A brutally cold and wildly unusual winter hoops season ended with a bang Saturday when top-seeded Mahopac and No.2 Putnam Valley were each crowned regional champions after their respective victories in the Putnam/Northern Westchester large and small school girls’ basketball tournaments. The Class AA Indians ran wire-to-wire in a 77-39 victory over second-seeded Class A Brewster while the Class B Tigers used a fourth-quarter surge to knock off top-seeded Class A Walter Panas, 52-40, before a madcap celebration... see Girls’ Hoops Notebook
In a year unlike any other in Section 1 history, there was plenty to be thankful for when Championship Saturday commenced and concluded in the culminating events that saw a slew of Examiner-region teams compete in their respective regional championships. COVID-19 restrictions forced the Section 1 Executive Committee and athletic directors to scramble all season and had forced most parents and fans to watch the games from their laptops and viewing stations. Within the final week of the season, though, Section 1 allowed the parents of senior players to watch the action live, adding the element of fanfare, which players and coaches genuinely enjoyed throughout the eight locally regionalized tournaments.

Putnam-Northern Westchester Small School

No. 2 PUTNAM VALLEY (11-2) and top-seeded host WALTER PANAS (13-2) know each other inside-out, having played CYO and AAU ball together and building the relationships that come with competition. While the mutual respect was evident throughout Saturday’s championship, nothing mattered more than the W, especially when defending Section 1 Class B champion PV took over in the fourth quarter of a 52-40 win over the Class A Panthers.

Behind a suffocating defense and a ripped second half from sophomore G Eva DeChent (game-high 22 points, 11 rebounds) and senior F Arianna Stockinger (21 points, 8 caroms, 2 blocks), the Tigers took control in the fourth quarter and eased their way to a second-straight title after never winning one previously.

“That’s just typical Putnam Valley defense,” said the Pace-bound Stockinger, who hit 11 of 14 from the charity stripe. “Our thing is defense, even when things aren’t going our way. We play Putnam Valley defense for four quarters and today it showed. We made the most of this mini season and played today just like it was a gold ball game and to beat a Class A team like Panas is just such a great feeling.”

A dual defensive battle ensued throughout the first half before PV’s relentless pressure and superior rebounding wore the Panthers down.

Putnam-Valley players celebrate their second title in as many years after beating Panas 52-40 for P-NW small school regional title Saturday.

Putnam Valley sophomore G Eva DeChent took over in second half of Tigers’ 52-40 P-NW title win over host Panas Saturday.
I told Eva at halftime that we are going to win this game only if you step up and take over,” added Dini, who has mentored DeChent since the first grade. “She took over beyond expectations; she went to the rim, took threes with a hand in her face, dominated the boards. That’s the division one basketball player that we know and love.”

Tigers Amanda Orlando (4 points, 7 boards), Natalie Mazza (8 boards, tough D) and Nai Torres (5 4th-quarter points) added some clutch shots and/or prime minutes.

“Torres plays basketball year round,” Dini said. “Sometimes, offensively, we’re relying on the same three girls, and I told her you don’t need to score 20, you just need to play team basketball and hit the open shot when it presents itself.”

Panas might have been blown out if not for a monster effort from eighth-grader Cadence Nicholas, who dropped a team-high 17 points. Panas senior G Kristen Cinquina added 12 points for Panas but was a point of emphasis in the fourth quarter before both...
she and Stockinger fouled out to end their tremendous high school careers.

"Arianna is a top five player, at least, in Putnam Valley history," Dini said. "She’s always given us 12-13 points a game and been the best defensive player on the court, but this year she’s had seven, eight games with 20-26... to think that I’ll never be on a sideline with her again is crazy. The kid is just so special, even the coaches we play against just talk about her class. She’s the first kid to help an opponent off the floor and the first kid to get hyped if a teammate makes a good play. I’m bad cop and she’s good cop, and we reiterate the same message, just differently.

That’s a leader, and, trust me, she is going to have an unbelievable career at Pace."

When Panas lost point guard Alex Sudol to a knee injury early in the third quarter, the Panther seemed a bit discombobulated. The effects were evident.

"I do think Sudol getting hurt definitely emotionally hurt us," Panas Coach Matt Evangelista said. "That is definitely not to take away from PV. They found another gear in the late third and fourth quarters. DeChent became much more aggressive. We were doing a pretty good job on her until she became much more assertive during that time. She made lots of clutch shots. Torres stepped up and hit those two big shots in the fourth as well. Stockinger was so tough the whole game. She single-handedly got three or four of our players in foul trouble."

When Panas lost point guard Alex Sudol to a knee injury early in the third quarter, the Panther seemed a bit discombobulated. The effects were evident.

"I do think Sudol getting hurt definitely emotionally hurt us," Panas Coach Matt Evangelista said. "That is definitely not to take away from PV. They found another gear in the late third and fourth quarters. DeChent became much more aggressive. We were doing a pretty good job on her until she became much more assertive during that time. She made lots of clutch shots. Torres stepped up and hit those two big shots in the fourth as well. Stockinger was so tough the whole game. She single-handedly got three or four of our players in foul trouble."

