

# Examiner Sports Beeb Sting!



RAY GALLAGHER PHOTO

## Mahopac Throttles Undermanned Hornets, Moves on to Final 4

Mahopac junior F Lauren "Beebs" Beberman readies to block shot by determined Lakeland freshman G Amanda Franco, who was denied access in the fifth-seeded Hornets' 67-35 Class A quarterfinal playoff loss to host Indians Saturday when the fourth-seeded Indians advanced to the Section 1 Final 4 to challenge top-seeded host Tappan Zee Wednesday (4:30 p.m.). The Hornets, who were without top scorer Tyler Hormazabal due to a knee injury during a first-round win over Byram Hills, were up against it from the start and never threatened a Mahopac club that ripped off 13-straight wins behind 15 first-half point from senior wing Julie DeBrocky... see Girls' Hoops Notebook

# Double Trouble!



MATTHEW TURRI PHOTO

## Cregan Scores 13, Grabs 12 Boards in Panther Playoff Win; Panas Advances to Class A Final 4

Walter Panas junior F Kelsey Cregan has been a walking double-double this season, recording 11 this year, including Saturday's 13-point, 12-rebound effort in the third-seeded Panthers' 57-41 Section 1 Class A quarterfinal playoff win over visiting No.13 Pearl River. Panas advanced to its third Final 4 in six years under Coach Matt Evangelista (not including 2021's abbreviated run to the regional finals) and will visit No.2 Harrison Wednesday (4:30 p.m.)... see Girls' Hoops Notebook



# Survive, Advance: Panas, Mahopac Reach Class A Final 4

## Putnam Valley Advances to Class B Semis; Ossining Ousted in Class AA

By Tony Pinciario

It was a little too close for comfort at halftime for **WALTER PANAS** in its Section 1 Class A Girls' Basketball quarterfinal game against Pearl River.

The third-seeded Panthers led the 11th-seed and upset-minded Pirates by just six points. Panas did not want to become Pearl River's second consecutive upset victim, so junior F Kelsey Cregan and her teammates came out surging.

Panas took control of the game with a quick outburst, extending its lead to double digits en route to an easy 57-41 victory. The Panthers, now 19-3, will play at No.2 Harrison, Wednesday, in a semifinal. The other Class A semifinal has No.4 Mahopac going to No.1 Tappan Zee. The semifinal winners will play for the Class A title, Sunday, 4 p.m., at Yorktown High School.

"At halftime, our coaches always tell us that the first couple of minutes of the third quarter are very important," said junior and captain Kelsey Cregan, who had 13 points and 12 assists. "That reminder helped us come out with high energy."

Freshman G Sofia Tavaréz had a game-high 17 points and she also had five assists for the youthful but effective Panthers. Panther G Cadence Nicholas, another fresh-faced freshman, contributed 16 points and Sarah Chuili added seven points, seven rebounds and five assists.

Panas Coach Matt Evangelista credited Nicholas with fueling Panas.



Mahopac G Julia Paolicelli eyes up two points against Lakeland F Grace Hahn in Indians' 67-35 playoff win over visiting Hornets Saturday.

"Cadence knocked down some really difficult threes early in the third quarter," Evangelista said. "We also really took care of the defensive glass and created some turnovers."

Cregan and her teammates were well aware that Pearl River was a strong No.11 seed and not being prepared for it could have ended the Panthers' season prematurely. Panas, especially the seniors, wanted the final home game to be a celebratory memory.

"We knew that Pearl River was a very good team and the upset against Brewster helped us stay focused because we knew they were coming to play," Cregan said. "It was very special to play at home and we are so excited to move on to the semis."

Even though Panas did not play Harrison in the regular season, the Panthers began focusing on the Huskies once the quarterfinal win concluded.

"We know that Harrison has a variety of skill and hustle players," Cregan said. "The next couple of days we will work in practice and approach the next game like we always do. We are just really excited to be at this point and see where we can go."

This is Panas' third trip to the sectional semifinals under Evangelista. The



Mahopac wing Julie DeBrocky drills one of several big 3's she would drain in host Indians' 67-35 win over Lakeland Saturday.

Panthers advanced to the semifinals of the 2020 Section 1 Class A Girls' Basketball Championships and last year, Panas played in the Northern Westchester/Putnam Large School Championship game where it was defeated by Putnam Valley...

Melanie DeMeo and her senior classmates made sure their final **MAHOPAC** home game would be memorable. The fourth-seeded Indians took charge early and handed fifth-seeded Lakeland a 67-35 defeat in a Section 1 Class A Girls' Basketball Championship quarterfinal.

Mahopac will visit No.1 Tappan Zee, Wednesday, for a sectional semifinal. The semifinal victors play for the title, Sunday, 4 p.m., at Yorktown High School.

Senior sniper Julie DeBrocky led Mahopac with a game-best 17 points, including 15 in the pivotal first half. Junior G Kristina Rush finished with 15 points and DeMeo added 11 points as Mahopac led by 20 points at halftime.

"All sectional games are special and this one being the last home for the seniors, was extra special," DeMeo said. "We needed to win to move on to the next game and we didn't want to lose our last home game."

Even though Mahopac was unsure whether Lakeland's top player, Tyler Hormazabal, who was injured, was going to play, it did not alter their preparation. Once again, Mahopac's defensive intensity dictated terms.

