

Killer Bee(b)s!



RAY GALLAGHER / GIL MCMAHON PHOTOS

Mahopac Junior Yields Honey in Win over Bears

Mahopac junior F Lauren "Beebs" Beberman (11) did a little bit of everything last Tuesday in the Indians' 51-39 league win over host Brewster and senior star Grace Galgano (2), who was held below her season-long averages while Beberman went for 10 points, six assists, five boards and five steals while paying serious attention to Galgano... see Girls' Hoops Notebook

Examiner Sports Mullet-Proof!



RAY GALLAGHER PHOTO

Mahopac Stylin', Profiling in 61-56 Win over Somers

Mahopac senior F Colum Ranaghan (R) has been grooming a stylish mullet for quite some time now, and it barely budged an inch on this strong post move against upcoming Somers sophomore Andrew Violante (22) in the host Indians' 61-56 win over the Tuskers last Thursday when Mahopac raced out to a 22-7 first-quarter lead but held on for dear life in the end... see Boys' Hoops Notebook

Sports

NWE/Putnam Boys' Hoops

Mahopac Holds off Somers, Panas Topples Hen Hud

By Ray Gallagher
Examiner Sports Editor @Directrays

Our unlucky student athletes seem cursed these days. Just when we got back into a logjam of action last Thursday, Mother Nature blew us off course with a slew of cancellations on Friday, followed by major setbacks to Sunday's Slam Dunk Challenge at Iona College. With COVID- and weather-related cancellations getting the best of us since coming out of the holiday break, we got some peak league-related action on Thursday only to see a mini-storm push through early Friday and more ice on Sunday, thus adding to an already-packed menu of make-up games.

Thursday's stop took us to **MAHOPAC** where the Indians (3-3) played host to a **SOMERS** club that has been searching for its hoops legs after a prolonged 2021 football campaign. What some folks in Somers don't quite understand is that it's going to take some time for veteran Coach Chris DiCintio's Tuskers to get up to speed. DiCintio is literally implementing a plan of the fly, each and every day since his

Tuskers (1-6) showed up fashionably late to the hardwood on account of a NYSPHSAA soccer title and a state finals appearance on the grid.

Basketball is a complicated game, especially when you mix in four talented sophomores, who have never faced this level of competition, and your seniors and juniors are still adjusting from overtime on the pitch/grid.

Still, there are grumblings at Somers. Why do we have so much success in soccer and football, but we're 1-6 in basketball? Well, we just laid out part of the problem. Another issue, like it or not, is the fact that Somers was never a basketball powerhouse before DiCintio hopped aboard nearly a dozen years ago. The cupboard was bereft of prime-time hoopsters when he arrived, until John Decker's teams came along.

It took some time to change the culture, but the Tusker culture was alive and well last Thursday after Mahopac went off for a 22-7 first-quarter lead. Somers could have folded right then and there – but in the old-school images of Gilroy, Tradito, Bicknese, Maestri, Pires, Fecci and Decker – the Tuskers did not quit. Somers cut the deficit to three late in the fourth, only to see Mahopac senior Michael Callahan drop consecutive free throws in the waning seconds to secure the win.

"In all my years of coaching, more than two decades between Somers and Rye, I've never coached a team as snakebitten as this one," DiCintio admitted. "We've already lost three games this year in the last 30 seconds. Our kids (at Somers) have enjoyed enormous success in soccer and football this year, and just like they did in 2016 when we won state titles in both, there's a process of development that requires patience. If we were running five or six seniors out there, it might be different, but we're giving four sophomores major minutes, and we're asking our football players to play basketball one day after a heartbreaking loss in the state finals. Talk about a rock and a hard place.

"We saw the light at the end of the tunnel against Mahopac, though," DiCintio added. "We could have quit right there after that first quarter when we were hit with things we've never seen from

Mahopac, which we scouted and knew what to expect."

