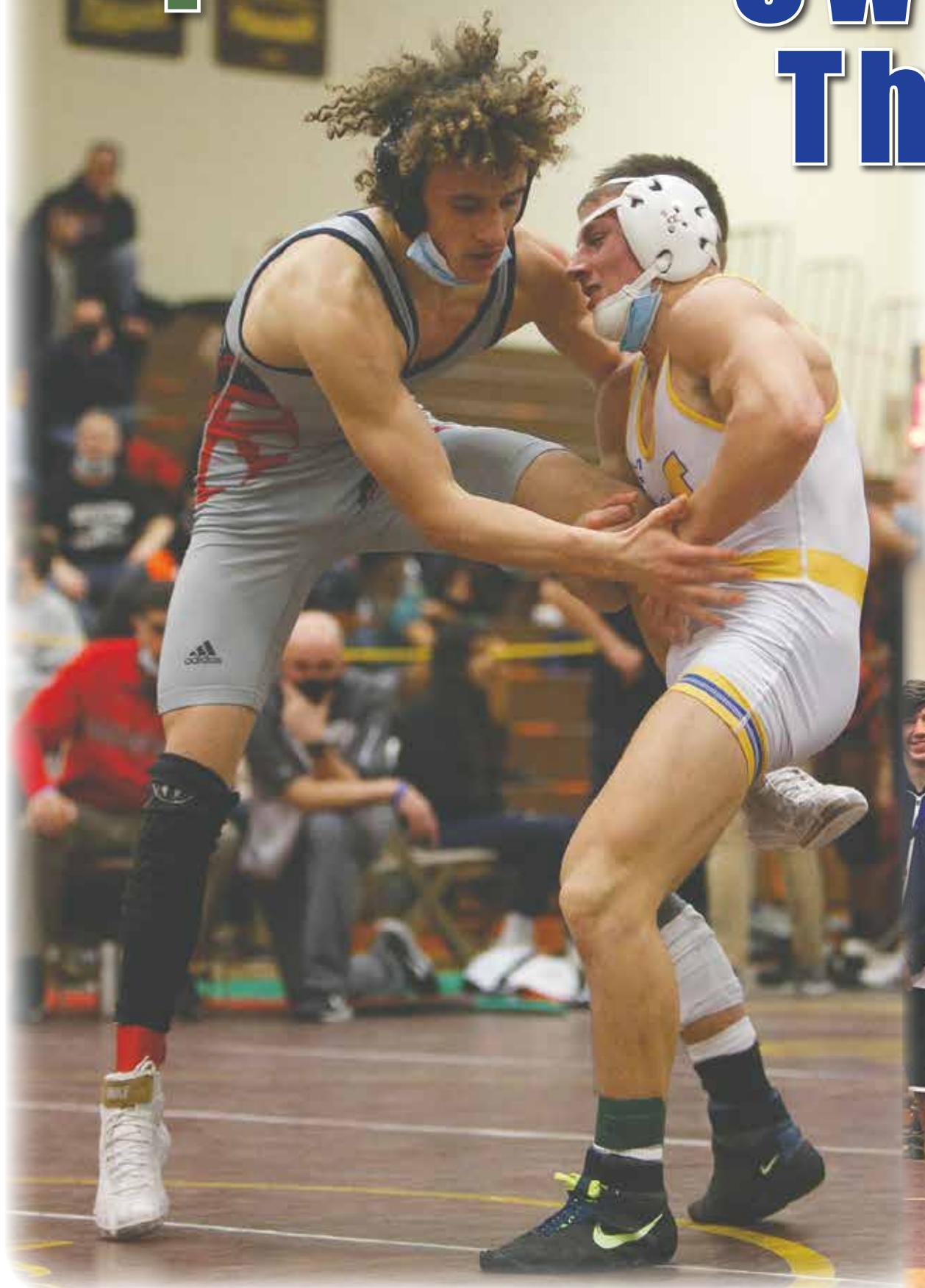


# Examiner Sports

# Centrone Owns the Throne!

**Mahopac Senior  
Crowned King at 145,  
Takes 2nd  
Section 1 Title**



SEAN VICTOR PHOTOS

Mahopac senior Angelo Centrone had his way at the Section 1 Wrestling Championships Sunday at Clarkstown South High where the able-bodied 145-pounder worked a handful of tech falls en route to his second-straight Section 1 title, including this 19-4 title triumph over RCK's Matt Masch. Centrone took the top perch at podium (inset) and will join a team of Section 1 champions this weekend at the MVP Arena in Albany... see Grappling Notebook



# Yorktown Takes Home 2 Titles, Foxes 2nd, Mahopac 3rd in Sectionals Pleasantville Places 3rd in Small School Meet, Put Valley 4th

By Tony Pinciario

The Tornambe name has been synonymous with Section 1 wrestling.

The brothers – Anthony, John and Steve – all had successful wrestling careers for Ossining in the 1990s, highlighted by Steve. The youngest brother won consecutive sectional titles (when it was one division) and finished fifth in the state his senior year for then coach Salvatore Imbimbo.

John would coach Yorktown and had two sectional champions and state place-finishers in Steven Sabella and Thomas Murray. He would also lead Yorktown to league titles. John retired from coaching a few years back and is currently a Section 1 wrestling official.

Steve was a long-time Pleasantville assistant for legendary coach Bob Bernarducci, before becoming the Mahopac coach.

Once the brothers married and their respective wives had children, it was just a matter of time before the next Tornambe generation would begin wrestling. This began two years ago when John's son, Joe, started as an eighth-grader on Yorktown's varsity. As Joe said, 'Wrestling is in the Tornambe blood.'

Joe added to the Tornambe wrestling legacy by winning the Section 1 Division I (large school) 102-pound title at the Section 1 Division I Wrestling Championships Sunday at Clarkstown South High.

Tornambe, along with teammate Dillon Carter, the 160-pound champion, and all the champions qualified for the New York State Division I Wrestling Championships, Friday-Saturday, Feb. 25-26, in Albany.

Ironically, Tornambe's Yorktown coach, Jimmy Kaishian, wrestled for John Tornambe and finished third in the section his senior year. Kaishian would wrestle at Springfield. Also, in order to reach the final, Tornambe had to beat his Uncle Steve's Mahopac wrestler in a semifinal.

The top-seeded Tornambe completed his sectional title win with a pin of second-

seeded Luis Diaz-Giron (Fox Lane) in the final.

"To know when the whistle blew and you finally get your arm raised, it all came together and it felt so good," Tornambe said.

Tornambe took control of the match immediately with a takedown and two back points. From that point on, Tornambe was in complete control.

"When I got the takedown, I knew I could control the match and push the pace," Tornambe said.

Tornambe, now 28-1 this season, received a congratulatory hug from his Uncle Steve and the two posed for a picture. With two years remaining, Tornambe has a chance to surpass his uncle for family bragging rights.