En route to the title, Panas avenged its only regular-season loss in a 70-40 semifinal win over No.4 LAKELAND last Thursday.

Nolan scored 23 points to pace the Panthers. Cregan posted a double-double (12 points, 12 rebounds) and Cinquina dropped a dozen. Eighth-grader Cadence Nicholas chipped in with 10 points and five rebounds for Panas. Lakeland’s Hannah Devane scored 14 points and Tyler Hornzazabal, who scored the game-winning buzzer-beater in the quarters, finished with 10.

In the opening round, Lakeland beat No.5 CROTON-HARMON at the buzzer, 62-61. Hornzazabal had the heroics going and finished with 15. Amanda Cole (13 points, 9 boards), Nichole Luljic (12 points) and Sarah Pinkowski (9) also chipped in for the Hornets.

"It was just an amazing all-around effort from both squads," Lakeland Coach Miranda Mangan said. "Everyone really left it all on the court."

Emma Windrum led Croton with 23 points and Lucia Thoreson added 17.

Mahopac junior G Julie DeBrocky has inside step on Brewster F Grace Galgano in No.1 Indians’ 77-39 P-NW title win over No.2 Bears Saturday.

Mahopac G Kristina Rush eyes a 3-ball on Brewster’s Carly DeLanoy in No.1 Indians’ 77-39 P-NW title win over No.2 Bears Saturday.
playoff win over Foxes. Somers' Ava Giudice pushes the pace while Fox Lane's Cara Drapala defends in Tuskers' opening-round playoff win over Foxes.

continued from previous page

In Putnam Valley's 51-31 semifinal win over No. 3 BRIARCLIFF, Stockinger hit for 27 points, one off her career high. DeChent went for 15 points.

Briarcliff Coach Don Hamlin concluded a storied coaching career last week. Hamlin finished with over 400 wins, numerous section final appearances and a state and Federation title.

Briarcliff cruised past sixth-seeded North Salem 60-30 in Wednesday's quarterfinals. Jordan Smith (20 points) and Cat Carrafiello (14 points) led the way.

The Bears finished 5-3 in Hamlin's final season.

"Many thanks to all in Section 1 and New York State that made this journey amazing," Hamlin wrote on Twitter. "You will always be in my heart. I feel incredibly blessed to have shared this journey with you all. To my Bears family, I love you."

In PV's 56-46 opening-round win over then-defending Class A champion Hen Hud, DeChent was a menace, scoring 27 points, five blocks and five steals in a well-rounded effort. Orlando had 16 points. No. 7 Hen Hud was led by eighth-grader Kaitlin Raguso (20 points), who has one heck of a bright future, as do many promising youngsters in the region.

Putnam-Northern Westchester Large School Group

There were more than just Putnam County bragging rights on the line when No. 2 BREWSTER (9-4) visited No. 1 MAHOPAC (12-1) in Saturday's regional championship, and Mahopac grabbed those rights and more behind an impressive 77-39 wire-to-wire regional title win.

Mahopac's senior duo of Mia Klammer (18 points, five assists) and Caitlyn O'Boyle (16 points, 10 rebounds, 5 blocks) shined in their final high school game. Mahopac cruised to a 23-7 lead against an improving Brewster program and never looked back.

"It really was a great feeling to win like that," the Tufts-bound O'Boyle said. "I wouldn't have wanted my last game to go any other way. It was a great season, even with all the changes, and I'm just so grateful we got to play at all. It was all-around a great day for us, and it was really nice to leave the court with the seniors like that: A perfect ending. I'm looking forward to seeing what the team will accomplish over the next coming years, they're definitely a great group."

Mahopac Coach Chuck Scuzzafava had seen this quick start before, ignited by his two shining seniors and a complementary cast that could have challenged for a Section 1 Class AA title in a normal season.

"It was a great year and I am so proud of everyone," the veteran coach said. "Caitlyn and Mia set the tone for how we played and both had great years. Caitlyn was just dominating on the boards and just protecting the paint. Caitlyn averaged 12 rebound and 2.5 blocks. Mia's defensive play was excellent again this year. She's the type of player who can make an impact on a game and she doesn't have to score. We always put her on the best player. She led the team in scoring with 11.5 points per game as well as 3.3 assist per game and 3.1 steals.

"It was great to see the seniors go out as regional champs during this shortened season," Coach Scozz continued. "Lauren Beberman was big for us all year averaging 10.5 PPG as well as 2.3 assist and two steals per game. Julie DeBrocky did a great job as a first-year starter averaging just around 10 PPG. Mel DeMeo did a great job running the point averaging 7 PPG and 3.5 assists. Kristina Rush did a good job coming in off the bench to get us some instant offense. We had such great trouble and turned the ball over. I was really surprised how we played. We had such great energy in warm-ups but it did not carry over into the game. Mahopac just hit us in the mouth and we never recovered. They are an unbelievable team and proved they deserved the 1 seed and the championship. However, I am so proud of our girls. We won so many close games this year, and we had two huge wins in the playoffs. We just lost to the best team."