What the Tuskers didn't expect was a barrage of threes from Indian senior G Max Gomes, who went for the vast majority of his career-high 20 points in the first quarter. Indian G Patrick McMahon and F Ryan Reilly each added a dozen.

"Max got us going," Mahopac Coach Tom McMahon said. "Somers is way too talented to go away. I thought we played great defense, except for the second quarter. Somers is very good. I know they were winless before today, but they have played some tough opponents and coming off a soccer state title and a football state final, it's impossible to try and get ready for basketball.

"Callahan had a great game for us and hit the big 3 late and then the free throws to put it away," the coach added. "Ryan Reilly was really good for us inside and I thought Colum Ranaghan played great defense."

Somers did manage to post its first win of the season in Saturday's 57-51 win over host **YORKTOWN**, which has lost three of the last four, including a 57-50 setback to John Jay CR last Thursday.

In the Somers/ Yorktown game, Tusker junior F Matt Fitzsimons scored 15 of his game-high 20 points in the first half while Bennett Leitner (13) and young Andrew Violante (14 second-quarter points off 4 treys) did major damage.

"We finally closed one out," DiCintio said. "Felt good for the kids to do so."

Senior F Eddie Brucj led the Huskers (4-5) with 18 points, following a solid effort against John Jay CR, in which he posted a solid double-double (20 points, 14 rebounds). Billy Feeks had 14 points and seven boards in the loss to Jay.

Getting out to see Class A **WALTER PANAS** remains a major priority since before the break, and the Panthers (6-2) were supposed to be our first stop last Tuesday when they were set to take on sister school **LAKELAND**, but the Hornets dipped on account of a pause, and

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Mahopac senior Max Gomes gets some ups defend Somers sophomore Mac Sullivan in host Indians' 61-56 win over Somers Thursday.

RAY GALLAGHER PHOTOS



Somers sophomore F Mac Sullivan takes on Mahopac senior C Ryan Reilly in Tuskers' 61-56 loss to host Indians Thursday.



Mahopac senior Michael Callahan attempts to block shot by Somers sophomore Andrew Violante in Indians' 61-56 win over visiting Tuskers Thursday.

N. West./Putnam Fab Five Hoops Poll

No.1 PANAS – Class A Panthers (6-2) welcome Poughkeepsie (6-3), Peekskill, Lourdes and Lakeland in a mega-tough, four-game stretch through Jan. 20, and we'll settle for nothing less than 2-2, though 3-1 or better is what we expect from a unit that just might challenge for its third gold ball in Panther history.

No.2 HALDANE – Coach V's Class C Blue Devils (7-1) are poised to put the hammer down on Put Valley today; curious to see if they blow the doors off or allow a youthful PV club to hang around.

No.3 LAKELAND – Coach Fallo's Class A Hornets (6-3) lost at Lourdes, 81-79, and then went into a pause, but things will get serious from here on out, including a league dust-up against Hen Hud, followed by a road game at Poughkeepsie, which will tell us a lot about Lakeland's prospects.

No.4 MAHOPAC – Coach McMahon's Class A Indians (3-3) are, without question, that team that will show up every night expecting to whip some tail, and they have a chance to prove the naysayers wrong with this upcoming four-game stretch, including Yorktown, Greeley, John Jay CR and Brewster upcoming. Anything less than 3-1 is unacceptable.

