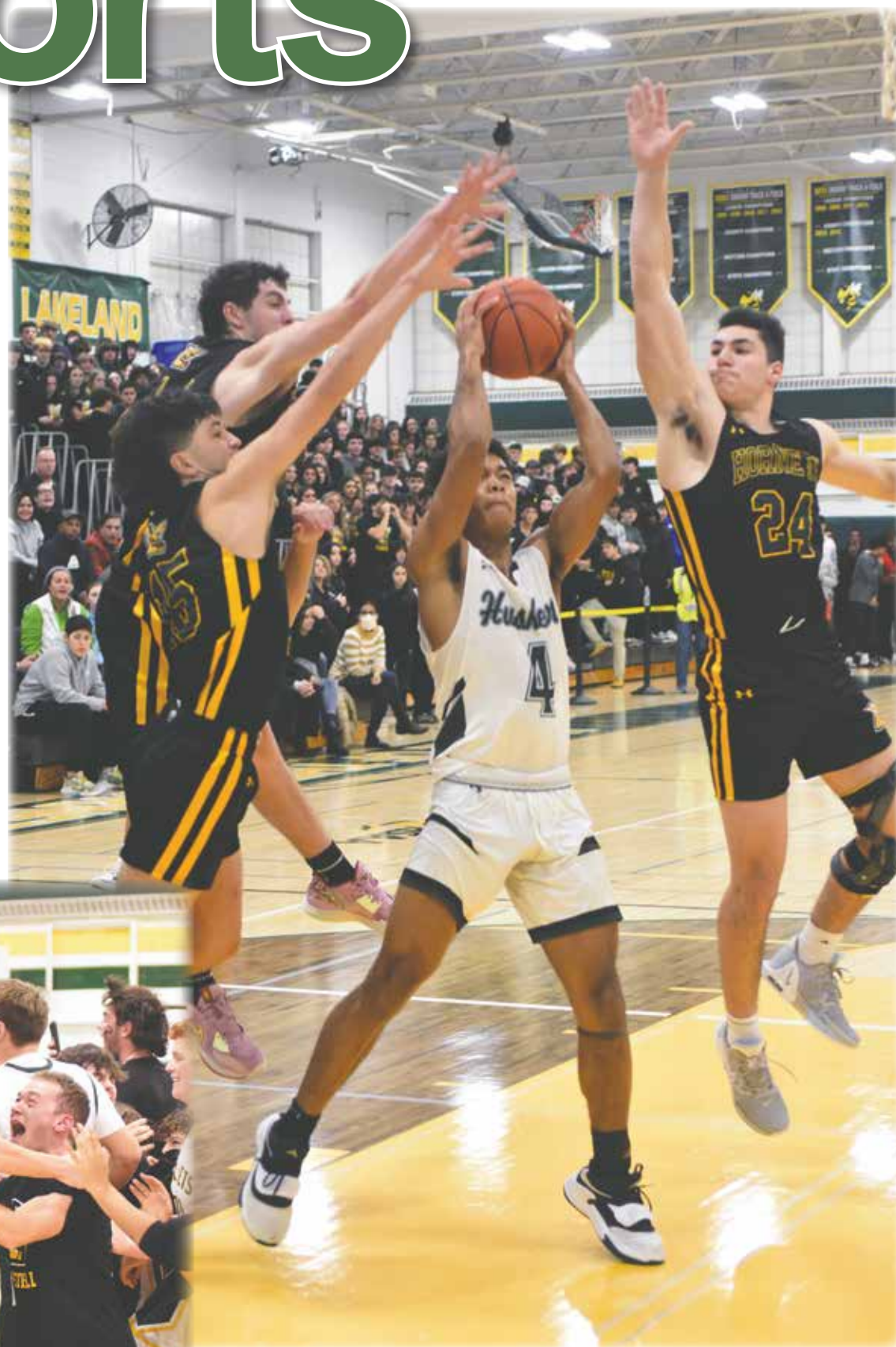


# Examiner Sports

## ‘Shi’ High!



RAY GALLAGHER PHOTOS

## Euphoric Lakeland Skies in Frantic Finish, Tops Yorktown

In a finish for the ages, Lakeland's Logan "Shi" Shiland (middle), Anthony Jennings (R) and Andrew Mendel (24) all get high in an effort to clamp down on Yorktown's Brandon Montero (4) in the Hornets' improbable 66-63 come-from-behind win over the visiting Huskers last Friday at Lakeland where Hornet players, including Jennings (15, inset), and black-clad fans would storm the court after erasing 17-point halftime deficit ... see Boys' Hoops Notebook



# Sports

## Boys Hoops Notebook

# Lakeland, Panas Come up Huge; Byram Snags B'Ville Tourney

## Westlake Crowned Kings at Croton Tourney; Stepinac, Fox Lane Shine Down South

By Ray Gallagher  
Examiner Sports Editor @Directrays

It appears as though most of Westchester is chock-full-of hoops goodness this winter, and places like Lakeland (5-1) and Walter Panas (5-0) are jacked and juiced for a run for the roses.

Nobody has ever really seriously considered a Lakeland vs. Walter Panas Section 1 Class A title game would ever come to fruition; until 2022, a year in which both clubs could find themselves making deep runs in March of 2023 based on the early returns. We will be lucky enough to see the two league rivals square off twice in



Panas senior G Derek Mojica launches J against D from Somers senior F Matt Fitzsimons in Panthers' 58-56 win over host Tuskers.

RAY GALLAGHER / ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS



Panas senior G Alex Tavarez skies for 2 of his game-high 29 points, including 10 in the 4thQ, in Panthers' 58-56 win over host Somers Saturday.

the preamble to the tournament, and many coaches have touted the intra-district rivals as serious challengers for the coveted gold ball. Imagine what that would look like. We'd be down with the sickness of this marquee matchup, but there will be many obstacles in the path to such a party as we're witnessing some very good ball being played in places like reigning Class A champion Poughkeepsie, which, while struggling out of the gate at 0-2 could foil such a plan in the end; Fox Lane (2-2), which will come out of its league having faced a grizzled schedule; Tappan Zee (3-0), which is always a pesky thorn in the side; Somers (1-1), which is already up to speed after a lengthy run for

the state roses on the grid. Yup, Class A hoops will be a blast this winter, so saddle up and come along for the ride.

The Panas vs. Somers' finale - in the 26th annual Michael DePaoli Memorial Basketball Tournament - saw the host Tuskers have the ball and the last crack at victory before the Panthers came up with a clutch stop to prevail in a 58-56 triumph. Again, Panas senior G Alex Tavarez was a whirling dervish, going for a game-high 29 points, including 10 in the fourth to infuriate the Tusker faithful.

"They beat Ossining last night by 15 after we barely beat them the night before,

*continued on next page*



Sports

Boys Hoops Notebook

continued from previous page

so we knew going in this was going to be a tough game, one we could not take lightly,” said Tavaréz, averaging over 25 PPG. “The biggest thing for us going into the year was developing chemistry, but now our goal this year is the section title and make it to states.”

Panas wing Cayden Turner added three second-half 3’s, including a big one down the stretch, to thwart the Somers comeback attempt behind 24 points from Tusker senior swingman Matt Fitzsimons (4 3’s), who came off the gridiron looking smoother than ever this weekend. Dillon Chenard added

11 for the Panthers. Somers guards Andrew Violante and Nate Cohen dropped 10 apiece while Dylan Ingraham went for nine.

“You have to be tough to win tough road games,” Panas Coach Mike Auerbach said. “It’s not going to be pretty when you play a road game against good teams, and Somers is a really good team. You gotta find kids who step up and make a play late, like Cayden Turner did when he hit that big 3 for us to put us up late. You love it to be pretty but you’ll take whatever you can get to win it. We had some key contributions, especially defensively, from guys other than Tavaréz, who just finds ways to win close games. We feel good about everybody defensively.

We’ve got seven or eight guys who can press, who can run and rebound for us.”

Tavaréz dropped 34 points, including 12 from downtown, a pair of dunks and his 1,000th career point to open the week in a 62-45 drubbing of Pelham before literally stealing a 59-57 win over OSSINING with a steal and buzzer-beating layup in the opening round of the Somers Tournament. Tavaréz, with 1,059 career points, now sits at No.2 on the all-time scoring list at Panas, just 64 points behind Scott Ganelas (1,123 – 1979-82).

Tavaréz added 10 caroms, four assists and seven steals against good Pelham club.