Galgano ended the season with eye-popping numbers (17.5 PPG, 15 RPG, 5.2 BPG) while Mark finished the season with 11.3 PPG and 8.5 BPG.

En route to the title, Mahopac handed OSSINING its worst playoff defeat in over a decade, an 83-47 setback that left Pride Coach Dan Ricci in a bit of awe as the Indians hit their highest scoring total of the season against a traditionally stingy defense.

continued on next page
“Mahopac had real good balance throughout the lineup,” Ricci said. “They were a very cohesive unit.”

Beberman had the game of her life, scoring a career-high 26 points and DeBrocky (14 points) hit four critical 3’s in a fiery start to the game. ‘Bebes’ added seven assists, six rebounds and four steals.

DeMeo added eight points and seven assists at the point. O’Boyle scored just four points but snagged 11 caroms. Klammer was the playmaker on the court, with six assists at the point. O’Boyle scored just four points but snagged 11 caroms. Klammer was the playmaker on the court, with six assists. Beberman had the game of her life, scoring a career-high 26 points and DeBrocky (14 points) hit four critical 3’s in a fiery start to the game.

“The Pride (7-7) made one key run to keep it close (at 48-34), but the Indians smothered the game high in points (14), boards (19) and blocks (7). Mark added nine points while Dakin had eight. Somers was led by Ava Guidice (8 points). The Taskers advanced to the semis after knocking off FOX LANE in the quarters.

In Brewster’s 53-45 opening round win over John Jay, Galgano posted one of the most impressive triple-doubles in school history, dropping game-highs in points (28), rebounds (15) and assists (11). Mark added 10 points and eight boards and Madison Dakin added eight points.

“It looked like we would cruise to an easy win when we built a 15 point third quarter lead, but John Jay was able to turn us over and get easy layups and eventually cut the lead to two,” Casraldo said. “Galgano hit a huge 3-pointer with just over a minute to go for a 51-45 lead and we held on to win.

No.3 FOX LANE staged (8-5) a furious rally but came up short in a 43-38 loss to sixth-seeded Somers in the quarterfinals of the Putnam-Northern Westchester large school tournament last Wednesday.

Fox Lane senior Natalie Pence left her mark on the program, surpassing the school’s all-time scoring record last week. Pence finished her career with 1,239 points and added seven assists, six rebounds, four assists, three steals and two blocks.

“Natalie’s legacy is going to be etched in stone right up there with the other greats who helped Fox Lane emerge from irrelevance,” Foxes coach Kris Matts said. “Fox Lane has always been a small program but the height of the girls who post it are not small at all. Natalie fits right beside them.”

The history making bucket came late in the first half on a drive to the hoop and left-handed finish to surpass previous record holder Maria Violante.

“She will leave a gaping hole in leadership, offense, defense and poise,” Matts said of Pence. “But she also helped plant the seeds of the next generation to fill that hole. Every girl that saw how hard she played and how hard she worked will know what it takes to succeed, what it means to be a Fox Lane basketball player. It is a high standard, but that is Natalie Pence.”

Pence was a five-year varsity player and came off the bench as an eighth-grader. Violante was a mentor for Pence and took her under her wing as an eighth-grader.

“I was really nervous (at the foul line) but my teammates really reassured me,” McAllister said. “They were like, ‘Hey, no matter what we’ve got your back. We’ll get them in OT then.’”

Overtime wasn’t needed.

“Jenna’s the smartest basketball player in the school and has been for a couple years,” Clark said. “She made a winning play because she’s a winner.”

Irvington, which is two years removed from a Class B state championship, had a towering height advantage over the Panthers, led by Thybulle, a 6-foot-2 Yale-bound senior. Pleasantville’s tallest player stands well under 6-feet tall but the scrappy Panthers make up for the lack of height with heart and hustle.

“Our main game plan was just to crash in on them and try to

Pleasantville celebrates a hard-fought 53-51 semifinal win over perennial power Irvington.

Pleasantville’s Reilly Byrne takes a shot in the paint over Irvington’s Grace Thybulle in the semifinals.
get a body on them,” McAllister said. “We knew they were going to get some offensive rebounds. We just had to deal with that and hope our offense was better and in the end it was.”

McAllister led the Panthers with a team-high 15 points while Mary Grace O’Neill added 13 points. Thrybulle had a game-high 22 points for the Bulldogs.

“It’s a tremendous win for the program,” Clark said. “It just shows how committed these girls have been. We did Zoom workouts over winter break and didn’t know if we were going to have a season but they persevered. The mantra was always, whatever opportunity we were blessed with that’s what we were going to do.”

Pleasantville advanced to the championship game but fell to top-seeded Hastings 68-52 on the road on Saturday. The Panthers trailed 36-16 at halftime.