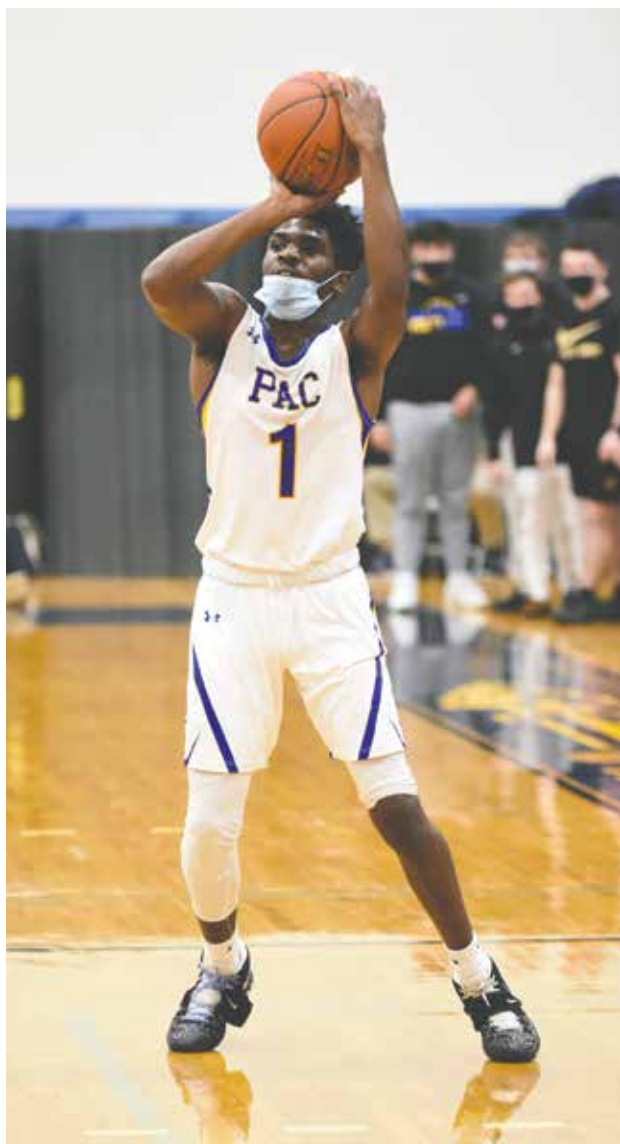
No.5 OSSINING – Coach Casey's Class AA Pride (4-3) have consecutive losses to Clarkstown South and Fox Lane, and things don't get any easier with Scarsdale on deck, so it's time to stop the bleeding to figure out what we are.

HM YORKTOWN – Coach Pavella's Class A Huskers (4-5) hope to snap out of their recent funk with chances against Mahopac, Magnus, Greeley and Somers, which are a combined 8-19. Seriously, they need to go 2-2 or better. We see a bunch of winnable games on the docket.

HM HEH HUD – Coach Hirsch's Sailors (4-4) had Panas on the ropes through three Q's, so when they put their best foot forward the Sailors are a blue-collar bunch of bad men.



Mahopac senior Ryan Reilly goes for two of the 12 he would sink on Somers in Indians' 61-56 win Thursday.



Mahopac senior Max Gomes lit up Somers for a career-high 20 points in Indians' 61-56 win over visiting Somers Thursday.

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then the ice came Sunday when Panas was set to face **WHITE PLAINS** in the Slam Dunk Challenge (congrats to legendary White Plains Coach Spencer Mayfield on his 400th career win previously #MuchRespect!).

Panas then ventured to the other side of town for a league tilt against neighboring rival **HEN HUD**, who hung tough before a 26-point fourth-quarter outburst from the Panthers, who went on to produce a 62-52 League I-D win.

Panther hotshot Alex Tavarez led a rusty Panas club with 23 points while Maleek McNeil and Oliver Smith each had 12 points. Hen Hud led by a point after three quarters and smelled an upset before the Panthers snuffed it out on the boards and went to work in the fourth.

"We were pretty rusty out of the gate," Panas Coach Mike Auerbach said. "Three weeks between games with a really scattered practice schedule hasn't been ideal, but Hen Hud played well, too. They did some stuff that made us a little uncomfortable and we didn't adjust well enough early on. I think at this point a win is a win though. With so much uncertainty everyday, we take it and move forward."

Gino Wamack had 14 points to pace four Sailors in double digits.

Hen Hud hung as tough as it could but size matters

when it comes to Panas, and the height-challenged Sailors (4-4) couldn't measure up on the glass down the stretch.