Against Pelham (2-2), Tyler Greene (10 points, 6 assists, 5 boards) and Derek Mojica (6 points) each dropped a pair of 3’s in the

first quarter and Cayden Turner (6 points, 4 boards, 4 assists) hit twice from distance in the third. Panas C Dillon Chenard had 10 rebounds and four blocks

“We didn’t play a great first half,” Auerbach said. “They were doing some things defensively we hadn’t seen yet in scrimmages or games but still led 27-22 at the half. Tavaréz needed 28 points entering the game to reach the 1,000-point milestone. He had a monster second half, scoring 24 points after the break, 34 in total to hit the 1,000-point mark midway through the fourth quarter.

“The team effort, especially in the second half was great,” Auerbach said. “Cayden Turner and Jerry Smallwood did a great job

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Somers junior G Andrew Violante takes run at Panas C Dillon Chenard in Tuskers’ 58-56 loss to visiting Panthers Saturday.



Pleasantville forward Etai Nunberg tosses up a one-hander in the lane during the first quarter of Friday afternoon’s 47-36 Panther win at Sleepy Hollow.



# Sports

## Boys Hoops Notebook

*continued from previous page*

pressuring the Pelham guards full court for 32 minutes. Dillon Chenard anchored the back end of the defense pulling in 10 rebounds and blocking four shots. "His presence at the back of our press allows our guards to be aggressive and take chances all over the court," Auerbach said of the lengthy Chenard.

By scoring his 1,000th point, Tavaréz became only the third boy in school history to reach that plateau. He now sits second overall just 61 points behind Scott Ganales for the all-time scoring leader at Panas.

"He's got a great shot to become the all-time leading scorer in school history on the boys side sometime within the next month," Auerbach said.

Against Ossining, the Pride cut the deficit to four at 32-28 with just over 5:00 to play in the third and took a 39-38 lead open fourth, but Tavaréz hit a layup with seven seconds left, stole the inbound and did his best Dennis Johnson impression (just Google it) by stealing the inbound and scoring again for the win.

"That was one of the wildest games I've ever been a part of," Auerbach admitted. "We played a really good first half. It was the best half of basketball Dillon Chenard has played

for us. He was the best player on both ends for 16 minutes, finishing with nine points, 15 rebounds, 4 blocks. I think we hit a bit of a wall in the second half. The emotional game Tuesday plus not going terribly deep down the bench yet, I think caught up with us a bit in the second half. Ossining has a solid group of athletes too and were very active on the defensive end making it tough on us to find anything easy. Their front line took over as well. The 6'3 athletic types, of which Ossining has a couple, are an Achilles for us right now as we don't match up great."

The last minute or so from Tavaréz was special. He scored nine points in the final 49 seconds, with all of Ossining's defensive attention on him.

"Obviously, we were fortunate to catch a break on the final play when they turned over the inbounds pass, but we did a lot of things well as a group in the final minute to be in that position," Auerbach admitted. "We have a tough schedule. The quality of teams in Northern Westchester is as good as it's been in a while. We're going to need to keep finding ways to make plays late in tight games."

The Pride (2-3) were led by Isaiah Ahlers (17 points, 5 rebounds, 4 steals), Dominique

*continued on next page*



Lakeland players and coaches start to sense their 66-63 come-from-behind win over visiting Yorktown Friday.



Somers junior G Nate Cohen drives lane in Tuskers' 58-56 loss to Panas in 26th annual Michael DePaoli Memorial Tourney.



Michael Hundzyski of Pleasantville sails to the basket on a fast break in the Panthers' win at Sleepy Hollow on Friday afternoon.



# Sports

*continued from previous page*

Bautista (15 points, 6 rebounds) and Jaiden Newton (13 points, 8 boards).

**SOMERS** then sent the Pride packing with a 59-37 win behind a terrific effort from Fitzsimons, who led the way with 21 points, including a cross-court steal and swinging slam dunk while Cohen (14 points) and Violante (12) were big contributors.

**LAKELAND** erased a 17-point deficit in a playoff-like atmosphere to edge **YORKTOWN**, 66-63, on a last-second layup from Grady Leonard, which was preceded by a career night from senior G Chris White-Luciano who knocked down 26 points, 22 in the second half.

“Our motto this year is ‘Why not us,’” Whyte-Luciano said. “We knew we played a bad first half, but the coaches challenged us to win this, so we took that to heart. We just went out there and played as hard as we could. I’ve been in the zone like this my freshman year at Iona and in AAU tournaments, but I loved the feeling in here tonight, I loved it. I’m thankful to everyone who came out tonight to cheer us on.”

Yorktown was cruising behind solid efforts from Billy Feeks (18 points, 4 assists), Justin Price (16 points, 5 rebounds, 4 steals) and Brandon Montero (15 points, 10 rebounds).

“Yorktown shot lights out in the first half, but our kids didn’t quit,” Lakeland Coach Steve Fallo said. “Give Yorktown all the credit in the world, they played their asses off. But we just told our kids, take your time, don’t panic, we’ll get back in this.”

When Yorkton’s Price drained a 75-foot buzzer-beater at the half, it looked like Lakeland had no chance. The youthful Huskers (3-2) went into the locker room with all the momentum and had been playing with the poise of seasoned veterans.

“Chris got hot, Grady made a couple of buckets and the game changes,” Fallo said. “Lakeland/Yorktown, that’s all I can say. Somebody had to lose, unfortunately. I’m just glad it wasn’t us.”

Yorktown Coach Mark Pavella was clearly agonized by the loss and a couple of non-calls by officials he questioned down the stretch.

“We gave that one away,” Pavella said. “We’ll learn from this, though.”

**BREWSTER** won its second straight game last Monday, taking down Edgemont, 71-67, in a hard fought contest where the Bears (2-2) came up big at the charity stripe,

making all nine of its attempts. Matthew Thompson played a big role for Brewster with eight points, 12 rebounds and four assists. Brewster’s All-League senior C Conner Griffin, who has been a stud to date, shined in this matchup, scoring a career-high 29 points and securing his third straight double-double with 13 rebounds; he also added two blocks on the defensive end. Bears sophomore Will Dignan stepped up big time, scoring 14 points, dishing four assists, and was able to ice the game with two key free throws late in the contest.

“This was the second game in a row that the underclassman was able to help secure the victory,” first-year Bears Coach Michael Nicastro said.

Steven Switzer also added 10 points, five rebounds and five assists in the Bears win.

“Despite the win, we need to be more disciplined on defense and limit turnovers in upcoming contests,” Nicastro admitted.

The Bears looked to continue their win streak in Friday night showdown at Putnam County supremacy at **MAHOPAC**, but it was the **INDIANS** (caps for emphasis) who prevailed, 55-51, with a solid fourth-quarter run (Brewster led by five after three quarters).

Mahopac G Jake Couzens (16 points, 6 rebounds) had one of his finest nights as an Indian. Joey Koch (9 points, 8 rebounds, 3 steals), John Kearney (11 points, 4 assists, 4 steals), Liam Scanlon (4 points, 4 rebounds) and Liam Dodd (5 points, 4 boards) all made contributions for the **INDIANS**.

Griffin led the way for the Bears once again, logging his fourth double-double in as many contests with 24 points and 14 rebounds. Dignan and Thompson chipped in with 10 and nine points, respectively, with Thompson adding nine rebounds and four assists in a well-rounded effort. Switzer did likewise with nine points, five rebounds, three assists and four steals. The Bears put together a solid defensive effort against Mahopac after giving up 67 to Edgemont earlier in the week and will look to build on that.