Fox Lane had its three-year sectional-title run stopped by Arlington. However, Fox Lane had two champions in Marc Berisha (285 pounds) and Justin Gierum (132). Jake Hoffman, the 152-pound runner-up, also qualified as the true top-two finishers in each weight class advance.

Berisha, who was Fox Lane's starting 182-pounder for the 2019-20 season, pinned his way to the title, improving to 36-0. It also marked a long road back for Berisha, who suffered a torn labrum in November of 2020. This sidelined him through July of 2021.

Berisha was anxiously awaiting sectionals because he didn't place in 2020 and missed last year because of the injury and Covid.

"The injury motivated me to come back and to come out on top," Berisha said.

Even though Berisha wrestles in the 285-pound weight class, he is not your typical super heavyweight. Berisha uses his quickness to overcome his opponents, but also has immense strength to throw them.

"This feels amazing," said Berisha of the title, after taking a team picture, "All the hard work we put in as a team. Nobody works harder than us. I'm still not done though. My goal is to be on the first-place spot on the podium in Albany."

Neil Paulercio of Briarcliff/Byram Hills/Valhalla/Westlake added to his break-out first varsity year by winning the 118-pound title.



Yorktown coaches pose with Section 1 champions Dillon Carter and Joe Tornambe Sunday at Clarkstown South.

He led top-seeded Shane Acheson of Tappan Zee before pinning him in the third period. Paulercio, a Valhalla freshman, advanced to the final with a semi-final victory over Mahopac's Sam Przymyski, who had beaten him earlier in the year.

"I wanted to win a sectional title this year, but didn't know if I would be able to do it because I had some really tough losses this year," Paulercio said. "As the season went on I was able to clean up my mistakes and it all started coming together."

"This feels great. I can't think of a better feeling than being a sectional champion."

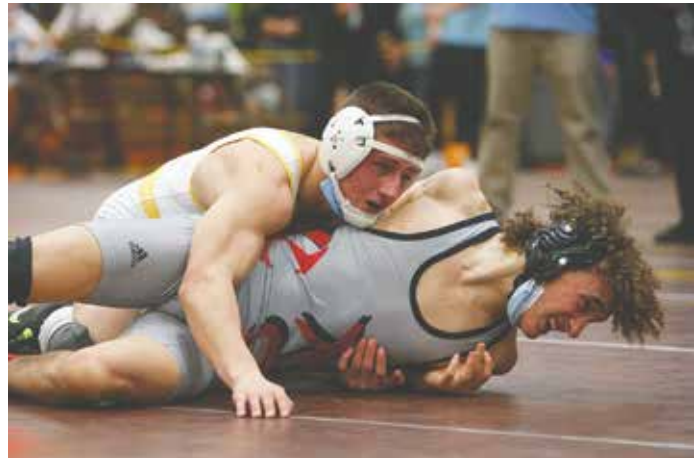
Paulercio's teammate, senior Justin Fortugno, is also going to Albany after winning the 126-pound title.

Mahopac's Angelo Centrone will be

making his third trip to Albany and second as a sectional champion after he won the 145-pound crown. Centrone never broke a sweat in registering four technical falls.

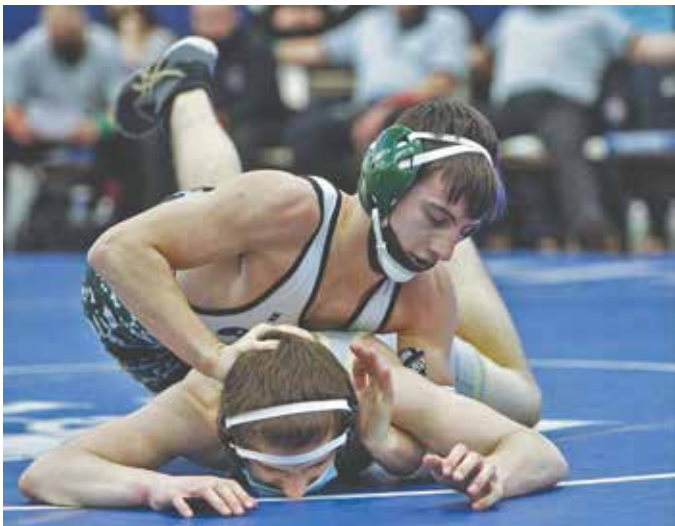
"I was being aggressive, attacking, which is my style, and putting up a lot of points," said Centrone, who finished fifth at the state

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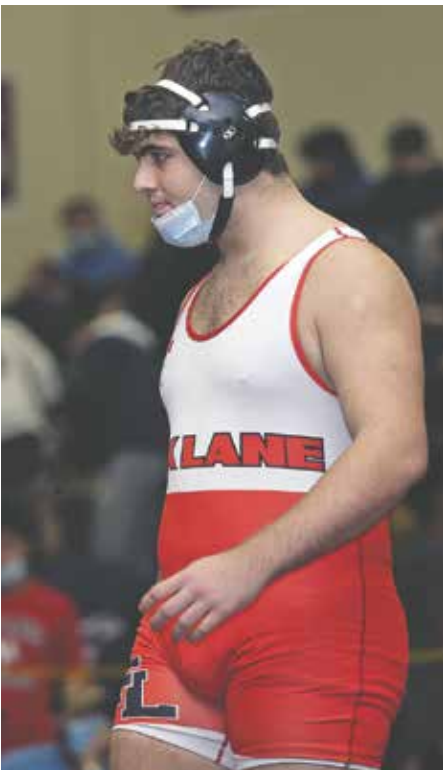


Mahopac 145-pound senior Angelo Centrone en route to tech fall in Section 1 title match at Clarkstown South Sunday.

ANDY JACOBS / SEAN VICTOR PHOTOS



Pleasantville's Christian Perleshi earned his second sectional title, winning at 138 pounds in Division II on Saturday at Hen Hud High School.