"Our guys played very tough and executed really well," Sailor skipper Jordan Hirsch said. "We need to clean some things up and keep improving as a team, but Panas is very, very tough. They really hurt us on the offensive glass with their size in fourth."

CLASS AA

OSSINING was looking to step up in class when the Pride (4-3) paid FOX LANE a visit last Thursday, but the Foxes (5-3) showed why they are in the hunt for the league title behind a 62-44 win. Fox Lane could not keep that momentum going, though, and suffered a 41-33 loss to undefeated North Rockland (9-0), which is taking Class AA by storm with quality wins over the Foxes and Panas.

CARMEL (0-2) has played just two games due to a late start on account of its state football championship in early Dec., but the squad looked like it shook off a bunch of rust in Saturday's 73-62 loss to Scarsdale (7-2), one of the top teams in Section 1 to date. Ram F Nick DiLeo looked fresh as he dropped 20 points and snagged five boards. Andrew Fiore (16 points, 3 rebounds and Randy Aboagye (10 points, 5 boards) were solid contributors on both ends of the floor.

CLASS B/C

HALDANE sent visiting **CROTON** packing with a 73-39 loss last Thursday when the surging Blue Devils (7-1) saw every player on the team score, including Matteo Cervone (14), Soren Holmbo (14), Ben Bozsk (13), Robert Viggiano (10) and Ryan Eng-Wong (7).

Haldane then posted a 68-60 win over visiting Section 9 foe Chester Saturday behind 19 points from swingman Soren Holmbo. Cervone dropped another 17 and Tristen Reid went for 14 as the Blue Devils continue to live up to the hype they've injected into the community.

"Matteo Cervone, Soren Holmbo, are leading us offensively and Robert Viggiano and Ryan Irwin are all averaging double digits," Haldane Coach Joe Virgadamo said. "We also have Tristen Reid, Ben Boszik and Will Bradley being explosive on offense as well as some others coming off of the bench. Our ability to share the ball and make the extra pass has been a huge factor to our success as well as our defensive intensity."

PUTNAM VALLEY (0-5) hung tough with Class AA John Jay EF before falling 58-55 behind a team-high 13 points from senior G Cole Durocher. Senior G Tommy Calicchio and freshman forward James Apostolico (career high) added nine points apiece. The improving Tigers will have their mettle tested today when they visit League III-E rival Haldane.



Mahopac senior Patrick McMahon goes for three of the dozen he would drop on Somers in Indians' 61-56 win Thursday.

Sports

NWE/Putnam Girls' Hoops

Mahopac Hitting Stride in Wins over Brewster, Somers

By Tony Pinciario

Players and coaches will tell you that nothing positive comes out of a loss. However, senior and captain Melanie DeMeo and her **MAHOPAC** teammates might disagree.

Following a loss to an undefeated **WALTER PANAS** last month, Mahopac walked away upbeat.

"The positive thing coming out of that game was that we didn't hang our heads down or give up," said the four-year varsity starter and point guard. "After getting into early team foul trouble and falling behind big, we fought our way back and made it a close game."

Since that game, Mahopac has won three of its last four, including triumphs over **BREWSTER** (51-39) and **SOMERS** (50-27), last week. Brewster (8-2) had handed Panas (9-1) its first loss of the season prior to the holiday break.

Mahopac (5-4) took control of the Brewster game in the third quarter, extending its lead to 15 points.

"The key to the Brewster win was that we came ready to play," said DeMeo, who had 13 points and ran the break to precision. "We had energy all throughout the game, we

were shooting the ball well and our defense made it easy for us to hold the lead."

Mahopac held Brewster's outstanding senior, F Grace Galgano, to 12 points. Meanwhile, Julie DeBrockey led Mahopac with 15 points and Lauren Beberman added 10 points.

Along with beating Brewster and Somers, Mahopac is now 4-3 overall and 2-0 in a difficult league.

"Winning league games is always tough," DeMeo said. "There are all good teams in our league so starting off 2-0 feels really good, considering the hard work that we put in."