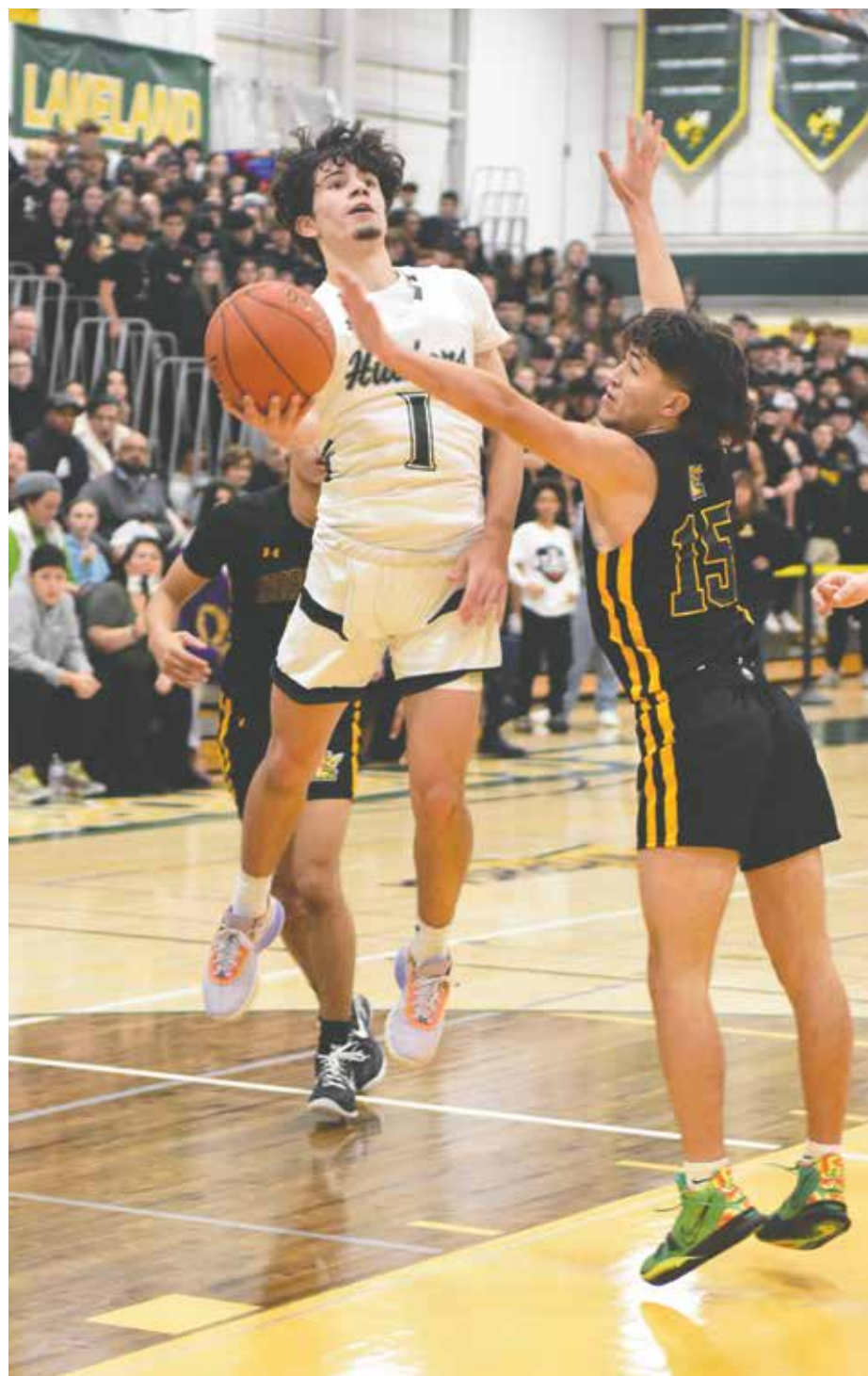
“We were tested by a good Brewster team and responded to adversity the way we talk about and expect to,” first-year Mahopac Coach Matt Calabro said. “Our bigs battled with Griffin, who is a very good player. Scanlon, Dodd and Dedvukaj all gave us

*continued on next page*

## Boys Hoops Notebook



Yorktown players celebrate junior Justin Price’s 75-foot, buzzer-beating heave that led to 17-point lead against host Lakeland Friday.



Yorktown G Billy Feeks goes for scoop shot on Lakeland G Anthony Jennings in Huskers’ 66-63 loss to host Hornets Friday.



Lakeland senior Logan Shiland (44) ignites a vociferous Hornet crowd in 66-63 come-from-behind win over visiting Yorktown Friday.



# Sports

*continued from previous page*

everything they had. Jake Couzens and Joey Koch continue to lead. Danny Koch was very impactful, controlling the game and being aggressive, and John Kearney had a helluva fourth quarter. Our fans were great, nothing better than a Friday night high school basketball win!"

That was almost the case on Wednesday, too, but the Indians squandered a seven-point lead in a 54-50 loss to John Jay-CR. Couzens (20 points, 5 rebounds), Joey Koch (14 points, 3 rebounds, 3 assists, 3 steals), Scanlon (6 points, 9 rebounds), Dodd (5 points, 7 rebounds) and Kearney (4 points, 5 rebounds, 2 steals) were all impactful but could not produce enough down the stretch.

"With a seven-point lead in the fourth quarter on a night we didn't shoot well, I was hoping to get a few buckets early in the fourth to get a bigger lead, but we failed to do that," Calabro admitted. "We got punched by Jay in that fourth quarter and we didn't respond the way we needed to. We need to learn from this so we can win these games in the future."

**FOX LANE** had a solid showing at an eight-team tournament at Boys' Latin in Maryland where the Foxes defeated Stevenson, 47-40 behind an all-tournament effort from Niko Dent (24 points, 13 rebounds, 2 assists). Chris Redhead (7

points, 5 rebounds) and Matt Toscano (5 points, 8 assists) were key for the Foxes, who also knocked off Boys Latin (MD), 51-43, behind a career-effort from freshman G Arthur Shevick (19 points, 2 rebounds, 2 assists), who has shown immediate promise. Toscano (15 points, 5 assists, 3 steals, 4 rebounds) had another big game, and senior Charlie Shevick (7 points, 6 rebounds, 2 steals) did as well.

"It was an exciting trip for the Foxes as Baltimore is a hot bed for basketball," Fox Lane Coach Mike Tomaselli said. "We had a tough game on Friday vs. a very skilled and talented **SEED** School team. We rebounded well on Saturday and Sunday with a pair of impressive wins. Niko Dent was fantastic all weekend with his effort and scoring. Arthur had an unbelievable game on Sunday and made some huge shots in the fourth quarter to propel us to a win. Matt Toscano, Chris Redhead, Charlie Shevick and Conrad Hardie were great on defense and had some big plays on the offensive end all weekend. We got some quality minutes out of Kevin New, James Minottir, Eli Daglio and Arthur Shevick as well.

"Overall, our defense has been fantastic," he added, "and we have played a very tough schedule that will hopefully prepare us for the rest of the season. We head back to Section 1 play, battle tested with our games

vs. Mount Vernon and a trip to Baltimore."

## CLASS AA

**WHITE PLAINS** announced its intentions to contend in Thursday's 49-48 win over Scarsdale when Logan McCormack got hot in the second half and dropped 16 on the Red Raiders and Menzy Carden went off in the first half for 10 of his 15 in the first half. The two hot-shot Tigers played a virtual tag-team on Scarsdale.

"That's exactly how it went," White Plains Coach Spencer Mayfield said.

Mayfield's Tigers followed up with a 62-45 win over Eastchester to improve to 3-0. McCormack went for 22 points and another 25 from Carden were dominant factors in the win.

**HORACE GREELEY** went on the road and beat **CARMEL**, 45-41, behind Nick Tasso's 17 points and seven boards while Justin Potack added 15 points for the Class A Quakers (2-2), who knocked off Nanuet, 45-24, in an excellent defensive battle.

The Rams (1-1) saw Aiden White and Jack Salisbury hit for 17 and 10, respectively.

## CLASS B/C

**BYRAM HILLS** earned a tough 50-46 win over a talented **HALDANE** team last Tuesday behind sophomore G Brody

# Boys Hoops Notebook

Geisler's career-high 22 points and seven rebounds. Luke Berliner added a well-round effort with eight points, 10 boards and five assists while Luca Scali and Sean Seigel each went for eight points.

All-Section Blue Devil Matteo Cervone scored a team-high 18 points and Ben Bozsik added 11 for Haldane.

"We played a solid game on both ends against a very good team," Haldane Coach Joe Virgadamo said. "I like how we were battling for loose balls and rebounds and we moved the ball well on offense. We are currently 2-3, but this tough and challenging schedule is going to pay off by the end of the year."

Will Bradley scored 18 points for Haldane in a 69-52 loss to a very good **VALHALLA** club.

"We were down two going into the fourth and Valhalla got real hot and went on a nice run in the end," Virgadamo said. "I'm proud of my guys having the ability to move on from this tough loss and have a great practice the following day. We're having a lot of different guys as our leading scorers and we are going

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Yorktown junior Brandon Montero goes at Lakeland senior Logan Shiland in Huskers' 66-63 loss to host Hornets Friday.



Yorktown junior G Justin Price (5) goes up for reverse layup on Lakeland senior F Andrew Mendel in Huskers' 66-63 loss to host Hornets.



Valhalla sharpshooter Mikaele Martinez fires a jumper during the overtime win over Hastings on Friday night.



Sports

Boys Hoops Notebook

continued from previous page

to be a tough team to defend by the end of the season.”

Byram Hills then went on to defeat **PEEKSKILL**, 49-39, Friday in the opening round of the Bronxville Tournament. The Bobcats were led by junior G Tyson Repa (15 points) and Scali (12 points) while Peekskill’s Brown and Thaimes each finished with 11.

