devils, who will play at Cortland High School seeking their second NYS title since 2014. The winners will advance to Sunday's state final against the Section 3 Little Falls vs. Section 5 Wheatland-Chili survivor.



Somers senior M Alex Maher vies for head ball in Tuskers' 5-0 Region 1 title win over Cornwall Saturday.

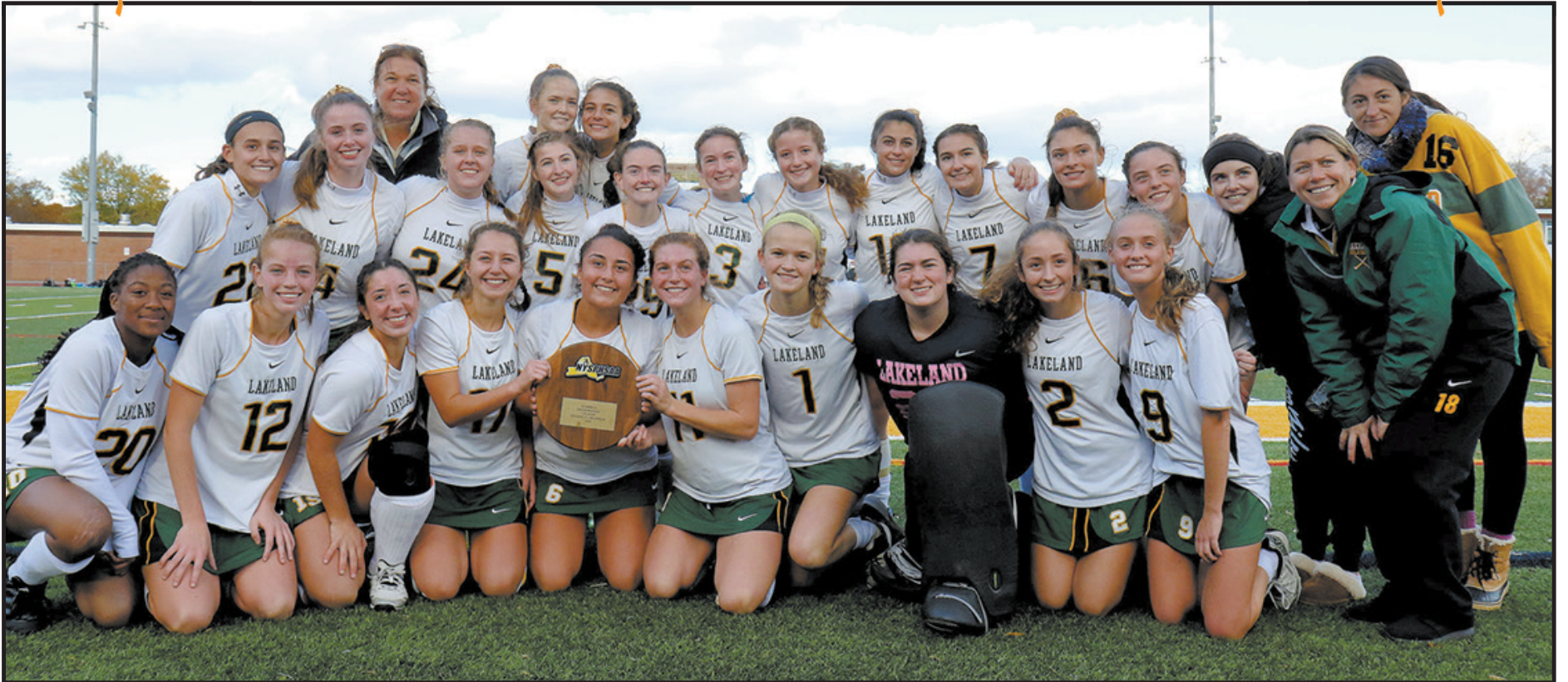


Somers M Jon Riina gets a touch in the box in 5-0 NYS Region 1 title win over Cornwall.

Sports

We Are the Champions!

Lakeland Field Hockey, Somers Soccer, Hen Hud Volleyball, Haldane Gridders Crowned



Members of the Lakeland field hockey team pose with 10th-straight Region 1 NYSPHSAA championship plaque after 1-0 win over Burnt Hills Saturday.