Mahopac has once again established itself as a top team in its league and in Class A. The Indians were the Northern Westchester-Putnam Large-School Champions last year. Even with the graduation of four seniors, including two starters, DeMeo and her fellow veterans have Mahopac playing at a high level.

"They were a huge part of our team and we knew they were going to be hard to replace but we were confident that we were still going to have a good team," DeMeo said. "As preseason progressed, I think what gave me a good feeling about this team was that we are so close-knit. We are friends on and off the court, which makes this team special."

Mahopac was even at 2-2 through four games, but DeMeo and her teammates were still acclimating themselves to each other. She said the team gelled and became more comfortable with each other.

Mahopac Coach Chuck Scozzafava credits DeMeo, who will attend the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth in the fall and play basketball, with playing a complete game.

"Mel has stepped up as one of our leaders on the court, both offensively and defensively," Scozzafava said. "Mel usually gets to defend the top guard on the opposing team."

"She's been a great influence on the younger players, as well."

DeMeo, who plans on majoring in Architecture and Interior Design, is averaging 10 points, 4.5 rebounds, three assists and two steals per game.

DeMeo led Mahopac with 12 points against Somers (1-5). Kristina

Rush added 10 points and Beberman finished with nine points.

BREWSTER closed out 2021 by handing Panas its first loss of the season, but Mahopac dashed the Bears' momentum to open 2022.

Mahopac defeated Brewster, 51-39, but the Bears rebounded to handle Horace Greeley (58-30) and Dobbs Ferry (61-34).

"It was a very disappointing game," Brewster Coach Mike Castaldo said of the Mahopac game. "We didn't come out with the same intensity and energy as Mahopac did. Mahopac was the team that played like they had something to prove and they showed they are the best team in the league right now. They shot the ball very well and played great team defense."

Galgano posted a triple double – 23 points, 13 rebounds and 10 blocked shots, against Greeley, and added seven steals. Adrianna Calicchia turned in a season-best 18 points.

"It was a great defensive game overall," Castaldo said. "The guards got a lot of steals and deflections in the press and Grace was a force down low. Adrianna, a

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Mahopac G Melanie DeMeo dropped 13 points in Indians' 51-39 win over host Brewster Tuesday.



Brewster F Madison Dakin was denied here by Julia Paolicelli but had six points and seven rebounds in Bears' 51-39 loss to visiting Mahopac last Tuesday.



Brewster G Jordan Niles tries to split Mahopac defenders Lauren Beberman and Melanie DeMeo in host Bears' 51-39 loss to Indians.

Sports

NWE/Putnam Girls' Hoops



Brewster G Sophia Alzugaray tries to gain lane on Mahopac F Lauren Beberman in Bears' 51-39 loss to visiting Indians Tuesday.



Mahopac F Jess Sterbens (24) was inserted into the starting lineup and went for seven points, nine rebounds and two assists in Pac win over Brewster.



Putnam Valley junior G Eva DeChent will shoot for 1,000 career points today against Haldane.

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senior, played the best game of her career and I could not have been more proud of her. Adrianna executed the game plan to perfection and really stepped up for us. She has been playing great and has been a difference maker for us."

Against Dobbs, Galgano had another strong game with 24 points, 15 rebounds and eight rejections. Calicchia finished with 14 points and Margo Cunningham and Madison Dakin each added 10 points.

Brewster (8-2 overall) will play John Jay-Cross River, Tuesday, and Yorktown, Friday.

PANAS went into the holiday break experiencing its first loss of the season – to Brewster.

The Panthers used that time to work on a few things and returned for its 2022 opener with a solid 53-28 win over Hen Hud.

Freshman Cadence Nicholas rang up a game-high 18 points. Sofia Tavares and Katie Hofmann added 9 points apiece and Kelsey Cregan had eight points and eight rebounds for the Panthers, who had their Slam Dunk Challenge game against Putnam Valley canceled Sunday (icy conditions).