The Bobcats then went on to win the Bronxville Tournament, 61-50, Saturday night.

“A total team effort,” Byram Coach Ted Repa said.

Tyson Repa brough home MVP honors after dropping 16 points to go with eight caroms and six dimes. Scali earned an all-tourney nod after scoring 14 points to go with six assists. Bobcat sophomore C Zac Efobi returned to the lineup with an impressive double-double (16 points, 11 boards, and Luke Berliner was just shy of a double-double with 10 points and nine boards.

Valhalla hung tough in OT to defeat Hastings, 68-61, behind 25 points from hotshot Basiaka Butcher, including a monster slam in the waning moments, and another 19 points from Mikaele Martinez. Chris Purchia chipped in with nine for the Vikings (3-0), who have the look of a legit Class B contender should they do a better



Westlake players and coaches pose with championship trophy after winning the 41st annual Croton-Harmon Mayclim tourney title Saturday.

job of closing. Valhalla squandered an eight-point, fourth-quarter lead before holding firm for the win.

**PLEASANTVILLE** improved to 2-1

when the Panthers went on the road to Sleepy Hollow for a 47-36 win with Caleb Bronkema leading the way with 13 points, including four big free throws in the final minute of OT to seal the win. Etai Nunberg

threw down a pair of big dunks, including a one-handed royal flush off a steal, in the Panthers’ 56-24 win over host Pawling.

continued on next page



Pleasantville junior guard Daniel Picart drives to the basket late in the first half of Friday afternoon’s 47-36 victory vs. host Sleepy Hollow.



Valhalla senior standout Basiaka Butcher rises for a jump shot in the second half of the Vikings’ 68-61 overtime victory over visiting Hastings on Friday evening.



# Sports

## Boys Hoops Notebook

*continued from previous page*

**PUTNAM VALLEY** chalked up its first W of the season last Tuesday in a 44-37 defeat of defending Section 1 Class B champion Bronxville. Senior F Sean Holzman paced the Tigers (1-3) with 13 points and sophomore wing James Appostolico added 12. The Tigers showed a much-improved interior defense to hold the Broncos (0-1) in check.

An impressive **WESTLAKE** team chalked up a 42-37 road win at Dobbs Ferry to open the week before finishing first in the 41st annual Croton-Harmon Mayclim Tournament over the weekend where the Wildcats worked a 49-36 win over Edgemont in the opening round before defeating the host Tigers in Saturday's title tilt, 52-35, to win the fabled tournament, which has stood the test of time. Christian Occhipinti was named MVP and Nick Castellano drew an All-Tournament nod. Castellano led all scorers with 20 points. Occhipinti (11), freshman Marcus Jackette (7) and Jack Neglia (6) were primary contributors.

Against Edgemont, Jack Neglia (14 points), Nick Castellano (13), Occhipinti (8) and Marcus Jackette (4) all found the scoring sheet.

Against Dobbs, Nick Castellano led the Wildcats (4-0) with 16 points while Neglia (10) and Marc Malandrucolo (6) hit some clutch buckets.

The Wildcats opened the season with a 73-26 whipping of Keio, who had a tough time containing Castellano (16 points), Albert Mehmedovic (11), Neglia (9), Jackette (9) and Luis Beato (8).

"A 4-0 start is a first in the modern era with the exception of the COVID year," Wildcat Coach Chad Charney said. "Christian Occhipinti was the MVP of the

Croton tourney as he filled up the stat sheet both nights and supplied the big baskets down the stretch in both the Edgemont game and Croton game. Nick Castellano was all tournament and scored 21 points on Saturday night. Nick has three double doubles in four games. We were up 11 at half in the Croton game, they cut it to two early in the fourth and we pulled away 52-35 to finish. We play Wednesday and Thursday for our first home games with the late start because of football."

### CHSAA

**STEPINAC** is taking the City of Palms Tournament by storm. The Crusaders competed in what some say is universally regarded as the top high school holiday basketball tournament in the USA. And Stepinac left little doubt in a 52-44 opening-round win over Vashon High (MO) behind the all-around effort of the 'Boogie Man', Boogie Fland, who went for 24 points, three rebounds and two steals. Danny Carbuccia (14 points, 6 rebounds, 3 assists, 3 steals) was up for a prime-time effort and Ben Lyttle added five points.

In the quarterfinals against nationally-ranked Imhotep (PA), the Crusaders suffered a 46-44 loss despite Fland's 12 points, four boards and

two assists. Braylan Ritvo (8 points, 3 rebounds), Carbuccia (8 points, 6 steals, 3 assists) and Lyttle (7 points, 6 boards, 2 steals) were prime contributors as the Crusaders continue to prep for the CHSAA title in March. Next up in the tourney was Tuesday's game against either Christopher Columbus (FL) or Myers Park (NC).

*Examiner-area coaches are encouraged to hit up sports editor Ray Gallagher at raygallaghersports@gmail.com for inclusion in our weekly Hoops Notebook. Tag him @Directrays on Twitter or kindly text stats and comments to the number he has provided.*



Byram Hills Bobcats pose with championship hardware after beating host Bronxville, 61-50, in Broncos tournament.

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Rob Foisset of Valhalla hauls in an offensive rebound over Robert Kennedy of Hastings in Friday night's home win in overtime by the Vikings.



A ripped Joey Koch puts up shot in Mahopac's loss to John Jay CR.



Anthony Naclerio of Valhalla gets inside for a short toss in the lane in the host Vikings' overtime win against the Hastings Yellow Jackets on Friday.

CREDIT GIL MCMAHON





Mahopac senior F Lauren Beberman tries to gain baseline on Panas sophomore Kiara Williams in Indians' loss to eventual Somers tourney champ Panthers.

focus on  
GIRLS HOOPS

Panas Trims Mahopac,  
Claims Somers  
Tourney Title; P'ville  
Bounced by Hastings



Pleasantville's Lexi Tomaselli drives for two of her eight points in Friday's loss to Hastings.



Mahopac senior Piper Klammer has been a defensive force for Indians.



Panas' Julia Gallinger and Cadence Nicholas double up on Mahopac's Piper Klammer in Panthers win over Indians in Somers tourney opening round.



Against textbook defense from Mahopac's Piper Klammer, Panas G and tourney MVP Cadence Nicholas goes up for two of her 21 points in 62-46 win over Indians in opening round of Somers tourney Friday.

RAY GALLAGHER / DONNA MUELLER / GIL MCMAHON PHOTOS

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# Girls Hoops Notebook



Pleasantville's Ruby Donohue chipped in with nine big points in loss to Hastings.



Pleasantville's Meghan Raefski and Lexi Tomaselli combine to get after rebound in Friday's loss to Hastings.



Pleasantville hotshot Meghan Raefski hit six 3-pointers in loss to Hastings last week en route to 20 points.

## focus on GIRLS HOOPS



Panas G Sophia Tavarez, an all-tournament choice, went off for 31 points and five boards in Panthers' 62-46 opening-round win over Mahopac Friday at Somers tourney.

RAY GALLAGHER / DONNA MUELLER PHOTOS



Mahopac's Lauren Beberman gets a block on Panas G Sophia Tavarez in Indians' 62-46 loss to Panthers in opening round of Somers tourney.



Pleasantville's Zoe Kress looks to make pass in recent loss to Hastings.

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# Sports

## Grapplin' Notebook

# Pleasantville Legend Bernarducci Earns Record-Setting 430th Win

By Tony Pinciario

Pleasantville opened the 2022-23 varsity wrestling season by giving veteran Coach Bob Bernarducci a well-deserved honor. The Panthers defeated Putnam Valley, in the Section 1 Division II Dual-Meet semifinal, for Bernarducci's Section 1 record-setting 430th win. This surpassed former Somers and Mahopac Coach Dennis DiSanto, who finished with 429, and also coached against Bernarducci.

"It takes a lot of hard work and support from school administrators, family, wrestlers and parents," said Bernarducci, in his 33rd year at Pleasantville and 40th, overall. "I have been extremely lucky to have many outstanding assistants like Steve Tornambe,

Michael Esteves, Joe Dovi, Tony Stewart and currently Len Balducci. I was also extremely honored to have so many former wrestlers present.

"When I came to Pleasantville in 1990, there was not a team for several years," he added, "but thanks to Dick Rote's support and guidance, we were able to get it going again. I love coaching in Pleasantville and I am proud of how far this program has come."

Bernarducci began his coaching career at Irvington where his first sectional champion was Lenny Balducci, Len's father. Senior Luke LaMagna has been in the program for a few other milestones, including winning a Section 1 Division II team title and also getting Bernarducci his 400th win.