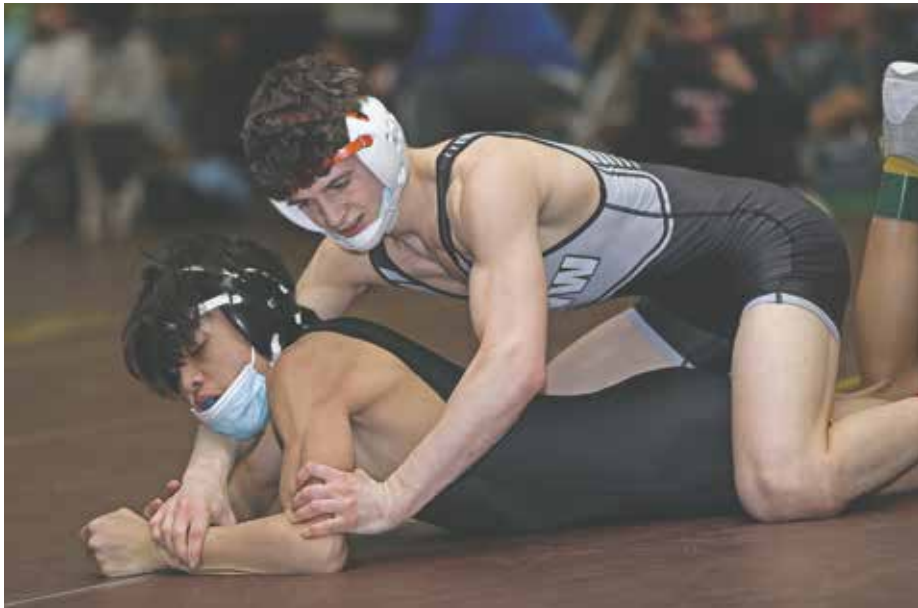


Fox Lane's Marc Berisha capped off an undefeated season by winning the Division 1 sectional title at 285 pounds.



# Sports

## Grappling Notebook



Justin Fortugno, a senior on the Briarcliff, Byram Hills, Valhalla, Westlake combo team, wrestles in Sunday's semifinals en route to winning the 126-pound championship.

*continued from previous page*  
in 2019 and seventh in 2020.

Centrone, 37-1 this season, said he learned a lesson from his 2020 state championship performance.

"Wrestling is a long, hard season and you have to take care of your body," Centrone said. "You have to wrestle hard every time you go out on the mat and never take anything for granted."

Carmel had a sectional champion as Leo Venables won the 172-pound crown. He was trailing Yonkers' Kiam Coleman, 7-2 in the third period, before reversing him then pinning him. Brother, Joel, was the 285-pound runner-up.

Mahopac's Nicolas Greco placed second at 126 pounds and George Johnson, Jr., finished third at 102 pounds. However, he beat Diaz-Giron to claim the second 102-pound berth for Section 1 in the state championships.

Lakeland/Panas had its first sectional finalist since 2009 when Joe Hauser was a champion. Connor McGannon wrestled for the 182-pound title.



Putnam Valley's 215-pound Section 1 title winner Jacob Cassidy works his opponent Saturday at Hen Hud High.

Ossining's Tristan Robinson-July was the 160-pound runner-up and Anthony Lofaro was third (138).

Horace Greeley's top finisher was Vincent Sasso, who took third at 189 pounds, and teammate Josh Hametz placed fourth (132).

Brewster's top finisher was Shane Daly (fourth at 215) and Somers' eighth-grader Ryan Ball finished fifth (102).

Pleasantville junior Christian Perlleshi faced a crossroads at the end of January after suffering an elbow injury.

Perlleshi, a 2020 Section 1 Division II (small school) champ, could have taken some time off and nursed it. That was not an option.

"Right as I hurt my elbow I knew I was coming back," Perlleshi said. "I didn't care what it was. You could have snapped my arm, I was coming back."

Perlleshi added his second sectional title, winning the Section 1 Division II 138-pound championship.

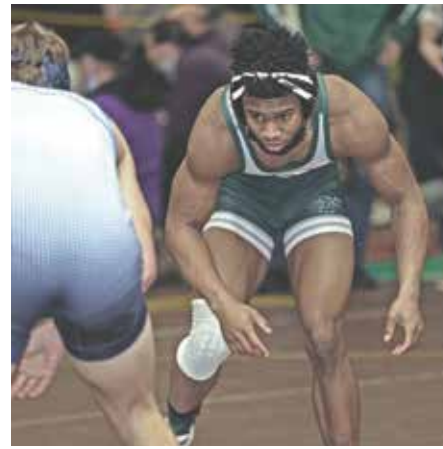
He, along with teammates and fellow champs, Ciaran Egan (102 pounds), Quinn Egan (132) and Nick Paternostro (160), qualified for the New York State Division II Wrestling Championships, Friday-Saturday, Feb. 25-26, in Albany.

Pleasantville, based on its four champions and 12 place-finishers, finished third behind champion Edgemont and runner-up Nanuet.

The Panthers finished with the most individual champions, highlighted by Perlleshi, who dominated.

"I was trying to keep chain wrestling, keep going, keep moving and wrestling tough on top," Perlleshi said. "That's all I can ask for and now I have to do it at the state level."

Perlleshi was the kid in 2019 in his first state wrestling championship.



Yorktown senior Dillon Carter, the champion at 160 pounds, looks for a takedown in his semifinal victory over Suffern's Toby Coombs on Sunday afternoon.

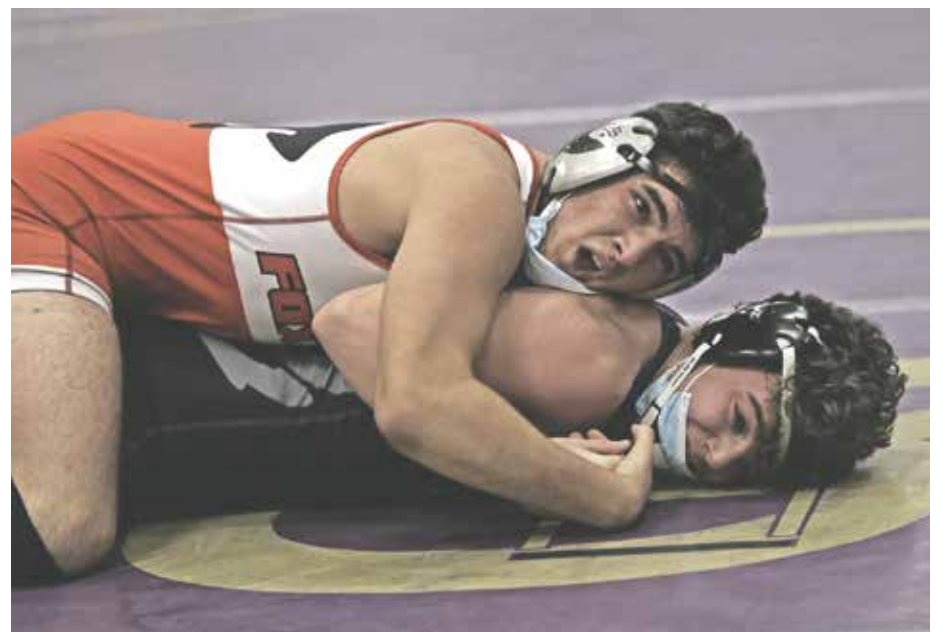
Now, he is the seasoned veteran and is looking forward to sharing the stage with his teammates.

"A few years ago I felt like I was on an island because I was so much younger, but this year we're all about the same age so now we have to go and get the job done there," Perlleshi said.