Lakeland players mob goalie Kellie Smith after the Hornets' 1-0 win over Burnt Hills secured 10th-straight Region 1 Class B title.



Haldane Coach Ryan McConville is doused by Blue Devils Matt Champlin (5) and Mame Diba after 18-6 Class D title win over Tuckahoe last Saturday.

RAY GALLAGHER/RICK KUPERBERG/GREGORY LOH PHOTOS



Sports



Hen Hud players revel in glory of their 14th sectional title in 18 years after beating Nyack in the Class A finals at Pace University Saturday.



Members of Hen Hud volleyball team pose with 14th sectional title in 18 years after defeating Nyack in the Class A finals at Pace University Saturday.



Tusker Andrew Lasher hoists the hardware, surrounded by Somers teammates after 5-0 Region 1 title whitewashing of Cornwall.



Lakeland Captain Julianna Cappello scored the lone goal in Hornets' 1-0 Region 1 NYSPHSAA Class B title win over Burnt Hills Saturday at Lakeland.



The final stages of Lakeland's dog pile after 1-0 win over Burnt Hills secured 10th-straight NYS Region 1 championship win.



Members of the Haldane football team pose with Section 1 Class D title plaque after beating Tuckahoe 18-6 Saturday at Mahopac.



Somers Tuskers bench erupts after yet another goal in 5-0 NYS Region 1 title win over Cornwall Saturday.

Hen Hud Dethrones Panas in Semis, Reclaims Section 1 Title

By Tony Pinciario

Ashley Perez had the pleasure of winning a Section 1 Volleyball Championship with **HEN HUD** as a freshman. It was a memory Perez would never forget and one she had hoped to duplicate under the watchful eye of legendary Coach Diane Swertfager.

"When we won it everyone was so happy, but it was almost expected," Perez said of her freshman campaign. "I was young so I didn't expect anything else."

Unfortunately, in 2016 and in '17, Hen Hud was denied the Section 1 Class A title by Panas as the Panthers went on to win consecutive state championships. This season, Perez and her teammates would not allow Panas to make it three consecutive years.

Hen Hud defeated Panas in the semifinals of the Section 1 Class A Volleyball Championships on Halloween Day. The top-seeded Sailors followed that up with a four-set victory over second-seeded Nyack to win the title at Pace University.

It was Hen Hud's 14th sectional title in 18 years under the guidance of Swertfager. The Sailors, over the course of time, have been to volleyball what Lakeland has been to field hockey: A Section 1 dynasty.

Hen Hud, now 22-0, receives a bye into the regional final, Saturday, 1:30 p.m., at



GREGORY LOH PHOTOS

Hen Hud's Ashley Perez (25) and Pamela Loh celebrate a point in Sailors' Class A title victory over Nyack.

John Jay-Cross River where it will play the Section 4 vs. Section 9 winner. The regional-final winner advances to the state final four, Saturday-Sunday, Nov. 17-18, at the Glens Falls Civic Center.

"Individually, this means the world to me because other than Pam (Loh) and myself, nobody knew what it felt like, so I wanted to win it so badly, especially for us seniors," Perez said. "For the seniors, it showed that all of our hard work and commitment to the team was worth it."

After dispatching Poughkeepsie and Yonkers in the first round and quarterfinals, Hen Hud hosted fourth-seeded Panas. The Sailors came in prepared and would exact revenge.

"After two years of being beat by the same team, playing them, again, in the semis and winning gave us a boost of confidence going into the finals," Perez said.

Hen Hud had played and swept Nyack during the regular season. It was Nyack's only loss of the season entering the final.

However, the day prior to the final, Hen Hud had an eye-opening practice.

"We were not playing well, so coach packed up her bag and was walking through the door," Perez said. "We told her she's not going to leave until we get it right. We realized that we had been playing and practicing six days a week for three months and, for us, we were not ending practice early. After that, we played really well."

Hen Hud won the first two games against Nyack, before the Indians seized the momentum by taking game three. That was all Nyack would get to celebrate as Hen Hud closed out the match in game four.

"After the third game, we had two games on them, but we had to keep pushing and we did," Perez said. "We were also more relaxed in the fourth game. In the third game, we wanted to win so badly that we tensed up and we don't usually play like that."

Swertfager was proud of her team and preparation for the state tournament begins.