“First half really hurt us with our lack of rebounding,” Ryan said. “During the final minutes, we did the best we could against Amanda. You can’t teach height.”

Byram was unable to score on its next possession but the Bobcats forced a turnover with under 10 seconds to go. Olivia Picca passed ahead to Grace Corelli, who found sister Beth Corelli but she missed a left-handed layup. Olivia Barry grabbed the rebound and was fouled with a second remaining. She missed the first and intentionally missed the second shot, but Rye grabbed the rebound and the clock struck zero.

“Our press really rattle them and we had some great shots and steals down the stretch that tied the game and we had two opportunities to win,” Ryan said. “The ball just didn’t fall for us, that’s how sports go. It was a fantastic and fun comeback.”

Barry notched nine points and five rebounds while Grace Corelli and Picca (8 rebounds) added eight points each.

In a 49-40 win over fourth-seeded Harrison in Thursday’s semifinals, Beth Corelli (12 points, 8 boards, 4 assists, 3 steals), Grace Corelli (13 points, 4 assists, 4 steals) and Picca (7 points, 12 rebounds) paced the Bobcats.

“The Corelli sisters are just a force to be reckoned with on defense and just feed off each other on offense,” Ryan said. “It’s a sister bond that you just can’t teach.”

Byram routed Edgemont 70-22 in the quarterfinals on Wednesday behind 13 points from Barry. Beth Corelli added 11 points and Kiley Blackman had 10.

It was an impressive season for a Bobcats team that got off to a 6-0 start and finished with an 8-2 record.

“I think we are one of the most underrated teams this season,” Ryan said. “We had terrific returners along with new players that gave our team amazing grit. We have one of the best guards in the section, Beth Corelli, and amazing hustle and skill out of seniors Olivia Picca and Gabby Ripka. I am completely impressed with what our team did in the short five weeks. We had eight days in quarantine, lost three key starters (from last season) and had a 20 point comeback in the finals with an opportunity to win. I couldn’t ask for a better group of young women and coaching staff to go on this journey with.”

Southern Westchester Group 1

Third-seeded WHITE PLAINS made an impressive run to the Southern Westchester Group 1 championship game but ran into a buzzsaw in top-seeded Ursuline. The Tigers fell to the host Koalas, 84-45, and had a six game winning streak end.

Notre-Dame bound Sonia Citron ended her career with Ursuline, tallying 27 points, 20 rebounds and seven assists. Ursuline, last year’s Section 1 Class AA champion, won its 38th consecutive game.

White Plains sophomore Aliya McIver sparked the Tigers with a team-high 16 points. She also had five rebounds and three assists. Freshman Ineivi Plata added nine points for a young White Plains team, which ended the season with a 7-4 record after a slow start.

Girls Hoops Notebook

The historic Don Hamlin era at Briarcliff ended with a playoff loss at Putnam Valley.

“We increased the skill work and conditioning,” White Plains coach Benji Carter said of the Tigers’ improvement from the beginning of the season. “We had an honest conversation about what they lacked because we were getting out-worked by teams with lesser talent. The coaching staff pushed them to build up a strong mentality. We needed to master their emotions so that productivity can increase. It led to us going on a six-game win streak and playing Ursuline in the championship. I love their progress and growth.”

In the semifinals, White Plains avenged a regular season loss to Scarsdale, handily disposing of the second-seeded Raiders, 57-34.

“After having my team watch film, it showed how not to take any team for granted moving forward,” Carter said of what they learned from the first meeting. “We had to increase our energy knowing that Scarsdale had ambition to beat us again. I kept preaching we were the better team and needed to stay motivated and execute for 32 minutes. We didn’t have time to come up with excuses anymore. They understood and fought back for a smooth victory.”

Senior Katie McAteer paced White Plains with a game-high 16 points, Plata (15 points) and McIver (13 points, 12 rebounds, 7 assists) were also key contributors.

“Katie McAteer was a spark plug,” Carter said. “She came in the game making defensive plays and knocked down three-threes and hit a half-court shot going into the half. The team was motivated from her energy and we needed that leadership from our senior captain. It was fun to watch. Ineivi Plata has been putting up good numbers along with her energy and toughness she brings to every game. She’s a warrior. Aliya McIver started off slow but found her groove in the second quarter.”

White Plains crushed sixth-seeded Port Chester 81-36 in the quarterfinals on Wednesday. Plata (21 points, 6 assists) and McIver (13 points, 12 assists) led the way.

The Tigers also came from behind to defeat host Byram Hills, 67-64, in their regular season finale last Monday. Plata (22 points, 6 assists), McIver (18 points) and Sequoia Layne (13 points) sparked the offense.
The championships for Examiner-area teams were inevitable, given the number of local teams representing in the culminating regional events in this abbreviated 2021 boys’ hoops campaign, which concluded on Championship Saturday with the likes of FOX LANE, LAKE L, WESTLAKE and BYRAM HILLS all being crowned in the respective regional groupings. The COVID-19-induced shortened season, though far from what we’re used to in Section 1, still delighted players, coaches and fans, who were thrilled with the opportunity to compete and strut their stuff.