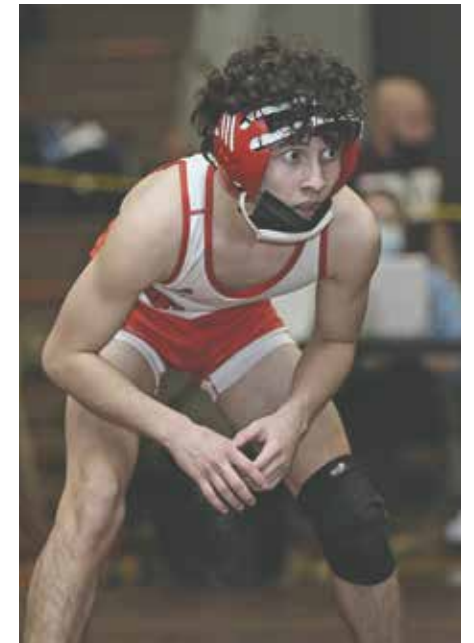
A young Putnam Valley team, with only one senior, finished fourth and had nine place finishers.

Lone senior, Jacob Cassidy, made his final sectional championship memorable by winning the 215-pound title. Cassidy, now 26-2 this season, pinned top-seeded Christian Dash of Ardsley.

"Jacob has come a long way in three years," Putnam Valley Coach Will Carano said after his 34th Section One Champion tied him with Fox Lane legend Joe Amuso Sr. for most all-time. It also gave him 38 state qualifiers, which is now the most in Section 1 history. "He has always had a great work ethic, but now, as a senior, his composure and belief in himself has made him a much tougher competitor at 215. He is strong, patient and doesn't allow anyone to out-wrestle him. He's one of the finest young men I have ever coached. Humble, considerate, hard-working and reliable. He is the exception, not the rule."



Fox Lane's Alex Berisha wrestles Carmel's Leo Venables in the semifinals at 172 pounds. Venables, looking for an escape here, wound up as the sectional champion.



Luis Diaz-Giron of Fox Lane reached the finals at 102 pounds.

The Tigers also had a trio of wrestlers finish third – Chris Maroulis (126 pounds), Esuar Ordonez (132) and Albert McDonald (145).

Hen Hud hosted the Section 1 Division II Wrestling Championships for the first time with the Sailors finishing seventh.

Hen Hud placed seven wrestlers among the top six, highlighted by eighth-grader Eric Selvaggi, who placed second at 102 pounds, and third-place finisher Ismael Andrade (138). Selvaggi upset second-seeded Aidan Soto of Pawling to reach the finals.

"The guys all wrestled really well for being so young," Hen Hud coach Shane Turrone said. "Eric has only been wrestling for three months and I am happy that he gave his all in the finals and almost pulled it out."

Turrone and his team is accustomed to hosting its tournament annually, but this was a first for sectionals.

"It really is special and I hope we can host again next year," Turrone said.

Croton had a pair of wrestlers place fifth – Henery Martin (138) and Colin Kooney (172).



# Sports

## NWE/Putnam Boys' Hoops Notebook

# Put Valley Shocks Carmel, Wins for 8th Time in 9 Games

By Ray Gallagher  
Examiner Sports Editor @Directrays

Class B **PUTNAM VALLEY** began the season at 1-8, and it looked like a third straight season of gloom and doom was on the horizon for the once-proud franchise that took the section by storm between 2013 and 2018 reaching a pair of sectional title games and three Final 4's. Out of nowhere, though, Coach Al Morales started pushing all the right buttons and the Tigers (9-9) have won eight of the last nine, including Friday's stunning 65-58 win over visiting Class AA **CARMEL**, which had just knocked off an RCK club that is staring down the barrel of a No.4 Class AA seed.

When Putnam Valley (9-9, 5-2) was taking on top-flight programs like Briarcliff and Woodlands in the sectional finals (2014, 2016), the program had won over 100 games between 2014-2019. The glory years have been a thing of the past since Woodlands shocked then-top-seeded PV in the 2019 quarterfinals. The 2020 and 2021 seasons were a far cry from what folks had become accustomed to, and 2022 looked like more of the same before the Tigers found themselves.

"I am so happy and thrilled for these boys," said Morales, who left Kennedy Catholic and took over in 2020 from former PV Coach Mike McDonnell, who orchestrated much of the Tigers' success between 2014-19 after Coach Ed Wallach led the Tigers to a 2013 Final 4 loss to Lourdes. "They have worked their tails off six days a week for me and the program. Chemistry and work ethic has been our spark. We started the season off 0-6 but played a heavy schedule on purpose with the hope that we would eventually succeed. They really trust the process and have earned all that has come their way so far. It is never easy when you have young players in the mix. You always need to leave



Put Valley seniors (L-R) Doug Brown, Arthur Holzman, Cole Durocher and Tommy Calicchio bask in their 65-58 win over Carmel Friday.

room for inexperienced play. We are now in the final stretch of our season and gelling at the right moment with still a great deal of great coaching and competition ahead."

The upset of Carmel has officially put the Tigers on the Class B radar as they were set to conclude the regular season last night at home against League III-E champion **HALDANE** (17-2, 7-0), which was hoping to wrap up an undefeated league campaign.

PV senior Cole Durocher, a four-year veteran who was a budding freshman on the 2018 team, hasn't had the supporting cast during his sophomore and junior seasons, but he and senior F Arthur Holzman stuck it out and laid the foundation for a strong finish and

a bright future. Durocher finished with a team-high 21 points against the Rams while freshman F Nate Shillingford went for a career-high 19 points. Holzman added 14 points, nine boards and four blocks while Sean Holzman added eight boards and six points and Tommy Calicchio had six steals.

"That was one of the biggest games of the year for us," Durocher said. "We played our game and paid no attention to the fact that they were in a different class than us. I love these guys and I think we are gonna be a problem for teams come playoffs."

Carmel was led by senior F Nick DiLeo's game-high 29 points and seven boards.

"They didn't surprise us because we knew they had some good players," second-year Carmel Coach Brandon Johanson said. "We didn't execute efficiently offensively and it cost us. Our legs were flat as well. We have played six games in 10 days, and 11 games in 18 days, with most of those back-to-backs. Hats off to PV, though, they played a great game and earned the win."

Carmel senior F Randy Aboagye had 10 points and 10 rebounds while senior G Andrew Fiore, who finished with nine points and nine caroms, admitted the Rams were caught off guard.

"We definitely took PV too lightly," Fiore said. "It's hard to come back with the same energy after beating a team like RCK, but it's still unacceptable how we played on the defensive end tonight."