"We played with heart and never gave up," Swertfager said. "We have work to do to improve and be ready for regionals. Pam Loh was outstanding for our defense. Caitlin Weimar and Mackenzie Calhoun dominated the front row and Ashley Perez is always steady."

MAHOPAC earned the top seed in the Section 1 Class AA Volleyball Championships after a 16-1 regular season and league title.

Mahopac swept No. 16 New Rochelle in the first round, but dropped an epic quarterfinal, in five games, to eighth-seeded and eventual sectional champion, **OSSINING**, which went on to win its second title in three years.

"It was a tough bracket having to play Ossining in the quarterfinals," Mahopac Coach James Melville said. "Ossining has the best player in the section on their team and I heard that she was playing injured during part of the season. Ossining lost a couple of matches that it might not have lost if she was 100 percent. Ossining was far

from the No. 8 seed."

That was prophetic when the 8th-seeded Pride, won the Section 1 Class AA tournament in a five-set thriller over second-seeded North Rockland in the title match Sunday at Pace University, 25-16, 17-25, 25-27, 25-20, 25-19. Pride star Mychael Vernon was the difference, registering 39 kills, nine assists, eight digs and seven blocks in the win.

Even though Mahopac's season ended prematurely, it was one of the most successful in program history.

"Overall, I was extremely happy with how the season went," Melville said. "I knew the team had a lot of talent and that the team had the chance to have a great season. The girls had great chemistry and really played as a team all season. The loss to Ossining in the quarterfinals was obviously not the end we wanted, but we still had one of the best seasons in Mahopac volleyball history and we were undefeated league champs."

LAKELAND finished the regular season with a 12-3 record and the sixth seed in the super-competitive Section 1 Class A Volleyball Championships. The Hornets were upset by 11th seeded Yorktown in five games. Lakeland swept Yorktown during the regular season.

"We played extremely well in the first two sets but, unfortunately our energy level changed once Yorktown starting being up in the third and fourth set," Lakeland captain Anna Tomasini said.

Tomasini and her fellow seniors finished up with a 12-4 record and one of the most successful seasons in recent history.

"This was the best season we've had since I've been a part of the program and even though next year, our team is graduating six seniors, I believe they will still have a strong program," Tomasini said. "The girls on the team have constantly improved every year and they will continue to grow for all the years they have left on the team."



Hen Hud's Ashley Perez sets up for kill in Sailors' Section 1 Class B title win over Nyack.



Hen Hud volleyball players storm court after knocking off defending sectional and NYS champion Walter Panas last Wednesday.



Effort like this from libero Pamela Loh is the reason Hen Hud defeated Nyack for 14th Section 1 title in 18 years Saturday at Pace U.

Haldane Crowned Class D Champs; Put Valley Falls in Finals

Giachinta Plows for 218 Yards, 3 TDs, Smashes School Records

By Ray Gallagher
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The goal of every Section 1 football team is to get on a bus boarded for Mahopac – home of the Section 1 championships -- in early November. As just one of two teams in Class D, Haldane makes that trek every year, but Class B Putnam Valley made its virgin voyage last Friday after a pair of stunning early-round upsets; something nobody saw coming.

HALDANE made the most of its opportunity when senior RB Sam Giachinta made like a man among

“I’m competing alongside some of the best players we’ve ever had here, and, obviously, I’m trying to be the best player I can be. We’ve never won to state semi before, so we just looking to get our first one. Obviously, I think this is the best team we’ve ever had, and we’re gonna go as far as we can.”

Tuckahoe handled Haldane when they last met in Week 1, when Tuckahoe earned a 14-8 victory. Haldane hasn’t lost since, posting a seven-game win streak. With swirling winds and gusts of 40 MPH at times, the Blue Devils stayed on the ground and played stifling defense,

essentially pitching a shutout before the Tigers tacked on a meaningless score just before the final horn. Doug Donaghy and Matt Champlin each had an interception and linebacker Craig Dowd notched 11 tackles for the Blue Devils.

Haldane Coach Ryan McConville knows who butter his bread, though.

“Sam’s a hell of a player for us,” the coach said. “He works really hard. It starts in the weight room for him. If

you look back on all the players, he’s a hell of a player for Haldane history, for sure. He’s definitely up there in the top one or two player conversations of all time as a running back, as a linebacker, as a player.”