Putnam / Northern Westchester Large School Group

After a mediocre 2019-2020 season, FOX LANE was hoping for a turnaround season in 2021. The Foxes did just that and then some.

Top-seeded Fox Lane capped off a 14-1 campaign with a 57-48 win over No. 2 MAHOPAC in the championship game of the Putnam-Northern Westchester large school regional tournament on Saturday.

“Right after the season ended last year, we knew it wasn’t where we wanted to be,” Fox Lane junior Aidan Giannelli said. “We really got in the gym almost immediately. Even with COVID, we tried to social distance as much as we could. But we were still practicing and getting up shots every day. We kind of just built a bond. We’ve been playing together, honestly, since middle school.”

Giannelli led the Foxes with a game-high 18 points and added five rebounds. James DiBiasi (11 points, 7 rebounds), Aidan Hicks (12 points, 6 rebounds), Oliver Shevick (9 points, 5 assists) and Charles Shevick (7 points) also sparked Fox Lane.

“[It’s all the work we’ve put in during the offseason and it’s just the leadership,” DiBiasi, a senior captain, said of the turnaround from last season. “Last year, not to bash, but we didn’t have the greatest leaders. But this year, with the three captains I think we did a great job leading.”

Fox Lane was in control for most of the game but a deep three from the left wing from Mahopac’s John Cosentino trimmed the Foxes’ lead to 47-41 with 3:15 to go. **continued on next page**
Mahopac’s Ryan Reilly takes a shot inside while Fox Lane’s James DiBiasi goes for the block in Indians’ P-NW title loss to Foxes.

Mahopac’s Colum Ranaghan soars in for a shot while Fox Lane’s James DiBiasi defends in Indians’ P-NW title loss to Foxes.

Fox Lane’s Aidan Hicks attacks the basket on Mahopac’s John Cosentino in Foxes’ win over Indians in P-NW large school finals Saturday.

Fox Lane’s Oliver Shevick celebrates after knocking down a three in second half of Foxes’ regional final win over Mahopac Saturday.
A minute later, DiBiasi answered with a tough finish through contact. He missed the free throw but 30 seconds later Giannelli converted a three-point play to squash Mahopac’s momentum and give the Foxes a 52-41 lead.

“We’ve got really great senior leadership and we’ve got guys that play hard,” Fox Lane coach Mike Tomassi said. “Those two possessions I think put the nail in the coffin for them. As much as it was kind of back and forth, I think that was the backbreaker. We’ve got tough kids and the guys really wanted it. The effort was fantastic today.”

Oliver Shevick, a senior captain, and Giannelli made four straight free throws after that and it was academic from there. Hicks heaved the ball high into the air as the final buzzer sounded and the Foxes celebrated their championship.

“We’ve just worked hard. Last year we were very young and we’re still pretty young,” Tomassi said. “We just really worked hard this offseason. Even during the shutdown throughout the spring and summer, these guys worked on their own. Luckily, we were able to get in the gym in early November. I think we deserved to be in this game and this team had something to prove because they weren’t happy with the way last year went. I’m really proud of them.”

The ball never sticks with one player in the Fox Lane offense and when a teammate is having an off night, the rest of the squad picks him up.

“That’s our No. 1 asset,” Tomassi said. “We’ve got five or six guys that can really score and also want to move the ball. It makes us very tough. It’s hard to scout us because you can’t take one or two guys away.”

Giannelli concurred.

“It’s huge,” Giannelli said of the team’s chemistry on offense. “I’ve had times throughout the year when I was struggling or another player was struggling. But we have a ton of shooters so we just keep moving the ball. Then we get open looks and get a shooter going.”

After a slow start offensively, Hicks put the Foxes on his back, scoring their first

continued on next page
Briarcliff's Brett Lachtman and Panas' Dillon Coles had 14 points each. Tony Granitto (21 points) and Bennett Leitner (20 points) caused major issues for the Huskers. Jared Faivre scored 16 points to lead Yorktown while Eddie Brucaj (11 boards) and Antoine Coles had 14 points each. Tony Granitto added 11 points and 11 boards for Yorktown, which failed to finish strong, losing three in a row.

Westlake's G Carter Falkenberg hangs in air for two of his 14 points in Wildcats' regional championship win over Bronxville.

Lakeeland senior F Aidan Welcome (14 points) and senior G Marc Cummins (9 points) enabled the Hornets (9-6) to establish and hold the lead throughout much of the game. Briarcliff finished the season 11-2 and never found its flow. Jayden Larregue led the Bears with 13 and Aidan Murnane added 10, but Lakeiland posed some problems for all.

"They were very athletic, and hats off to them for being the better team yesterday," Briarcliff Coach Friedman said. "To their credit, we cut it from 12 to one late in the third and they didn't panic and hit a couple of big shots."