In Putnam Valley's 75-50 league win over Pawling, Durocher stroked a season-high 28 points while (12) and Shillingford (10) also went for double digits on senior night when a Section 1 referee was loudly booed for a charging call against the hometown Tigers with 20 seconds left and then promptly



Put Valley freshman F Nate Shillingford goes reverse on Carmel F Randy Aboagye in Tigers' 65-58 win over Rams Friday.



Put Valley F John Cekaj goes up for block to foul Carmel F Nick DeLeo in Tigers' 65-58 stunner over Rams Friday.



Put Valley G Cole Durocher fires jumper over Carmel G Trevor Cayea in Tigers' 65-58 win over visiting Rams Friday.



Put Valley junior F Sean Holzman drops clutch 3 in Tigers' 65-58 win over visiting Carmel Friday.

RAY GALLAGHER / GIL MCMAHON PHOTOS

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# Sports

## NWE/Putnam Boys' Hoops Notebook



Carmel G Kevin Dall floats in lane in Rams' shocking 65-58 loss to host Put Valley Friday.



Carmel G Andrew Fiore sinks runner on PV's Doug Brown in Rams' shocking 65-58 loss to host Tigers Friday.



Mahopac senior Jack Moore makes his move on Greeley's Caleb Reynolds in Indians' win over host Quakers.



Mahopac's Colum Ranaghan takes run at Greeley's Ethan Golub (12) in Indians' win over Quakers last week.

## N.West./Putnam Fab Five Hoops Poll

**No.1 MAHOPAC** – Coach McMahon's Class A Indians (14-4, 10-0) locked up the League II-C title with a 59-52 win over John Jay CR and should play a pair of home playoff games in front of the raucous #Mahopac Maniacs as the potential No.4 seed. Pac was led by Patrick McMahon's 18 points vs. Jay. Max Gomes and Mike Callahan each had 12 and Colum Ranaghan added 11. Sidenote: Yorktown's Crop has been the best of the student fan sections over the course of time, but the #Maniacs need to bring it this week.

**No.2 PANAS** – Coach Auerbach's Class A Panthers (14-6, 6-4) had their 8-game winning streak snapped by League II-D champion Lourdes in a 53-52 setback, which was acceptable given OLL has owned the entire league, but then the Panthers got waxed, 63-52, by host Lakeland and dropped from a likely No.4/5 seed all the way to a potential No.8. Talk about a vexing bunch, look no further.

**No.3 LAKELAND** – Just when we're about to write off Coach Fallo's Class A Hornets (11-9, 4-6), the possible 13-seed goes out and shocks Poughkeepsie, 54-42, and then floors rival Panas, 63-52, to complete a four-game win streak to close out the regular season. Remember what we told y'all guys two weeks ago: Lakeland started 2021 as an also-ran before winning the West./Put. small school regional, so look past them at your own peril. This is a potential No.14 seed I want no part of if I'm No.4 Mahopac, particularly since rangey F Logan Shiland is a matchup nightmare, and the Hornets already own a win over the Indians back in Week 1.

**No.4 HALDANE** – Coach V's Class C state-ranked (No.5) Blue Devils (17-2, 7-0) have had a heck of a season, but the loss to Bronxville is a tad alarming, considering the fact that Bronxville lost to a Hamilton team standing between Haldane and its first sectional title since 2016. Just hope this strength of schedule has pushed them to the limit before they see Hamilton again in finals, and PV should've pushed them hard last night.

**No.5 OSSINING** – Coach Casey's Class AA Pride (13-6, 4-2), the current No.5 seed, have ripped off wins in 8 of the last 9, including Saturday's 69-42 revenge match with White Plains, so we can't imagine anyone happy to get this draw, including current No.12 Suffern. Jaeden's Carr's Pride have a couple of impressive wins over Fox Lane and White Plains, but they could've lost some prime momentum if they didn't end strong against Arlington last night.

**No.5A SOMERS** – Coach DiCintio's Class A Tuskers (11-9, 7-3) didn't quite finish as they hoped they would and the result could be a No.13 seed, which might force a third game against Mahopac, which has owned them this season, should the seeds hold true.

**HM PUTNAM VALLEY** – Coach Morales' Class B Tigers (9-9) have gone from doormats to darkhorse over the course of one month #RemarkableTransformation and look like a potential No.10/11 seed.

**HM CARMEL** – Coach Johansen's Class AA Rams (11-8, 4-2) suffered three tough losses last week, including No.3 Fox Lane, No.7 Arlington and Class B Put Valley, which certainly puts them on the road for the playoffs as something like a 10/11-seed; all this after shocking No.4 RCK.

**HM YORKTOWN** – Coach Pavella's Class A Huskers (10-10, 3-7), the current No.17 seed, closed out the regular season with a pair of tough losses to John Jay CR and Mahopac (by a combined 4 points) before ending on three-straight wins, which they hope to ride into the playoffs.

**HM HEH HUD** – Coach Hirsch's Class A Sailors (11-9, 4-6), who lost to Lourdes and Poughkeepsie last week and dropped to the No.16 seed, may find themselves in a similar position as Yorktown and Somers... seemingly just a notch behind the upper crust of Class A. We'd be happy to eat those words should the Sailors knock off Yorktown in a potential outbracket.

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ejected more than 50 student body fans #ThingsYouNeverSawBefore.

**MAHOPAC** saw both its boys' and girls' hoops programs run the table with perfect 10's in League II-C, and as a result both are expected to secure a top-4 seed and a pair of home games. After opening the season at 1-3, Coach Tom McMahon's Indians (14-4) have won 13 of 14 and enter the Class A postseason on a roll, searching for the first gold ball in school history. Oddly enough, if the current playoff seeds (as of Super Bowl Sunday) hold true, No.4 Mahopac would host No.13 Lakeland in the first round of the playoffs should both survive the outbracket round while the No.4 Mahopac girls would host No.5 Lakeland in the quarterfinals should both survive and advance #BorderWars.

"I really think there are 10 teams that could win (the gold ball)," Mahopac Coach Tom McMahon said. "TZ is the clear favorite, but even their road won't be easy. There will be major upsets (based on seeds) in every round."

Lakeland knocked off Mahopac in the finals of the Lakeland tourney in early December. Both have improved vastly over time.

"I definitely think we are better than we were then, but they are, too," McMahon said. "It would be a wild game for sure. We have played well, and I'm happy about that, but we've mixed in some stinkers, too."

The Class A tournament was set to tip off this week with outbracket rounds beginning Feb.18th and opening rounds on Feb. 22nd in Class A, Feb. 19th in Classes AA and B.

**NOTES of Interest:** I know that officiating high school sports is a thankless gig, and I've stood by referees/umpires over the course of my entire career and always will, especially when some foolish parents refuse to stifle their gums. However, in

Putnam Valley's senior night game last Tuesday, the student body vociferously booed a referee's "charging" call against a Tiger player with 20 seconds remaining in their rout of visiting Pawling. The referee promptly, and I do mean swiftly, tossed the entire student body from the gym. I'd never seen anything like it in the 33 years I'm covering local sports. There were 20 dang seconds left in the game, at which point you swallow your pride and leave the floor in under a minute without causing a scene. Was it unsportsmanlike? Yes! Was it personal? Hell no!