"It's just crazy that we were in high school

during the time that coach got that win," LaMagna said. "It means a lot, especially for the seniors, that we helped coach. We feel a lot better that we got him this win. It was an important match and winning it made it even more of a big deal."

Even though Pearl River defeated Pleasantville in the championship match, it does not put a damper on the Panthers' quick start.

Pleasantville is among the Section 1 elite, especially in Division II, annually. The Panthers will be a major force, once again, this year after a 23-1 record and third-place finish in sectionals last year.

"After last year, coach kind of used not placing as high to motivate the guys to be active in the summer by going to GPS," said LaMagna, a sectional finalist last year. "By going to GPS, it has made everyone get better by working harder."

The off-season work has resulted in Pleasantville winning nine of its first 12 matches, including a third-place finish at the high-caliber Tony Carlucci (Port Chester) Dual-Meet Tournament.

LaMagna headlines an experienced returning nucleus that features four other returning sectional place finishers and some promising newcomers. The fellow returning place finishers are freshman Ciaran Egan (sectional champion), juniors Grant Kelly, Asa Nunberg and Fredy Mejia. Sophomore Adriana Palumbo, a Fargo All-American, also returns, as do Sasha McGaffey and Chad Sarraogonda.

Pleasantville suffered a major blow when two-time sectional champion and

senior captain Christian Perlleshi suffered a season-ending injury in the football team's state-title game.

"It's very unfortunate for Christian," LaMagna said. "He worked so hard in the offseason for his senior year and then it's over."

"As his teammate and friend, it stinks

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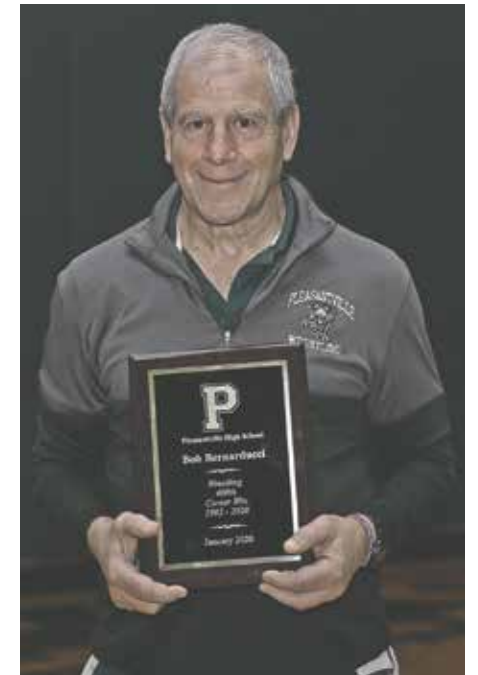
COURTESY TWITTER/FACEBOOK

Yorktown grapplers and coaches are quite pleased with a 4-0 start to the young wrestling season.



COURTESY TWITTER/FACEBOOK

Somers wrestler Ryan Ball should be among the top lightweights in Section 1 this winter.



Legendary Pleasantville wrestling Coach Bob Bernarducci set the Section 1 record for career wins last week.



William Navarro got Fox Lane off to a good start vs. Greeley in the Dual Meet Tournament quarterfinals last Thursday with a pin at 132 pounds.

ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS



# Sports

## Grapplin' Notebook



Greeley's Josh Hametz celebrates his 6-5 decision at 145 pounds over Fox Lane's Kevin Navarro in Thursday evening's quarterfinal matchup at the Section 1 Dual Meet Tournament.

*continued from previous page*

because Christian was the most experienced guy on the team and he knew the most stuff. It makes us feel like we have another reason to win. It's important to win for him."

Freshmen Alex Wish and Jesse Straus are two varsity newcomers who have been impressive to date.

As Pleasantville finishes up December, LaMagna is pleased with the team's progress even though it has three losses.

"From our first practice of the season, we wanted to make sure everyone would get better throughout the season," LaMagna said. "Coach let us know it's okay to lose in November and December when you are still learning, especially the new guys on the team. You learn from your losses."

"Even though we've lost some matches here in the beginning of the season, it's humbling and shows what we really have to work on. As the season goes on, we will become a much better team, all-around. All the work we put in during the offseason so it pays off in February."

### BREWSTER BEARS

**Coach:** Tom Looby (19th year)

**2021-22 record:** 9-13

**Graduated starters from the 2021-22 team:** Two.

**Top returning wrestlers:** Andrew Pfeffer, Sr., 189 (captain); Ian Sutherland, Jr., 172 (captain); Nick DiFabbio, Sr., 145; Derek Karlsson, Jr., 215.

**Key new wrestlers:** Thomas Looby Jr., Fr., 102; Eduardo Crisostomo, So., 126; Dillon Ramirez, So., 126; Liam Ford, So., 132; Jack Harrison, Sr., 138; Erik Jacobsen, Jr., 160.

**Team strengths:** We have a good mix of experienced and young wrestlers this

season. They are a hard-working group.

**Coach's outlook on the season:** As a team we are looking to improve throughout the season and with every competition.

**Noteworthy:** Brewster went 4-1 to finish third in the Bernie Miller (Rye) Dual-Meet Tournament. ... The Bears went 1-1 in the Section 1 Division I Dual-Meet Tournament. ... Former Brewster wrestler Grant Cuomo, a Section 1 and New York State Wrestling Champion, is a senior and wrestling at 165 pounds for Princeton.

### CARMEL RAMS

**Coach:** Seth Harrison (10th year)

**Sectional favorite (Division I):** Mahopac always has a solid squad and Fox Lane is always formidable.

**Graduated starters from the 2021-22 team:** One

**Top returning wrestlers:** Leo Venables, Sr., 172 (2022 Section 1 Champion); Chris Frisco, Sr., 160/172; Josh Rubin, Sr., 132.

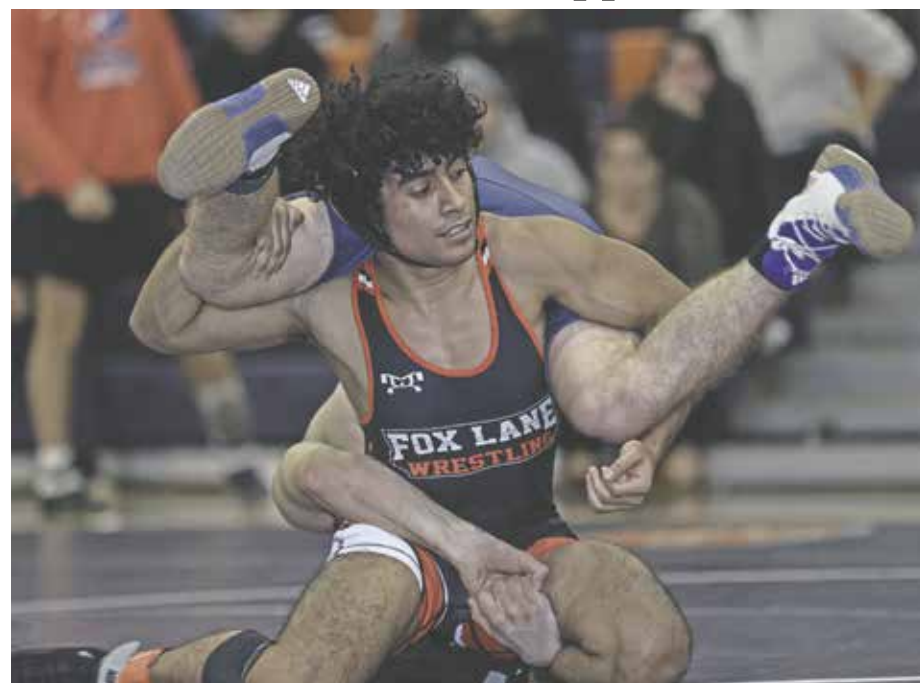
**Key new wrestlers:** Nikkita Rusnak, 138; Ken Kelto, 110; Gilberto Abzun, 126; Hudson Butler, 126.

**Team strengths:** We have a pretty balanced group of hard-working wrestlers.

**Noteworthy:** Harrison was a sectional champion for Carmel. He was a Carmel assistant before he became the head coach. ... The Carmel-Mahopac match is scheduled for 1/3. ... Joe Clement and Ryan Dufflemeyer, both 2021 graduates, are wrestling at The Citadel and Noah Orser, also a 2020 grad, currently wrestling at Cortland. ... Carmel went 1-1 in the Section 1 Division I Dual Meet Tournament.

### FOX LANE FOXES

**Coach:** Anthony Rodrigues (10th year, 22nd overall at Fox Lane)



Fox Lane's Kevin Navarro tries to gain the upper hand in his quarterfinal match at 145 pounds at Greeley last week.