"The game against Brewster showed us that even although we have won tough games, it does not mean we are unbeatable," Cregan said. "Brewster is a good team that came to compete. The loss definitely motivated us to work hard in practice over break and come back from break with a win. It was very important for us to win because we didn't let one loss get to us and lead to multiple losses."

Panas is now 9-1 overall and 2-0 in league play.

Following its lone loss this season, **OSSINING** defeated Fox Lane, 65-51, to run its winning streak to three in-a-row. Sophomore Joey Jowers had a strong game with a team-leading 18 points. She also registered seven steals. Senior Karen Perriott finished with 11 points and a team-best 10 rebounds and Angelica Rios also had 11 points and she grabbed eight rebounds.

Michelle Mercado had eight rebounds and seven assists for the Pride (6-1).

LAKELAND (8-0) and **YORKTOWN** (2-3) did not play last week, but Lakeland could soon be 10-0 before they face **PEEKSKILL** (4-2) and Panas on the 18th and 20th of Jan.

in a pair of pivotal league games. The Red Devils are surging behind talented freshman F Bethani Overby.

PUTNAM VALLEY (4-4) junior G Eva DeChent is only a couple of buckets away from 1,000 career points, which should be attainable today against **HALDANE** (3-5). The Rhode Island-bound DeChent is also closing in on Kristi Dini's school record for career points. The Tigers, who are still acclimating to new Coach Don Hamlin, have lost three of their last four, but their opponents in those three losses are a combined 19-7, and PV – the 2020 Class B sectional champ and 2021 small school N.West-Putnam regional winner – is just starting to get healthy, so expect a major run in the coming days.

– Ray Gallagher contributed to this story

Sports

Overtime 3-Pointers Lift Briarcliff to a Win Over the Panthers

By Andy Jacobs

Caroline Barbalato sure picked the right time to catch fire on Thursday evening.

The Briarcliff junior point guard swished a trio of shots from beyond the 3-point arc during a two-and-a-half-minute blitz in overtime, propelling the Bears to a 54-48 victory over host Pleasantville.

With just five points after four quarters, Barbalato, seeing the Panther defense focused on stopping teammate Cat Carrafiello, exploded for the Bears' first 10 in the four-minute extra session to send them to their sixth win in eight games this season.

"You know, she can do that. She can do that," said Bears head coach Denise Hamlin after watching the late-game heroics from Barbalato. "A lot of times she just defers and wants to make everybody else better. She realized that they were playing Cat in a box-and-one. And she stepped up. So give her a whole lot of credit. She stepped up big time."

"We knew those were the top two players and made a conscious decision not to let Carrafiello beat us in the overtime, and the other girl beat us," said Panther coach Dillon Clark. "She made plays when they needed plays. I give her credit."

In a contest between two rival schools that each hadn't played a game in more than two weeks, the lead changed hands four times and the score was tied on a half dozen occasions before Barbalato gave Briarcliff the lead for good 17 seconds into overtime by connecting on a 3-point shot from the right wing.

Pleasantville cut the Bears' lead to 44-43 25 seconds later as Ruby Donohue made a 15-foot jumper, but Barbalato soon launched another 3-pointer, this time from four feet behind the arc that again touched nothing but the net. A pair of free throws by Reilly Byrne with 2:19 to go then brought the Panthers within 47-45.

But that was as close as they would get



Pleasantville senior Abby McAllister dribbles up the court in the third quarter against the visiting Briarcliff Bears.

ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS



A loose ball in the second half of last week's Briarcliff-Pleasantville showdown has the attention of several players, including the Panthers' Meghan Raefski, the first one to hit the floor.

because Barbalato wasn't quite finished yet. With 1:17 left on the clock, her 3-pointer from nearly 25 feet away just right of the key swished one more time as she was being fouled on her follow through. She added the free throw, stretching the Briarcliff lead to 51-45. Despite a right-corner trey by Meghan Raefski 10 seconds later, the Panthers were unable to overcome the eruption from Barbalato and wound up with their fifth consecutive loss.