Then, over in Pearl River last week, Pirate fans in the gym were making noises – monkey- and ape-like shrieks – as a Black Nyack student athlete readied to take his free-throw shots from the

foul line on several different occasions, according to Nyack players who watched video tape in disbelief after the game (<https://twitter.com/NYACKHSHOOPS/status/1491869628942987272>). Nobody did a thing, not a damn thing, to hold that student body accountable for their insufferable actions, though they are now said to be investigating after the fact, if only because they got called out.

If a referee can toss 80-something kids from a gym for booing his call in Put Valley, why the hell can't members of the Pearl River security team – during a teachable moment – toss a pack of A-holes for displaying blatant racism against a neighboring community? Makes me sick! I thought this generation knew better, but this was a stark reminder that there's still a ton of work ahead of us.



# Sports

## NWE/Putnam Girls' Hoops Notebook

### Put Valley Drops Panas; Brewster's Galgano Grabs 1,000th Rebound

By Ray Gallagher  
Examiner Sports Editor @Directrays

Despite its potential No.5 seed, **PUTNAM VALLEY** has officially become the team nobody in Class B wants to face after the visiting League III-E champion **Tigers** (12-7) stunned Class A **WALTER PANAS**, 55-52, in a back-and-forth affair that saw PV junior star Eva DeChent rock the Panthers for 23 points, 13 rebounds and four assists. PV senior G Amanda Orlando had 17 points and G Nai Torres added 11, including seven in the pivotal fourth quarter. The Tigers needed contributions across the board against the Panthers, the likely No.3 seed in the playoffs, and they got that and then some from Ava Harman (two points, seven rebounds) and Nat Mazza (two points, six rebounds).

"I think it's a good confidence booster and a step in the right direction leading into playoffs," said DeChent, who could walk into a triple-double at any time. "This was our first good win of the season and it put us in a good place. We are excited to keep getting better and keep winning."

Panas freshman G Cadence Nicholas continued her ascent with 21 points and four rebounds while classmate Sofia Tavaréz had 12 points, four assists and four steals. Junior F Kelsey Cregan had seven points and nine rebounds for the Panthers (17-3) while junior F Julia Gallinger added six points and snagged six caroms.

"We will be fine," Panas Coach Matt Evangelista insisted. "Putnam Valley is excellent and they made the big plays they needed to make."

**BREWSTER** senior Grace Galgano became the first Bear in history – boys or girls – to snag 1,000 rebounds and score 1,000 points when she hauled in 10 boards to go with 32 points and six blocks in the Brewster's 52-30 win over visiting **YORKTOWN** last Wednesday. Additionally, Galgano passed Jody Tassone (1992) to become the program's all-time leading scorer with 1,114 points (and counting). Galgano then celebrated Senior Night with 25 points, 20 rebounds and seven blocks in a 49-21 win over visiting Somers.

Outbracket playoff games will commence on Thursday, Feb.17 in Class A with first round games to follow on Feb.19. Class AA outbrackets are scheduled to start on Feb.18 with the opening round to follow on Feb.22. Class B's first round opens on Feb.22 and Class C on Feb. 23.

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Panas junior F Kelsey Cregan is the glue that holds it all together for the potential No.3-seeded Panthers entering the playoffs.



Ossining G Michelle Mercado and the Pride are hoping for a home playoff game as the potential No.8-9 seed in Class AA.

RAY GALLAGHER PHOTOS



Lakeland senior Tyler Hormazabal and the Hornets are a high-flying top-5 seed entering Class A playoffs.



Mahopac senior G Melanie DeMeo's Indians are looking at two home playoff games as the potential No.4 seed in Class A.





# Sports

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Putnam Valley junior G Eva DeChent hopes to lead top-5 seeded Tigers to third-straight title.



Brewster senior Grace Galgano became the first Bear in history -- boys or girls -- to score 1,000 points and snag 1,000 rebounds last week in 52-30 win over Yorktown.

## NWE/Putnam Girls' Hoops Notebook

### NWE/Putnam Fab Five Girls' Hoops Poll

*So we've gotten some emails from time to time from folks wondering why we don't rank our girls' teams like we do our boys' teams, so here's a crack at it as we head into the sectional tournament this week.*

**No.1 MAHOPAC** (16-4, 10-0) – 4th-seeded Class A Indians have recently identified as a defensive menace, allowing under 35 PPG in the final six games while averaging 60 PPG during an 11-game-win streak. If they are on from downtown in the playoffs, this unit can play along with anyone as they possess four legit snipers from beyond the arc. If they go cold from distance, it'll take a dynamic defensive effort to reach the Final 4 should they see current No.5 Lakeland in the quarters.

**No.2 PUTNAM VALLEY** (12-7, 5-0) – 5th-seeded League III-E champion Class B Tigers are on a semifinal collision course with No.1 Hastings and have one of the state's premier players on their side in URI-bound Eva DeChent, who can get on an unstoppable roll and provide PV with its second sectional title in three years (to go along with its COVID-shortened West./Put. small school regional title in 2021). Ain't nobody in Class B wanna see these Tigers, provided they have hashed out any issues, which it seems they have after beating Panas. Still, would have liked to have seen them log a few more BIG wins prior to Panas.

**No.3 BREWSTER** (16-4, 7-3) – Impressive wins over Lakeland and Panas lead one to believe the 6th-seeded Bears are well within striking distance of reaching the Class A Final 4 but they could be staring down the barrel of a No.6/No.3 quarterfinal tap with Panas, which would be a war the Bears may or may not survive in Round 2 between them.

**No.4 LAKELAND** (17-3, 7-1) – League II-C co-champion Hornets have recovered nicely from losses to Brewster and Pearl River, including a huge win over rival Panas, which helped secure a top-5 playoff seed. The top seven teams in Class A (TZ, Harrison, Panas, Mahopac, Lakeland Brewster and Ardsley) are a combined 116-21, so anything beyond the quarterfinals seems unpredictable. Think about this: Panas and Lakeland are a combined 34-6. Can't recall that kind of intra-district goodness in moons, if ever.

**No.4A PANAS** (17-3, 7-1) – League II-C co-champion Panthers are not headed into the Class A playoffs on a high note after falling to Class B Putnam Valley and Lakeland in the final week of the regular season, but the current No.3 seed has wins over No.4 Mahopac and No.6 Class AA John Jay EF and current No.9 Ossining and is poised beyond their years. If they get to a Final 4 or beyond in 2022 without a prime-time senior on the floor, the sky's the limit next year.