"We had an incredible year, led by our seniors," Friedman said. "We'll always have to wonder what a normal season would have been like and what could have been, but I do feel in our heart we know what we were capable of. Our kids are champions of our league, went undefeated in Class B and made the phrase "Today's Not Cancelled" real. We are very proud of what we accomplished and will continue to build our program on the backs of this year's seniors. Thank you to Aidan Murnane, Brett Lachtman, Jacob Zednik, Spencer Safian, Sean Dy and the fans who support this program in so many ways.

Putnam / Northern Westchester Small School Group

Nobody saw No.5 LAKELAND'S 52-42 win over No.2 BRIARCLIFF coming after Coach Steve Fallo's Hornets (9-6) opened the season at 0-5, but this talented group of multi-sport athletes were not to be denied despite the Bears' overwhelming size advantage.

"These kids never doubted themselves," Fallo said. "They believed in our system and knew they could beat anybody if we just played unselfish, team basketball."

Which is what the Hornets did throughout the tournament, beginning and ending with senior Rob Nardelli, who had 17 points in the win over the Bears and a refuse-to-lose attitude since Lakeland got hot and finished the season having won 9-of-10.

"Rob's a big-time, All-Section player, no doubt," Fallo said of Nardelli, who closed the season strong, including 26- and 27-point games. "He simply would not allow us to lose. This was a great defensive effort all around."

Lakeland senior F Aidan Welcome (14 points) and senior G Marc Cummins (9 points) enabled the Hornets (9-6) to establish and hold the lead throughout much of the game. Briarcliff finished the season 11-2 and never found its flow. Jayden Larregue led the Bears with 13 and Aidan Murnane added 10, but Lakeiland posed some problems for all.

"They were very athletic, and hats off to them for being the better team yesterday," Briarcliff Coach Friedman said. "To their credit, we cut it from 12 to one late in the third and they didn't panic and hit a couple of big shots."

"We had an incredible year, led by our seniors," Friedman said. "We'll always have to wonder what a normal season would have been like and what could have been, but I do feel in our heart we know what we were capable of. Our kids are champions of our league, went undefeated in Class B and made the phrase "Today's Not Cancelled" real. We are very proud of what we accomplished and will continue to build our program on the backs of this year's seniors. Thank you to Aidan Murnane, Brett Lachtman, Jacob Zednik, Spencer Safian, Sean Dy and the fans who support this program in so many ways."

...continued on next page
continued from previous page

best commentator in Section 1, Eli Makaron. We’ll be back. Bears keep coming!

The Bears defeated third-seeded Walter Panas 56-42 in Thursday’s semifinals behind 15 points from Jayden Larregue and 10 points from Zednik. Friedman added that Blake Smith was “huge off the bench defensively.”

Briarcliff bested No. 7 PEESKILL 48-40 in the quarterfinals on Wednesday. Larregue led the way with 18 points while Luke McCann added 12 points.

Lakeland advanced to the finals behind a heroic come-from-behind win over HALDANE, 51-50 triumph of the top-seeded host Blue Devils (10-1). Cummins banked home the winning shot with 1.5 seconds left as the Hornes overcame a 12-point, fourth-quarter deficit. Again, Nardelli was insane, particularly in the fourth, going for 26 in all.

Matteo Cervone scored 19 for Haldane in the loss, while Dan Santos added 12 and Soren Holmbo finished with 10. Haldane also had its hands full in a 78-61 opening-round win over No. 8 PUTNAM VALLEY (2-7), which fought back from a big-time deficit to make it a six-point game (67-61) with 2:50 left. In the end, Cervone, who scored a career-high 31 points, was unstoppable.

Southern Westchester Group 3

Behind a dominant second-half effort, top-seeded WESTLAKE pulled away for a 56-57 win over second-seeded Bronxville in the Southern Westchester Group 3 regional championship game on Saturday.

“I couldn’t be more happy with the way our season ended,” Westlake senior guard Carter Falkenberg said. “Finishing my high school career with a championship is all I ever wanted since working with my teammates since eighth grade, some since third grade.”

The host Wildcats led just 25-24 at halftime and actually trailed 14-2 to start the third grade.”

March 16 - March 22, 2021

EXAMINER MEDIA

Byram Hills players hoist hardware after 63-45 win over Sleepy Hollow in S. West. regional final.

Southern Westchester Group 2/1

“Something happened when the playoffs started where we really started clicking,” Byram Hills coach Ted Repa said. “Tonight, we fed off our defensive intensity and the enthusiasm from our bench. We were able to collect a little lead and finished it out.”

Lightning quick senior point guard Matteo Sinon led the charge, dropping a game-high 21 points while dishing out seven assists. Bobby Chicoine (14 points, 15 rebounds), Brady Karp (12 points) and Ben Dreilinger (8 points) helped lead the balanced scoring Bobcats to the win.

“Everyone did their part and it was a great team win,” Sinon said. “It’s easy for defenses to key in on one guy but if everyone can do their part like everyone did today, we’re a hard team to beat.