**2021-22 record:** 15-4 record

**2022 Section finish:** Second (Division I)

**Graduating seniors from the 2021-22 team:** Five

**Top returning wrestlers:** Justin Gierum, Sr., (2022 Section 1 Division I champ); Alex Berisha, So., (2022 4th-place section finisher).

**Team strengths:** Young team showing to be resilient.

**Coach's outlook on the season:** We have a young team with little varsity experience, but they are working hard. Time will tell because it's a long season.

**Noteworthy:** Fox Lane could be wrestling for its fifth consecutive Section 1 Division I Dual-Meet title, Tuesday. Fox Lane faces North Rockland and Mahopac wrestles Yorktown. The two semi-final winners then

wrestle for title. ... Fox Lane graduated five all-section wrestlers with the following wrestling in college: Amos Rivera (Cortland), Nino Prisco (Oneonta), RJ Gierum and Marc Berisha, both at Sacred Heart. ... Fox Lane finished second at the Tony Carlucci (Port Chester) Dual-Meet Tournament, losing to state-ranked Monroe-Woodbury (Section 9). ... Rodrigues was legendary Fox Lane coach Joe Amuso's assistant. Rodrigues is assisted by former Woodlands' three-time Section 1 champ/NYS fifth-place finisher Jason Parker and former Fox Lane sectional champ and state place finisher Johnny Santos.

### HEN HUD SAILORS

**Coach:** Shane Turrone (sixth season)

**2021-22 record:** 1-17

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Jon Kung of Greeley checks the clock as he wrestles in the 152-pound match vs. Fox Lane's Daas McPhee-Djan during last Thursday's Division 1 Dual Meet Tournament quarterfinal.



# Sports

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**Sectional favorite (Division II):** Pearl River

**Graduated starters from the 2021-22 team:** None

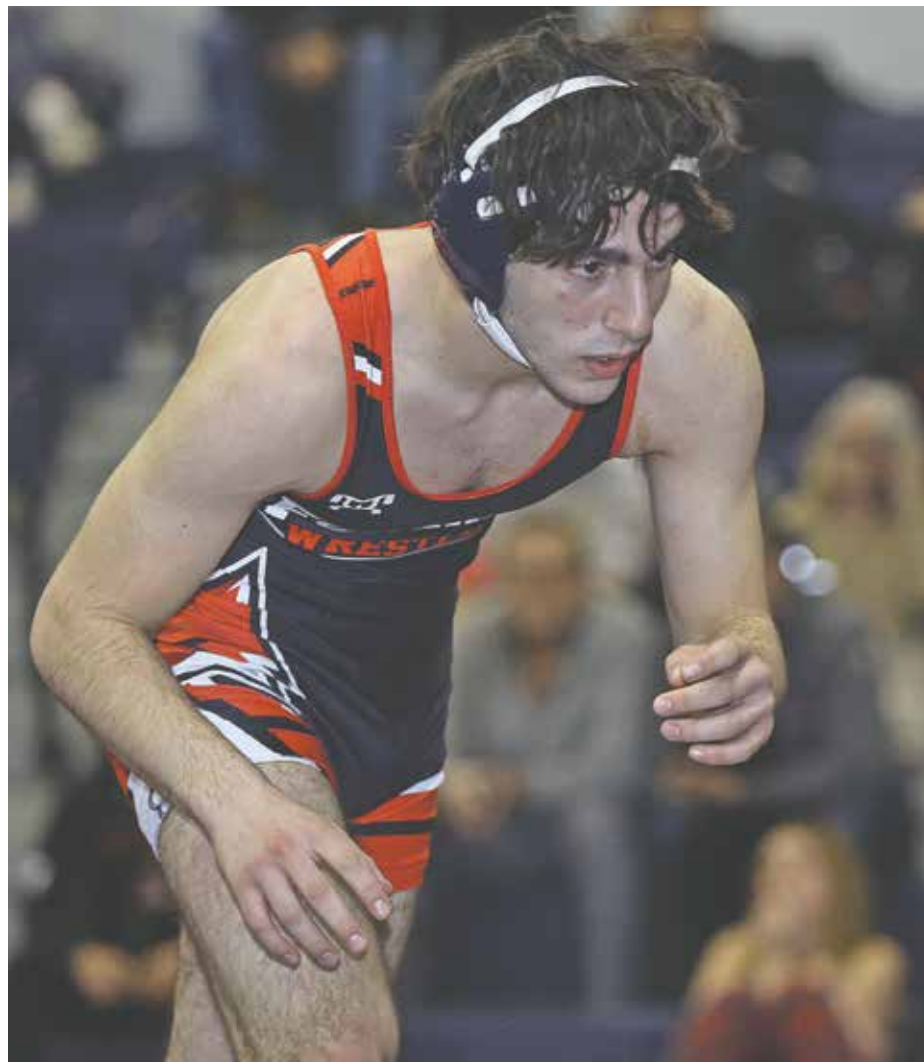
**Top returning wrestlers:** Kevin Skelly, Sr., 145/152; Ismael Andrade, Jr., 152/160 (2022 Section 1 Division II third place); Kyle Peske, Jr., 172; Giovanni Gioio, Jr., 132/138; David Perez, Jr., 285; Mason Dietz, So., 285; Eric Selvaggi, Fr., 118 (2022 Section 1 Division II second place); Shawn Omara, Fr., 126.

**Key new wrestlers:** Mohamed Mbareck, Sr., 160; Brandon Sumpter, Jr., 215; Ben Kushnir, Fr., 132.

**Team strengths:** The middle of the lineup is pretty tough, but that goes for a lot of teams this season. The team is also fairly young as we are only graduating two varsity starters this year.

**Question marks, if any:** The 102- and 110-pound weight classes. We can't seem to find smaller kids in the school that want to wrestle. Also, injuries and kids getting sick during the season is always a concern.

**Coach's outlook on the season:** I'm pretty excited for the season, but it has been a tough start due to the flu taking out much of the team. But, we are making due and hopefully by January our guys start coming into form and getting healthy. I have a few wrestlers I am excited to watch this season and see what this year brings for them come February.



Fox Lane's Francesco Ruggiero looks for a takedown during his quarterfinal match vs. Greeley last Thursday evening. His pin helped the Foxes to a 36-35 win over the host Quakers in the Section 1, Division 1 Dual Meet Tournament quarterfinals.

ANDY JACOBS / TONY HUMBERTO PHOTOS

**Noteworthy:** Beckett Herman (2020 graduate) is wrestling for the UMASS Club Wrestling team. ... Turrone was a Division I all-section wrestler for Hen Hud. ... Hen Hud will wrestle at the Eric D'Agnese (Somers, 1/4) and Westchester County (1/21) Tournaments. Hen Hud will host its tournament, 1/14. ... Hen Hud finished fourth at the John Jay-East Fishkill Patriot Tournament. Peske and Dietz were champions and Gioio placed second.

## HORACE GREELEY QUAKERS

**Coach:** Anthony Tortora (5th year)

**2021-22 record:** 7-6

**Sectional favorite (Division I):** Fox Lane, North Rockland, Suffern, Yorktown, Mahopac, Greeley.

**Graduated starters from the 2021-22 team:** Two

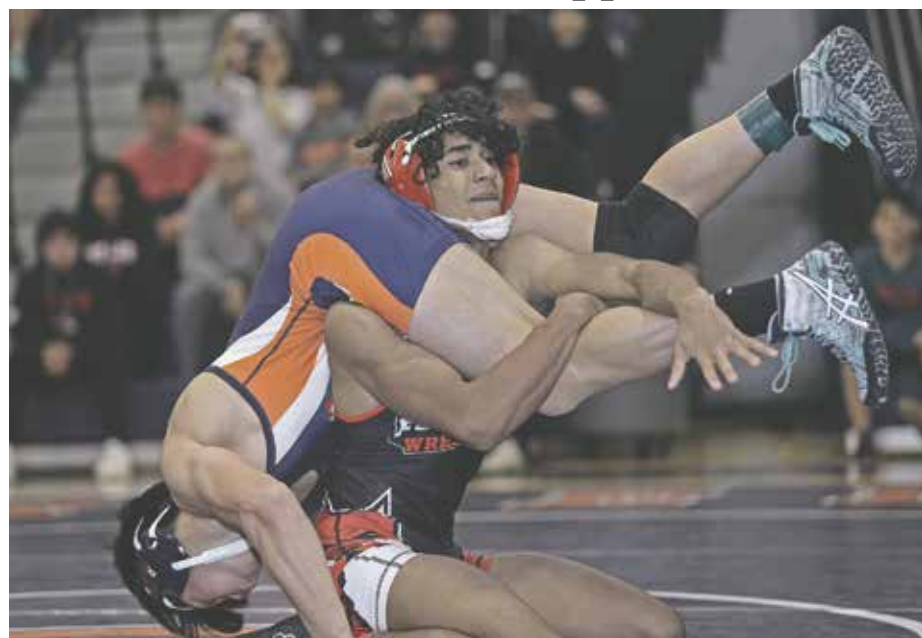
**Top returning wrestlers:** Vinny Sasso, Sr., 189 (2022 Section 1 Division I third place); Josh Hametz, 132; Andreas Gowdie, 172; Kai Lueckerath, 118; Corey Fitzsimmons; Jonathan Kang; Zach Haber; Tommy Antes.