McConville expects to ride Giachinta and his stout line as far as he can.

“Oh, absolutely, we’re going to go back get back to work as soon as possible,” McConville said. “The kids actually dressed up in business attire on Friday because we’re focused on business. We’ll focus on one thing at a time, and I will get back to work and get ready for whoever comes out of the next round.”

Just three weeks ago, PUTNAM VALLEY grid Coach Ryan Elsasser’s football program was hanging by the very threads he would eventually stitch into a championship contender. His sixth-seeded Tigers were floundering at 1-6, essentially counting the days to season’s end; his best two-way players, senior captains John Listwan and Darnel Shillingford – perhaps the best duo in program history – were due to graduate this coming June along with a handful of other key seniors; team morale was in the dumps; the junior varsity program was a

non-existent dumpster fire; and even the most optimistic souls on the team were looking ahead to their respective basketball, baseball and lacrosse seasons.

Nobody can really pinpoint where, when or why things went south in mid-September, and similarly, nobody can really fathom why or when, precisely, things turned on a dime in late October in a 14-8 opening round playoff win over Nanuet and a subsequent 36-25 semifinal win over Pleasantville – the reigning NYS champs – a week later.

But the worm did turn, so to speak; enabling Putnam Valley to reach its first Section 1 Class B championship game in school history last Friday afternoon at Mahopac High School where things spiraled out of control in a hurry during a 35-0 season-ending loss to top-seeded Ardsley. The undefeated Panthers achieved school history by routing the Tigers for a second time this season (Ardsley, the No. 1 seed, beat No. 6 Putnam Valley 48-14 during the regular season), and won for the ninth time in nine tries by double figures.

The game turned quickly when state-ranked (No.3) Ardsley, leading 14-0 in the second quarter, stopped Putnam Valley’s best drive of the game early in the second quarter. Tiger RB/QB John Listwan connected with his brother, TE Jake



RAY GALLAGHER PHOTOS

Haldane QB Daniel Santos avoids pressure to deliver pass in 18-6 Section 1 Class D title win over Tuckahoe Saturday.



Haldane senior DT Matt Ortiz makes pressure that resulted in intentional grounding in Blue Devils’ 18-6 Section 1 Class D title win over Tuckahoe.

boys last Saturday afternoon, scoring three touchdowns and rushing for 218 yards for the second-seeded Blue Devils in their 18-6 Section 1 Class D championship win over top-seeded Tuckahoe at Mahopac High School. The Blue Devils (7-1) knocked off the defending champion and captured their second sectional title in three seasons as their key seniors became the first two-time champions in school history.

Giachinta averaged 8.3 yards per carry on 26 totes for Haldane, which gets a bye through the regional round, advancing to the NYSPHSAA semifinals. Haldane will next will play on November 16th at Middletown High School against the winner of the NYS quarterfinal between Section 7’s Moriah vs. Section 2’s Warrensburg, looking to win the first state semifinal in school history with the best running back to ever suit up at Haldane.

“Obviously, this feels great to get the yards up and win this game,” said Giachinta, who