“This is great and I’ve been trying to do this since my freshman year (win a championship). It’s awesome to win my last high school game, especially with everything that’s been taken away from us as seniors.”

Host Byram Hills used its suffocating defense to force turnovers and lead to easy buckets in transition. They jumped out to a big first half lead and went into halftime up 36-20.

“Our trainer said at halftime, ’Is everybody playing well?’ It was one of those nights, at least in the first half, where everybody played well,” Repa said. “The second half was like a slugfest.”

Sinon picked up his third foul and headed to the bench midway through the third quarter. But Byram wouldn’t let the momentum slip away and held firmly to the lead, going into the fourth quarter with a commanding 49-32 advantage.

“This isn’t the first time they’ve done that. I’ve gotten in foul trouble a couple times this year,” Sinon said. “They always hold it down for me. I know they’ve always got my back and I’ve always got their back.”

S-12

Boys Hoops Notebook

continued on next page
Sinon, who battled an ankle injury throughout the playoffs, used his explosive first step to get past Sleepy defenders for pull-up jumpers or to get to the rim. When the defense collapsed him, he found open Bobcat teammates for easy layups.

“Matteo obviously does everything for us,” Repa said. “I think he showed everybody how valuable he is to us and was great throughout the playoffs. The practice before playoffs started, he rolled his ankle really bad and we didn’t think he was going to play. He’s been icing and taping it up every single game. It’s been beautiful to watch.

“The thing that we talk to Matteo most about is because he’s so talented sometimes he tries to do too much. Maybe even the rolled ankle made him trust his teammates a little bit more. He gets so many open shots for his teammates and then that opens it up for him.”

Byram grinded out a 52-47 road win over Ardsley in semifinals behind 15 points and 15 rebounds from Chicoine. Sinon (7 points, 12 assists), Karp (9 points) and Justin Gordon (8 points) were key contributors. Karp and Daniel Ahern led the defensive effort as the Bobcats held Ardsley to just 10 points in the first half.

The Bobcats, who finished the season 8-4, beat Edgemont 58-45 in the quarterfinals. Sinon (17 points), Chicoine (15 points, 19 rebounds), Karp (11 points) and Gordon (11 points) led the way.

“I did not think this was going to be one of our stronger years,” Repa admitted. “For these kids to win their last game, especially these seniors, it’s a pretty unique thing. We tried to view this season as an opportunity and to be grateful for it. And I think they took that approach, especially once the playoffs arrived.”

Fourth-seeded WHITE PLAINS fell to fifth-seeded Scarsdale, 53-44, in the quarterfinals of the Southern Westchester Group 1 regional playoffs.

Byram Hills and coach Ted Repa flexed out and overcome a slow start to the season to win a regional title.

Westlake’s Justin Silva soars in for a shot against Bronxville in Wildcats’ regional final win over Broncos Saturday.

Byram Hills’ Justin Gordon glides in for shot in South. West. regional title win over Sleepy Hollow.

Fox Lane’s Aidan Giannelli, who scored game-high 18 points, fires a corner three over Mahopac’s Michael Callahan in Foxes’ win over Indians.

Byram Hills’ Brady Karp skies for rebound in South. West. regional title win over Sleepy Hollow.
Greeley Comes Up Short Against John Jay-CR in Finals

By Rob DiAntonio @RJD_Photos

After defeating John Jay-Cross River in their second meeting during the regular season and playing to a tie in the first game, HORACE GREELEY was confident heading into the Putnam-Northern Westchester regional championship game.

But the top-seeded John Jay Wolves took control from the start and went on to hand the third-seeded Quakers a 5-1 loss on Saturday at Brewster Ice Arena.

“We did a better job in the two regular season games of staying out of the penalty box,” Greeley coach Dan Perito said. “I thought we had a good start but then took three penalties in the first (period), which took us out of the rhythm we were starting to establish. I thought John Jay did a good job of preventing second-chance opportunities and when we did get on the power play, they were able to kill all of our opportunities.”

John Jay had its 2-0 lead cut in half when Ben Cohen scored an unassisted breakaway goal with 8:55 left in the second period. But the Wolves had the answer, scoring just two minutes later to make it a two-goal game again.

Arye Wolberg and Ben Madden combined for 31 saves for the Quakers, who finished their season with a 6-4-1 record.

“I told the team after the game last night I couldn’t be prouder of this team and we could go on to win 10 straight sectional titles, I still would hold this team at the top,” Perito said. “Everything that we sacrificed to make sure we had a full season and had a chance to get to the finals is a true testament to their character and dedication to our program.”

Greeley gained an early lead and cruised past No. 2 MAHOPAC 9-3 in the semifinals on Thursday.

continued on next page

Horace Greeley players pose with P-NW runner-up title plaque after Quakers were knocked off by John Jay, 5-1, Saturday at the BIA.

Greeley’s Jared Rothman looks to get a shot off while Mahopac’s Chris Stiller defends in Quakers’ 9-3 semifinal win over Indians.

Greeley’s Gabe Adams slips a shot past Mahopac’s Mike Horan for a third-period goal.