**Key new wrestlers:** Chris Nocca, Fr., 145; Quinn Carpenter, Fr., 102.

**Team strengths:** We have a mix of experience and young talent.

**Coach's outlook on the season:** We are looking to have a steady climb, all-season long, and be in the conversion in February for sectionals.

**Noteworthy:** Former Greeley wrestlers



Before hurting his shoulder, Fox Lane's Daas McPhee-Djan has early control in his match vs. Greeley's Jon Kung at 152 pounds.

Jacob Ferreira (Hofstra) Aaron Wolk (Brown) and Matt Schreiber (Binghamton) are wrestling at the Division I level. Wolk and Ferreira are starters. ... Fox Lane and Greeley wrestle in a league match, 1/10. Fox Lane defeated Greeley by one point in a Section 1 Division I Dual-Meet Tournament quarterfinal. ... Greeley will compete in the Oswego Tournament. ... Tortora was a two-time Section 1 Division I champion and a state placefinisher for Greeley.

## LAKELAND/PANAS REBELS

**Coach:** Dave Bergen (sixth year, 25th overall)

**2021-22 record:** 16-8

**Sectional favorite (Division I):** Not

sure yet. It's a really long season.

**Graduated starters from the 2021-22 team:** Six

**Top returning wrestlers:** Alex Russo, 126; Josh Frogel, 145; Cooper Schmidt, 152; 160 Stephen Carroll, 160; Evan Salazar, 172; Alex Ryzy, 172; Dom Parente, 215.

**Key new wrestlers:** Dan Horowitz, 7th-grade, 102; Alex Macias, So., 132; Matt Clyman, Fr., 132; Thomas Mekuto, Fr., 138; Dan Hurley, So., 285.

**Team strengths:** We have excellent overall numbers this year, with 45 wrestlers on the team and multiple guys in each weight class. We also have a lot of youth. While we have seniors that will get wins

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Horace Greeley's Tommy Antes has his hand raised in triumph following his quick pin vs. Fox Lane at 172 pounds in the Dual Meet Tournament quarterfinals.





Alex Berisha of Fox Lane is poised to make his move in his 189-pound match vs. Greeley's Andreas Gowdie last Thursday evening.

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for us our young guys will learn a lot by being in the same room as the experienced wrestlers. This will pay off for the future of the program.

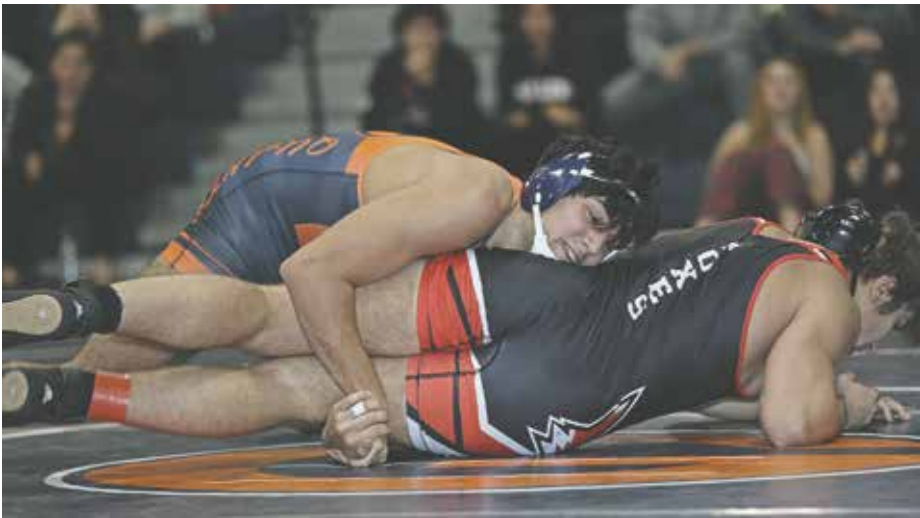
**Coach's outlook on the season:** I think we are going to have a great season. December has been about settling people into weight classes and shaking off some of

the off-season rust. We have won a number of dual meets and lost a few close ones. We are learning and growing every day. I am hopeful that along with success on the mat this group will have a good time competing and growing as a team.

**Noteworthy:** Gio Russo (2021) is wrestling at SUNY-Oneonta, Connor McGannon (2022) is wrestling at the



Tyler Stermasi of Fox Lane won by pin in his match at 285 pounds vs. Greeley in last week's quarterfinals of the Section 1 Dual Meet Tournament, hosted by the Quakers.



Vinny Sasso of Greeley is in control during his 8-5 decision over Fox Lane's Nate Brauning in the 215-pound match of the Division 1 Dual Meet Tournament quarterfinals.

University of Buffalo, Spencer Maja (2022) is wrestling at SUNY-Brockport. ... Lakeland/Panas finished second at the Clarkstown North Dual-Meet Tournament and fifth at the Yorktown Dual-Meet Tournament. ... Prior to coaching at Lakeland/Panas, Bergen was the White Plains varsity wrestling coach.

**MAHOPAC INDIANS**

**Coach:** Steve Tornambe (third year)  
**2021-22 record:** 12-5  
**2022 Section 1 Division I finish:** Third  
**Graduated starters from the 2021-22 team:** One.

**Top returning wrestlers:** Nick Greco, Jr., (2022 Section 1 Division I second place); Joe Ramirez, Sr.; Christopher Morris, Sr.; Robert DeMaurro; Mike Cuozzo, 138; Lucas Kilker, 160; Justin Mucciolo.

**Key new wrestlers:** Charles Pryzmylski, Fr., 102; Henry Ramirez, Fr., 110; Pace Zieler, 8th-grade, 118.

**Noteworthy:** Mahopac is wrestling Yorktown, Tuesday, in a Section 1 Division I Dual-Meet Tournament semifinal. The other semifinal is North Rockland-Fox Lane. The semifinal winners wrestle for the title immediately following the semis. ... 2022 graduate, Angelo Centrone, a three-time all-state wrestler, is wrestling for Cortland. ...2022 state-qualifier George Johnson

transferred to Iona Prep. ... Tornambe was a two-time Section 1 champion and placed fifth in the state his senior year. ... Former Mahopac Section 1 champion Anthony Esposito is the Hillcrest HS (SC) Varsity Wrestling coach.

**OSSINING PRIDE**

**Coach:** Tom Larm (fourth season, 14th season overall)

**2021-22 record:** 15-12  
**Sectional favorite (Division I):** Yorktown, North Rockland, Horace Greeley, Tappan Zee, Clarkstown North.

**Graduated starters from the 2021-22 team:** Three

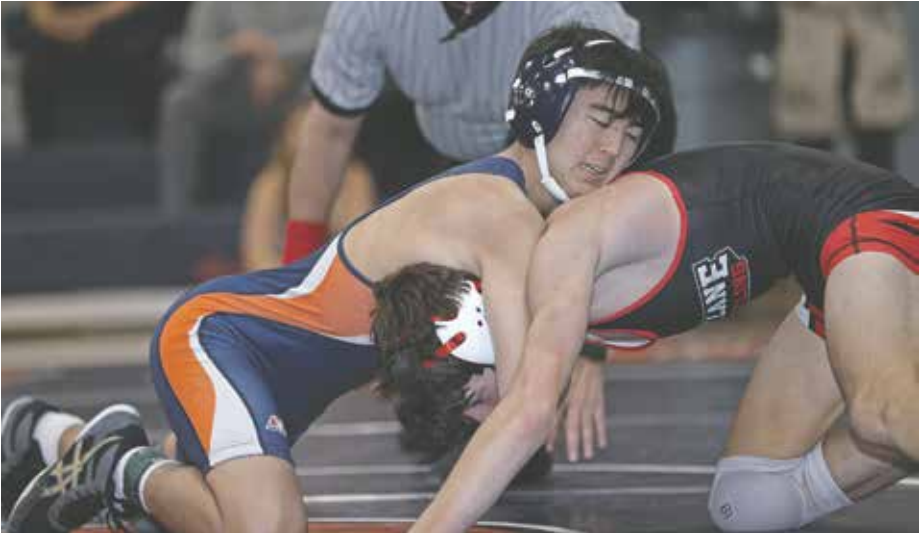
**Top returning wrestlers:** Tristan Robinson-July, Sr., 160 (2022 Division I Section runner-up, Wild card state-qualifier); Anthony Lofaro, Sr., 152 (2022 Section 1 Division I third place); Devin Almodovar, Sr., 189 (2022 Section 1 Division I fourth place); Colin Liebertz, 102; McKlaime Matos, 132.