**No.5 OSSINING** (13-6, 4-2) – Pride did not fare well down the stretch against top Class AA clubs, including two losses to White Plains and another to RCK. Still, they will be a dangerous 8/9 seed based on mystique and ability.

**HM YORKTOWN** (13-7, 6-4) – Huskers have had a super season but double-digit losses to Brewster and Mahopac are alarming if they are going to advance in Class A tourney as the potential No.8 seed with a chance to host an outbracket and then possibly host battle-tested No.9 Nanuet, which has faced opponents with a combined 186-123 record.

**HM PEEKSKILL** (12-8, 4-4) – Happy to see Coach Searight, Bethani Overby and Co. get this once-proud program back on the map again, but advancing on the road as the possible No.10 seed against a rugged potential No.7 Ardsley club (16-4) will be dang near impossible. Peekskill was surely hoping for the seeds to shake out differently Monday and move as of press time.



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Byram Hills’ Alex Cutier is hawked by Mahopac senior Matt Luczkowski in Bobcats’ 3-2 loss to Indians at BIA Thursday.

*focus on*  
**ICE  
HOCKEY**  
**Mahopac  
Ices  
Byram  
Hills, 3-2**



Mahopac F Christian Martirano cranks shot in 3-2 win over Byram Hills at BIA Thursday.



Mahopac freshman Alex Wanner (R) and Byram’s Erik Cipriano battle for 50-50 puck in Indians’ 3-2 win over Bobcats Thursday at BIA.



Mahopac F Johnny Martirano cranks shot on goal in Indians’ 3-2 win over Byram Hills Thursday at BIA.



Mahopac senior F Jordan Donatone cruises up ice in Indians’ 3-2 win over Byram Hills Thursday at BIA.



Mahopac senior captain Matt Luczkowski has been the heart and soul for the Indians this season.



# Sports

## Westlake Beats the Bears in Overtime to Claim League Title

By Andy Jacobs

More than a half dozen years have passed since a Westlake girls' basketball team last earned a league championship. But last Thursday afternoon, the 2021-22 Wildcats put an end to the drought in the unlikely of ways.

Without scoring a single basket in overtime, the Wildcats were still able to take command of the four-minute extra session, hitting 10 consecutive free throws while nearly shutting out host Briarcliff for a 61-54 victory that provided a thrilling finish to Westlake's season-long quest for a title.

"This was a great high school game. Both teams really went after it," said Westlake head coach Sean Mayer afterwards. "There were some huge shots from us, and them, at the end. Clutch shots, clutch free throws and, you know, it's one of those games where one team, unfortunately, had to lose it. Both teams really played hard."

Sami Oswald finished with 18 points and Julie Lyden added 16 for the Wildcats, who improved to 14-5 with the win and clinched the Conference III, League C crown. In the final minute of overtime, it was Oswald who made six straight free throws to help Westlake seal the outcome.

Briarcliff, which dropped to 12-7 with the loss, got 20 points from Caroline Barbalato, 17 from Cat Carrafiello and 12 from Rebecca Kratz. The Bears held a one-point lead at halftime, but found themselves trailing 44-32 early in the fourth quarter before mounting a rousing comeback down the stretch.

"I was super proud of 'em. They stepped up, they tried their best," said Bears coach Denise Hamlin, whose team had lost to Westlake by 28 points just three weeks earlier. "They worked all week long and they wanted to prove, I think more to themselves, they were better than that outing they had. And they did."

The Wildcats, clinging to a four-point



Briarcliff guard Caroline Barbalato drives the left baseline past Westlake's ToniAnn Mastracchio in the second half of last Thursday afternoon's game.

lead after three quarters, seemingly seized control for good when they began the fourth with a basket by Jenny Straface and then two straight 3-pointers from Allie Castellone. But the Bears then stormed back with a four-minute blitz, outscoring Westlake 14-2 to tie the game at 46-apiece.

The big Briarcliff run was sparked by a couple of buckets by Kratz and five crucial points from sophomore Adrianna Scanga, including a 3-point shot that cut the Bears' deficit to just two with 1:45 remaining. A pair of free throws by Barbalato 28 seconds later tied the score.

In the tension-filled final minute of regulation, both teams held brief leads. Oswald drove the lane for a shot that rolled in, giving Westlake a 48-46 edge with 57 seconds to go. A 10-second violation on the Wildcats with 36 seconds on the clock set the stage for the Bears' Carrafiello to deliver a left-elbow 3-point shot off the dribble 10 seconds later that gave Briarcliff a one-point lead.

A free throw by Castellone with 15.8



Westlake center Julie Lyden is sandwiched between Briarcliff's Eliza Aldrich (left) and Cat Carrafiello as they await a rebound in last Thursday's game won by the Wildcats.



Riley Giaccone of Westlake sets her sights on the rim as she makes her move in the lane during the Wildcats' road win vs. Briarcliff.

seconds left and then two more from Oswald with 11.2 remaining put Westlake back in front, 51-49. But the speedy Barbalato was knocked to the floor on a drive to the basket and calmly tied the game with two foul shots with 8.1 seconds on the clock. The Wildcats had a chance to win at the buzzer, but Castellone misfired on a 19-foot jumper from the right corner.

"I can tell you, when we went into overtime, we had a positive, positive bench that was excited for one more quarter," said Mayer. "So they didn't have their heads down. You know, we didn't just blow a 20-point lead. We were trying to double some players, left some others open and to their credit they made the shots. They hit a huge 3, we didn't get the ball across. That was a little bit of a mistake. But we stayed focused."

In the overtime session, the Wildcats regained the lead for good with two Lyden free throws with 2:43 left. Junior point guard ToniAnn Mastracchio gave Westlake a 55-51 advantage with two more foul shots with 1:05 to go. In the final minute, the desperate Bears sent Oswald to the line three different times and she hit all six of her attempts, stretching the lead to 10 points.

Briarcliff missed all eight of its shots from the floor in overtime until Barbalato finally drained a 25-foot shot at the buzzer. To coach Hamlin, it was another disappointing ending for



Westlake junior guard Sami Oswald lines up a shot from the left corner in the third quarter vs. host Briarcliff.

a team suddenly in the midst of a three-game losing streak.

"A couple bounces here or there might've made a difference," she said. "You know, they just doubt themselves sometimes. They lose confidence at times and I'm trying to be their biggest cheerleader, telling them they can do it. Today, they told each other they can do it. They were each other's cheerleaders and I think that's what brought us back in the game."

Meanwhile, Westlake, which routed Haldane a day later, wound up finishing the regular season with a four-game winning streak, its second one since the start of 2022. According to Mayer, his players are anxious to extend their current success well into the sectional playoffs.

"They're excited," he said. "But they have to stay focused and be ready to go each night because there's so many teams that can make a run. We're one of them, but there's a lot more as well and we know that. We'll see what happens."