Quakers celebrate an early goal in semifinal win over Mahopac.

Greeley’s Ben Cohen skates past Mahopac’s Nick Biagini in Quakers’ 9-3 win in the Putnam-Northern Westchester semifinals.

Mahopac’s Ryan Caraher makes his move while Greeley’s Charlie Spar defends in Indians’ 9-3 semifinal playoff loss to Quakers.

Ice Hockey Notebook

ROB DIANTONIO / RICH MONETTI PHOTOS
Sports

Football Notebook

Lipstick on a Pigskin!

Long Awaited Section 1 Grid Season Kicks off Friday

Friday’s Action

Pleasantville at Putnam Valley, 6 p.m. (Perennial power Panthers take aim at rebuilding Tigers)
Carmel at Fox Lane, 7 p.m. (Legendary Coach Cayea back on Rams sideline after crazy off-season)

Saturday’s Action

Haldane at Dobbs Ferry, 1:30 p.m. (Blue Devils visit traditional Class C powerhouse Eagles)
Bronxville at Valhalla, 1:30 p.m. (Last time we checked Vikings were reigning Section 1 Class C champs, still are!) Westlake at Byram Hills, 1:30 p.m. (Introductions not necessary, but say hi to Bobcat RB Matt Weiler as he sprints by... a doozy on tap)
Sleepy Hollow at Panas, 1:30 p.m. (Panthers coming off a rough year)
Horace Greeley at Lakeland, 1:30 p.m. (Hornets, Quakers both on the uptick, not much wiggle room for losses)
Peekskill at Poughkeepsie, 1:30 p.m. (Two rebuilding programs)
Edgemont at Briarcliff, 1:30 p.m. (Remember when Edgemont was Edgemont at the turn of the century, been a long time)
Nanuet at Hen Hud, 5 p.m. (Sailors drop down in class, expect to contend)
John Jay at Yorktown, 7 p.m. (League title could be on the line in Week 1 in a mighty clash of Class A titans)
Somers at Mahopac, 7 p.m. (DeMatteo vs. DeMatteo vs. DeMatteo; a highly anticipated family affair that could be settled by Somers RB Jack Kaiser)
Beacon at Brewster, 7 p.m. (Bears better figure out a way against struggling Bulldog program)

Somers at Mahopac, 7 p.m. (Leaves the door wide open for an exciting contest between a pair of powerhouse programs)

Ice Hockey Notebook continued

continued from previous page

“We did a great job of establishing our forecheck and forcing turnovers,” Perito said, “and countering off those turnovers to create scoring chances.”

Gabe Adams and Cohen paced the Quakers with three goals and an assist apiece. Ilan Laurence notched a goal and three assists. Jared Rothman added a goal while Dylan Murtoski had two assists.

Wolberg made 24 saves.

Ryan Caraher netted two goals to lead the Indians. Jake Roberts had one goal while Mike Horan made 33 saves in net.

Greeley easily disposed of sixth-seeded MOUNT PLEASANT, 8-1, in the quarterfinals on Wednesday:

Adams and Rothman (1 assist) each had two goals to lead the Quakers. Charlie Spar added a goal and an assist. Jacob Rothman and Ethan Stogdill each added a goal. Ben Madden made 30 saves.

Robert Criscuolo scored the IceCats goal on a feed from Matt Labriola. John Sarfaty made 29 saves in net.

Sixth-seeded WHITE PLAINS fell to No. 3 Rye 11-2 in the quarterfinals of the Southern Westchester tournament.

John Myers and Daniel Cardozo had a goal each for the Tigers. Anna Chochrek (32 saves) and Sean Keenan combined for 45 saves.

No. 4-seed BYSNS (Brewster/Yorktown/Somers/North Salem) saw senior G Matt Gergley stand on his head to make saves (39 in all) until John Jay pulled away in the third period for a 5-2 semifinal win. The Herd gave the Wolves all they could handle and should be proud of a terrific season.
Welcome to Titletown!

Fox Lane Snags P-NW Large School Title; Lakeland Upsets Briarcliff for P-NW Small School Crown; Westlake Cops S. West. Group 3 Chip; Byram Hills Storms S. West. Group 2

Members of the top-seeded Fox Lane team bask in the championship glory of the Foxes’ 57-48 win over No.2 Mahopac last Saturday in the Putnam-Northern Westchester Large School regional championship.

After starting the season 0-5, fifth-seeded Lakeland players and coaches pose with Putnam-Northern Westchester Small School regional title plaque after defeating second-seeded Briarcliff, 52-44, Saturday.

Third-seeded Byram Hills got hot when it had to and went on to hoist the hardware after the Bobcats’ 63-45 thrashing of No.4 Sleepy Hollow in Saturday’s Southern-Westchester Group 2 regional championship.

Top-seeded Westlake players pose with the Southern-Westchester Group 3 regional title plaque Saturday after the Wildcats blew past No.2 Bronxville, 56-37, to finish the season at 12-2.