**Key new wrestlers:** Wildes Santiago, 110; Matty Cascione, 138; Kayvon Ray, 145; Matt Keneally, 126; Zach Reyes, 126; Jordan Brown, 126; Chris Moroch, 215.

**Team strengths:** I think our team strength this year is the good mix of experience and the willingness to learn.

**Question marks, if any:** Like any season

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Kai Lueckerath of Greeley battles Fox Lane's Jake Long in the Dual Meet Tournament quarterfinal match at 118 pounds. Lueckerath nearly scored a last-second pin, but had to settle for a 21-6 decision as his Quakers narrowly fell to the Foxes 36-35.



# Sports

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the biggest question mark is being healthy all season.

**Coach's outlook on the season:** I'm very pleased, so far, with the daily improvement of everyone on the team. Both the kids and coaches are working hard each day to bring out the best in each other and it's clear that the kids have bought into our expectations and are holding themselves to a higher standard than we've seen in a while. Our younger guys are learning a lot each day and applying it right away. Our more experienced wrestlers are working to perfect what they have been doing well and accomplish their individual goals while helping the team along the way.

**Noteworthy:** Ossining went 4-1 to finish third in the Yorktown Dual-Meet Tournament. ... The Pride open its league schedule with Horace Greeley, Jan. 2, and will face archrival Sleepy Hollow, 1/24. Robinson-July and Almodovar will wrestle in the Eastern States Classic 1/13-1/14. ... Larm was an all-section wrestler for Brewster.

## PUTNAM VALLEY TIGERS

**Coach:** Will Carano (23rd year)

**2022 Section 1 finish:** Third (Division II)

**Top returning wrestlers:** Travis Appell, Sr., (returns after being out for two years with injuries); Chris Maroulis, Sr., 126 (2022 Section 1 Division II third place); Jr. Esuar Ordonez, Jr., 132 (2022 Section 1 Division II third place); Albert McDonald Sr., 145 (2022 Section 1 Division II third place); Nick Dichele, Jr., 145; Christian Nolan, Sr., 160; Michael Yurcho., Sr., 132; Alex Gecaj, Jr.,

189; Jaden Teshler, So., 215; Jack Runk, Fr., Nick Paonessa, Fr., 126.

**Key new wrestlers:** Max Fuca, Sr. 170; Joan Demetroules, Sr., 132; Stefano Paonessa, Jr., 152; Taylor Rogers, Jr., 112; Myloh Deprima, So., 160; Jojo Esposito, So., 285; Kieran Deprima, 8th-grade, 102.

**Noteworthy:** Former sectional champ Will Carano is wrestling at 174 pounds for the University of Iowa. ... Jacob Cassidy (2022) is wrestling at Alfred State. ... Carano, a Section 1 champion for Mahopac, created the Putnam Valley wrestling program and has been its only head coach. ... Former Mahopac coach Joe Mahoney, who guided Mahopac to a Section 1 team title (before the two division setup), has returned to coaching for the Putnam Valley modified team.

## SOMERS TUSKERS

**Coach:** Ron DiSanto, Jr. (ninth year)

**2021-22 record:** 9-13

**Graduated starters from the 2021-22 team:** None.

**Top returning wrestlers:** Mike Aquilino, Sr., 145 (captain); Anthony Tucci, Sr., 152 (captain); Luca D'Orazio, Sr., 160 (captain); Nate Traver, Sr., 189 (captain); Matt Cascio, Sr., 138; John Spatola, Jr., 118; Dalton Baloy, Jr., 118; Liam Dwyer, Jr., 138; Robert Vrabel, Jr., 138; Ethan Burns, Jr., 145; Justin Daniyan, Jr., 172; Ryan Ball, Fr., 110.

**Key new wrestlers:** Ethan Steuber, Fr., 102.

**Team strengths:** Lightweights, middleweights and overall depth.

**Coach's outlook on the season:** We are returning our entire starting varsity lineup from last season. Our starters are showing

great leadership and confidence. Our depth is improved, as last year's JV kids and some new freshmen will become varsity-quality wrestlers. Our mentality is to have fun, be optimistic and work hard.

**Noteworthy:** Somers won the Bernie Miller Dual-Meet Tournament. ... Ball, whose dad, Chris, wrestled for Peekskill, finished fifth in the Section 1 Division I Championship last year. ... The 42nd Annual Eric D'Agnes Memorial Tournament will be 1/7. ... DiSanto wrestled for his uncle, Dennis DiSanto, at Somers.

## WHITE PLAINS TIGERS

**Coach:** Ben Karol (first year at White Plains, 10th year overall)

**2021-22 record:** 3-6

**Top returning wrestlers:** Carlos Rivera, Sr., 132 (2022 Section 1 Division I, sixth place).

**Key new wrestlers:** Matteo Gutierrez, So., 145; Jamaal Wells, Fr., 102; Marcelino Chico, So., 110.

**Team strengths:** We have a young team that is eager to learn.

**Coach's outlook on the season:** We have a large team with a lot of youth on our team so this will be a developing year for White Plains.

**Noteworthy:** Prior to White Plains, Karol coached at Irvington where he was an assistant for five years before being the head coach the last four years. Karol is assisted by former R.C. Ketcham all-section wrestler Andrew Cabibbo and modified coach Mike Taino, all-section at Pleasantville. ... White Plains opens the league portion of its schedule, against Fox Lane. ... Former

# Grapplin' Notebook

White Plains' wrestler Sebastian Garibaldi is wrestling for Princeton.

## YORKTOWN CORNHUSKERS

**Coach:** Jimmy Kaishian (second year)

**2021-22 record:** 12-8

**Graduated starters from the 2021-22 team:** Two

**Top returning wrestlers:** Joe Tornambe, Jr., 106 (2022 Section 1 champion, 7th at the state); Nick Bucello, Jr., 126; Jason Glicksman, Sr., 134; Ronan Forde, Jr., 172.

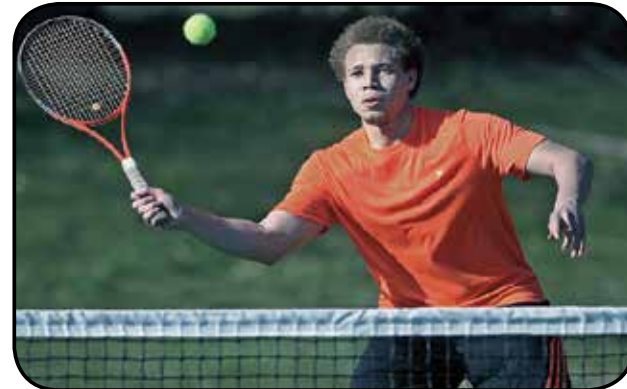
**Key new wrestlers:** Gio Tornambe, 8th-grader, 102; Frank Ofrias, 8th-grader, 110; George Gjerigi, Jr., 285.

**Team strengths:** Depth at the lightweights.

**Question marks, if any:** Middle and upper weights.

**Coach's outlook on the season:** Our focus has been building a culture of wrestling in Yorktown. We knew if we focused on the right things, attitude and effort, the winning would take care of itself. We had no idea we would win as much as we have this early in the year. We are just trying to stay humble and hungry and keep fanning the flames of wrestling in Yorktown.

**Noteworthy:** Yorktown is currently 11-1 with the loss to Catholic High School power Iona Prep. ... Yorktown wrestles Mahopac, Tuesday, in a semifinal of the Section 1 Division I Dual-Meet Tournament. The winner wrestles the North Rockland-Fox Lane victor in the final, immediately following. ... Kaishian was an all-section wrestler for Yorktown and coached by John Tornambe, father of Joe and Gio Tornambe.



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# Examiner Sports



ANDY JACOBS PHOTO

Oh, For  
Pete's  
Sake!

## Pleasantville Denies Sleepy Hollow

Pleasantville F Peter Choundas skies high to meet his maker and blocks a shot in the Class B Panthers' 47-36 win over host Sleepy Hollow where the Panthers improved to 2-1 on the season... see Boys' Hoops Notebook