Westlake junior Allie Castellone fires up a short jumper in the 61-54 overtime victory over Briarcliff that clinched a league title for the Wildcats last Thursday afternoon.



Briarcliff's Rebecca Kratz scores on one of the three breakaway layups she had after intercepting passes in the Bears' home game vs. Westlake.

ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS



# Sports

## Fox Lane's Huge Third-Quarter Run Overwhelms the Tigers

By Andy Jacobs

Even though it's been just nine weeks, it seems like eons ago since the Fox Lane boys' basketball team opened its season on the road against Yorktown looking nothing like a contender for a sectional championship.

But on Friday evening, in front of a large and enthusiastic Senior Night home crowd, the suddenly surging Foxes provided one more reminder that they are indeed in the mix for Class AA supremacy.

Using an overwhelming 22-2 run to close the third quarter, Fox Lane went on to a convincing 60-49 victory over the upset-minded White Plains Tigers, who held a four-point lead early in the second half. Justin Allen finished with 19 points and Niko Dent came off the bench to add 15 points, eight rebounds and one emphatic blocked shot as the Foxes clinched the Conference 1, League D title and stretched their winning streak to seven games.

"You know, we've come a long way," said Fox head coach Mike Tomassi, looking back on that dismal 20-point loss to the Huskers back in early December. "The first game of the year, we had two new guys in the starting lineup, first time playing with fans in a long time. And we had to grow. To be 14 and 5 right now, with one game to play, to win back-to-back league championships, is unbelievable. Unbelievable. It really is."

The visiting Tigers arrived with just six wins in 18 games, but with standout junior Menzy Carden pouring in a game-high 23 points, many of them coming on silky smooth pullup jumpers, they managed to match the Foxes basket for basket for much of the contest.

White Plains outscored the Foxes 18-11 in the second quarter and took a 26-24 lead into intermission following a Carden 3-pointer with 53 seconds left in the half. Even worse for Fox Lane, Allen had been whistled for his third foul driving to the basket with 4:20 remaining and was forced to watch the remainder of the half from the bench.



Senior forward Dylan Watson maneuvers down low against Elijah Pierre of White Plains in the second half of Fox Lane's 60-49 victory.



Fox Lane's Justin Allen uses his left hand to score a first-half basket in Friday night's 60-49 win over visiting White Plains.

"Yeah, we had some foul trouble," said Tomassi. "Definitely changed some of the things we wanted to do. But we persevered. We're a deep team and we had guys that stepped up. We were able to get through that first half down two, which I thought was great. And it was about the second half, just playing better as a team, and I thought we did that."

Just 12 seconds into the second half, Carden scored on a short pullup jumper to give the Tigers a four-point lead. Charlie Shevick, who provided the Foxes with 11 points, then dropped in a left-corner 3-point shot 30 seconds later. But White Plains regained its four-point advantage when Carden scored on a hanging-in-midair,



Junior guard Matt Toscano dribbles the ball near the top of the key in the Foxes' victory over White Plains on Friday that stretched their winning streak to seven games.



The Foxes' Niko Dent converts on a fast-break layup early in the fourth quarter of Friday's victory over the White Plains Tigers.

double-pumping put-back with 5:10 left in the third quarter.

Unfortunately for the Tigers, by the time they finally scored again more than four minutes later, Fox Lane had erupted for 18 straight points to quickly turn the contest into a rout. The huge spurt began with Michael Lombardi making a 10-foot pop in the lane. Exactly halfway through the quarter, Allen followed by driving in for a scoop shot off glass that tied the game.

Dent, the excitable junior forward who made an immediate impact with his offensive rebounding when he was summoned into the game by Tomassi in the first half, then gave Fox Lane the lead for good when he scored a layup on a feed from Aidan Giannelli. Back-to-back 3-pointers from Shevick and Allen capped the run and gave Fox Lane a commanding 14-point advantage.

A free throw by Elijah Pierre finally ended the Tigers' scoring drought, but the third quarter ended with Giannelli racing in for a lefty layup and then Dent scoring inside, off a nice pass from Allen, with five seconds on the clock. The Fox Lane lead was suddenly up to 52-36 and a game up for grabs just minutes earlier was all but over.

"Third quarter, we defended better," said Tomassi. "We switched up a little press, back into zone, but we also just moved the ball offensively and guys were making shots. I think we kind of got back into our flow on offense."

The Foxes built their largest lead of the night, 18 points, when Allen hit on a pullup 17-foot jumper 15 seconds into the fourth quarter. White Plains never got any closer than 13 points after that until Carden provided a highlight-reel tomahawk dunk after intercepting a cross-court pass with half a minute remaining.

"We had some injuries, some Covid stuff, so we really haven't been able to get into a flow until the last three and a half weeks, said Tomassi, whose team closed the regular



Fox Lane's Charlie Shevick rises for a jump shot in the Foxes' home win over White Plains on Senior Night.

season by defeating Harrison a day later behind 15 points apiece from Allen and Dent. "I tell the kids the season's a marathon. It's not a sprint. No championships are won in November, December and January. It's about who's got the team playing the best at the end of February. So that's what we want to do."



Michael Lombardi sails in for Fox Lane's first basket of the night in Friday's Senior Night win over White Plains.



Sports

focus on  
**WHITE  
PLAINS  
Basketball**



Shane Washington sets up the Tigers' offense in the second half of Friday night's road game.



The Tigers' Menzy Carden battles for control of a rebound with Fox Lane's Niko Dent in Friday night's game won by the host Foxes 60-49.



White Plains standout guard Menzy Carden pulls up for a jump shot vs. host Fox Lane. He scored a game-high 23 points.



White Plains sophomore Logan McCormick tosses up a runner in the lane during the third quarter of Friday's game at Fox Lane.

focus on  
**HORACE  
GREELEY  
Ice  
Hockey**



Greeley senior defenseman Charlie Spar stays ready during a faceoff on Friday night.



Greeley's Ilan Laurence finds room to skate up the ice with the puck as he tries to get to the goal in the first period of the Quakers' game against host John Jay.



Quaker goalie Ben Madden makes a save in the second period of the loss to the John Jay Wolves at Brewster Ice Arena.



Freshman Brody Skala controls the puck in the Quakers' game vs. the Wolves at Brewster Arena.



Greeley's Ellis Adams races for the puck in the first period of Friday night's game against the John Jay Wolves.



Horace Greeley senior Ben Cohen moves the puck up the right wing in Friday's 6-1 loss to John Jay at the Brewster Ice Arena.



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# Rise of the Wildcats



**ToniAnn Mastracchio and Westlake  
Defeat the Briarcliff Bears in Overtime  
to Capture the League C Championship  
and Gather Momentum for the Playoffs**