"We're not happy with the outcome, obviously," said the Panthers' Clark. "But we're gonna take it and build from it. We're still a green team at the varsity level and we're learning how to win. I think a lot of people contributed in a lot of different ways tonight and that's a good thing going forward."

The Bears, with Carrafiello back on the floor after missing the three previous games



Briarcliff senior forward Eliza Aldrich fires a jump shot in the fourth quarter of last Thursday evening's 54-48 overtime win over host Pleasantville.

with an injury, used a 9-0 spurt late in the first quarter to grab a 15-6 advantage. But three consecutive baskets, one of them a 3-pointer, by junior guard Gianna Doto, who finished with a team-high 16 points, moved the Panthers to within two points just over a minute into the second quarter.

A 10-0 burst by Pleasantville, highlighted by 3-point shots from Donohue and Doto, enabled the Panthers to jump ahead 23-20 with 2:18 left in the half. The Bears regained the lead by a point with 1:15 to go on a trey from Luella Luttkus before Donohue closed the first-half scoring with a 3-pointer that sent the teams off at intermission with the Panthers in front 26-24.

"We let down a very little bit," said Hamlin, whose team was outscored in the second quarter 18-9. "Against them, you can't let down at all. They can shoot, they're tough, they beat us to the ball. You let down a second and they're gonna capitalize. And that's really how the second quarter went. They took over in the second quarter."

The third quarter began with Carrafiello, who finished with a game-high 20 points, driving to the left baseline to roll in a layup that tied the score. With Pleasantville ahead 34-30, it was a wide-open Carrafiello who ended the period with a buzzer-beating



Ruby Donohue of Pleasantville boxes out Kyla Miller of Briarcliff as they await a potential rebound in the second half of Thursday's game that went to overtime.



Briarcliff's Caroline Barbalato (left) is greeted by teammate Cat Carrafiello after making her third straight 3-pointer in overtime against Pleasantville last Thursday.

3-pointer from the left elbow on a feed from Barbalato.

But in the final quarter, the Panthers built their largest lead of the night, 39-34, when Donohue, who wound up with 15 points, connected on a trey with 5:10 remaining. Briarcliff closed to within a point on a bucket by Rebecca Kratz with just over a minute to go and grabbed its first lead since the second quarter on two free throws by Carrafiello with 27 seconds on the clock.

The Panthers tied the game at 41-apiece on a foul shot from Byrne with 20 seconds left and had a chance to win in the final seconds. But a shot by Donohue was just short and then another by Byrne was just long, sending the game to overtime and setting the stage for the exploits from the Bears' Barbalato.

"I'm super proud of them, they worked hard," said Hamlin of her players. "I thought if we could get it to overtime, we could win because two of their kids had fouled out. So that's what I was hoping for, just try and tie it up."



The Panthers' Reilly Byrne searches for an open teammate near midcourt during last Thursday's game against visiting Briarcliff.

Sports

Briarcliff's Quick Start Overwhelms the Visiting Panthers

By Andy Jacobs

Reeling from three consecutive losses to conclude the 2021 portion of their schedule, The Briarcliff Bears took the court on Thursday afternoon determined to get back to winning ways.

Using a big run in each of the first three quarters, the Bears wound up overwhelming archrival Pleasantville 81-49. Senior forward Elliot Jones connected on five 3-pointers en route to a game-high 27 points as the host Bears evened their record at 3-3 and erased the sting of the previous game on their home floor.

"We had a really, really tough loss to Fox Lane," said Bears assistant coach Ezra Elliot, looking back on the 21-point defeat just before Christmas. "We got embarrassed on our home court and that doesn't happen very often. So we wanted to make sure that we came back and got on track right away."

That they did, grabbing a 12-0 lead before the game was even three minutes old. Jones opened the scoring 30 seconds after the tipoff with a put-back basket. A minute later, Ben Siegel made a steal and scored on a layup. Luke McCann soon followed with a short flip in the lane. Then came a 3-pointer from the right wing from Evan Van Camp, prompting a quick timeout by the Panthers.