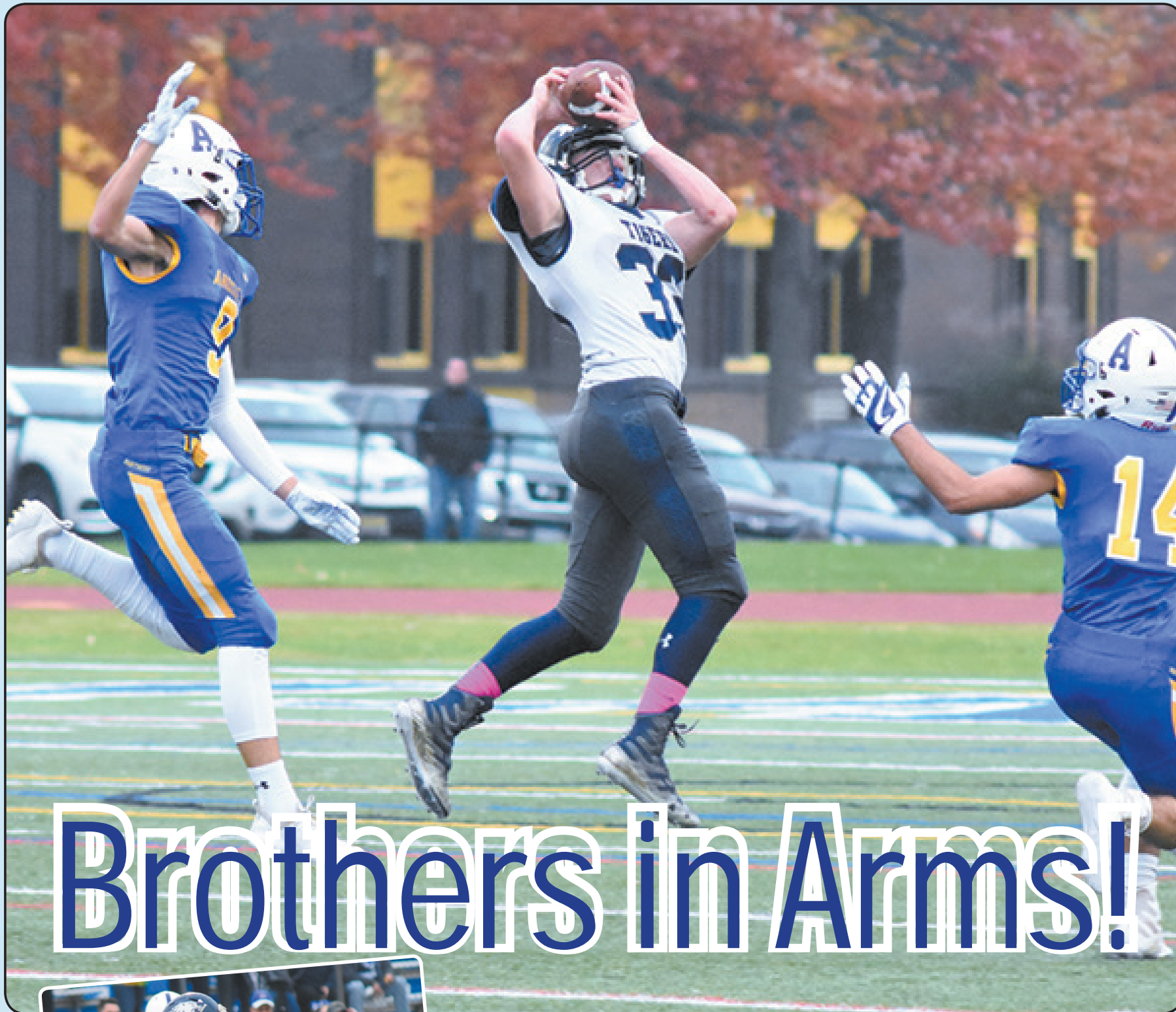
padded both his season long rushing records (143 carries, 1,297 yards and 18 TDs) and career rushing totals (621 carries, 3,986 yards and 43 TDs).

Listwan, on a 25-yard red zone grab, and the Tigers were inside the five-yard line before George Lebberes sent Listwan for a loss on a sweep. Facing fourth down from the 10, Putnam Valley QB Quinn Strang was then picked in the end zone. With the PV momentum thwarted instantaneously, Ardsley sent Manzi for a home run two plays later. QB Frank Belarge spun a 74-yard TD strike to Manzi for a 21-0 lead. Manzi killed the Tigers all day (three catches, 106 yards, two touchdowns and two interceptions).

Listwan, who rushed for a program-record 289 yards against Pleasantville the week prior, had 102 yards 25 tough carries, but three PV turnovers proved costly.



Putnam Valley defenders Kaiden Patterson (23), Dillon Gallo (80) and Mike Reichardt pursue to make tackle in Tigers’ 35-0 Class B title loss to Ardsley.



Brothers in Arms!



RAY GALLAGHER PHOTOS

Listwan Connection Not Enough In Put Valley's Class B Title Loss to Ardsley

Despite this nifty connection from converted senior QB John Listwan (44) to his brother, sophomore TE Jake Listwan -- who did his best David Tyree imitation from Super Bowl XLII to make this red zone catch -- the underdog Tigers (3-7) were outworked by state-ranked (No.3) Ardsley in the top-seeded Panthers' 35-0 win over the No.6 Tigers last Friday at Mahopac High School... see Grid Notebook