Briarcliff's early burst was capped off by a McCann steal and up-court pass to Saad Hussain for a reverse layup. The Panthers, who turned the ball over six times during the big Bear run, finally got on the scoreboard with a free throw by Maxwell Hall with 4:45 left in the opening quarter. Dom Matica, who led P'ville with 21 points, provided a pair of 3-pointers and a buzzer-beating fast-break layup that narrowed the Panther deficit to 17-9 after one quarter.

A Matica 18-foot jumper from the right baseline two minutes into the second quarter kept the Panthers within 25-13, but that was as close as they would get the rest of the day. Jones started and ended a 13-2 Briarcliff blitz



Briarcliff guard Ben Siegel dribbles the ball into the frontcourt during last Thursday's home win over the Panthers.

ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS



Pleasantville sophomore guard Daniel Picart is met by Briarcliff's Luke McCann as he heads for the basket in last Thursday's game hosted by the Bears.

over the next three minutes with 3-pointers from the top of the key. His layup on a baseline drive with eight seconds to go in the half sent the Bears to intermission with a commanding 44-22 advantage.

"Jones was lights-out and we just don't match up that well with him in size," said Panther head coach Bob Jordon. "We're too inexperienced there. We have nine sophomores, just one senior and a junior or two that play. It's hopeful that these are learning experiences for them and they grow on these. We will be better from this moving forward."

The second half began with Panther point guard Daniel Picart making a nice feed to Etai Numberg for a layup. A conventional 3-point play from Matica with 6:11 remaining in the third quarter cut the Briarcliff lead to



Caleb Bronkema of Pleasantville launches a 3-point try from the right corner in the first half of the Panthers' road game vs. Briarcliff.

46-27, just the kind of momentum swing Jordon was hoping for.

"What we told them was we just want to continue to battle, want to show some pride, fight into that lead a little bit and see where it goes from there," he said. "And then hopefully in the fourth quarter, it's a little bit tighter and we've got a shot."

Unfortunately for the Panthers, after the bucket and free throw by Matica, they went scoreless for nearly four minutes. Meanwhile, Briarcliff went on another huge run, this time scoring 14 straight points, starting with a Jones 18-foot jumper from the left elbow. Then Jones found Van Camp free on a backdoor cut for a layup. McCann and Jones soon took turns scoring the Bears' next 10 points. By the time the Panthers' Aidan Picart put an end to the Briarcliff run with a 3-point shot from the right corner, the Bears' lead had ballooned to 33 points.

The final points of the game from Jones came eight seconds into the fourth quarter, stretching the Briarcliff margin to 70-35, when he drained a jumper from the top of the key with one foot on the line. By then, of course, the outcome had long since been decided and the Panthers, winners of four of their previous five games, were left to lick their wounds.

"If this is the baseline, let's see how much better we get by the time we see them in February," said Jordon. "Hopefully, it's a little bit tighter. Also, they have a little bit of pride. They were a little humiliated out there and they're gonna use that and hopefully battle with that."

The Bears' Elliot, moving over one seat in the absence of head coach Nick Friedman, who was missing because he has a newborn daughter to worry about, relished the way his team took care of business against the Panthers.

"I told the guys at halftime I was really proud that we came out and started the game the right way," he said. "We didn't wait around to get going. Right off the opening tip, we were ready to play."



The Bears' Luke McCann takes the ball to the basket along the left baseline in the 81-49 victory over Pleasantville.



Briarcliff senior Elliot Jones shoots the ball in the third quarter of last Thursday's win over visiting Pleasantville. He scored a game-high 27 points.



Pleasantville senior Dom Matica fires a long jumper from the left corner in the first half of last week's game at Briarcliff.

BEAR REBOUND

**Luke McCann and Briarcliff
Bounce Back in a Big Way
by Routing the Panthers
Last Thursday Afternoon**