"The big keys for us in the first half was our defense, and Julia and Kristina hitting shots early," DeMeo said.

Mahopac is no stranger to Tappan Zee, having played the Dutchies in its season-opener in December. Tappan Zee won that day, but DeMeo pointed out that it was a different Mahopac team back then.

"We were still trying to figure out playing together at that time, but I think we have that fixed," DeMeo said. "Now, we just have to practice like we normally do and it should be a good game."

**PUTNAM VALLEY** is two-for-two in the Section 1 Class B Girls Basketball Championships after the fifth seed eliminated No.12 Dobbs Ferry and No.4 Bronxville.



Lakeland senior F Hannah Devane sets up two points in Hornets' 67-35 Class A quarterfinal loss to host Mahopac Saturday.



Mahopac senior G Melanie DeMeo pops a big 3-ball in Indians' 67-35 Class A quarterfinal playoff win over visiting Lakeland Saturday.



# Sports

## NWE/Putnam Girls' Hoops Notebook



Mahopac junior G Kristina Rush advances in Indians' 67-35 Class A playoff rout of visiting Lakeland Saturday.

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The Tigers travel to top-seeded Hastings, Thursday, in one semifinal while No.6 Westlake faces No.2 Irvington in the other. The semifinal winners play for the Class B title, Saturday, 4 p.m., at Yorktown High School.

PV junior G Eva DeChent, the URI-bound sensation, registered a game-high 21 points before fouling out with over two minutes remaining in the game. Feisty senior G Amanda Orlando added 12 points against Bronxville and took the brunt of all things hard.

"We played with energy and intensity all four quarters," said DeChent of the Bronxville game. "We knew we had to win the games we fought hard for the remainder of the game."



Walter Panas G Kiara Williams fires J in Panthers' 57-41 Section 1 Class A playoff win over Pearl River Saturday.

Putnam Valley lost to Hastings during the regular season but is undeterred entering the Final 4 on the road.

**OSSINING** experienced the highest of highs in its opening Section 1 Class AA Girls' Basketball Championship game.

The Pride, seeded 7th, overcame No.10 Arlington, 99-89, in double overtime as Michelle Mercado lit it up with 42 points, 10 rebounds, 12 assists and eight steals in a career effort.

However, in its quarterfinal game against No.2 Our Lady of Lourdes, the Pride suffered an immediate blow as senior Katie Marx suffered a severe knee injury in the first quarter. This left the Pride shocked and extremely concerned about their teammate.

The injury and Lourdes were too much to overcome as the Warriors advanced with the win, and Ossining concluded the season with a 15-7 record.

The Arlington game went into the first extra session when Mercado made two free throws in the final seconds. Arlington evened the score with seven seconds on the clock in the first overtime. Ossining dominated the second overtime, outscoring Arlington, 13-3.

"The game was the most fun and nerve-racking game I've ever played in," Mercado said. "I was nervous, before the game, that this could be my last game, so I was determined and made sure to keep fighting throughout the entire game until the very end. It was an amazing feeling that all the hard work and determination we put in got us that win."

"I think what lifted us to victory was we as seniors took the game to another level with our resilience," she added. "We were determined for this not to be our last game. Our whole team worked very hard the whole game, and Coach Ricci had a great game plan to put us in a great position where we could get a win."

Marx added 27 points and Karen Perriott contributed 14 points and 11 rebounds.



Panas G Sara Chiulli puts up shot in Panthers' Class A quarterfinal win over Pearl River Saturday.



Walter Panas G Cadence Nicholas drops two of her 16 points in Panthers' 57-41 Section 1 Class A playoff win over Pearl River Saturday.

The Ossining-Lourdes quarterfinal was earlier than these teams were used to playing. From 2010-2020, Ossining-Lourdes was oftentimes the Section 1 Class AA championship game.

This quarterfinal was going to be a well-played, tight game, but the Marx injury



Putnam Valley senior G Amanda Orlando did a little bit of everything in Tigers' Class B quarterfinal win over host Bronxville Saturday.



Panas G Sofia Tavarez hits two of her 17 points (to go with five assists) in Panthers' 57-41 Section 1 Class A playoff win over Pearl River Saturday.

deflated Ossining.

"When Katie first got injured, we were all concerned for her well-being and secondary, in terms of basketball, we all knew we had to work a lot harder because one of our best players was out," Mercado said. "When Katie got hurt, it diminished our chances against a good Lourdes' team. Katie makes a big impact, especially in the interior since Lourdes was a bigger team."

The victory over Arlington is one of many memorable moments for Mercado and her teammates as the Pride was once again among the Class AA elite.

"What made this season most memorable was that our team was very close and we all got along very well, including the coaching staff," Mercado said. "We all looked towards the same goal and we were always trying to make one another better."

"In the preseason, we were not expected to get this far, however, this motivated us to work even harder."

**LAKELAND's** excellent season did not conclude like the Hornets would have liked, especially without its best player. After opening the Section 1 Class A Girls Basketball Championships with a win over Byram Hills, the fifth-seeded Hornets were eliminated by fourth-seeded Mahopac, 67-35, in the quarterfinals.

Lakeland was forced to play without the injured star Tyler Hormazabal, who fell just

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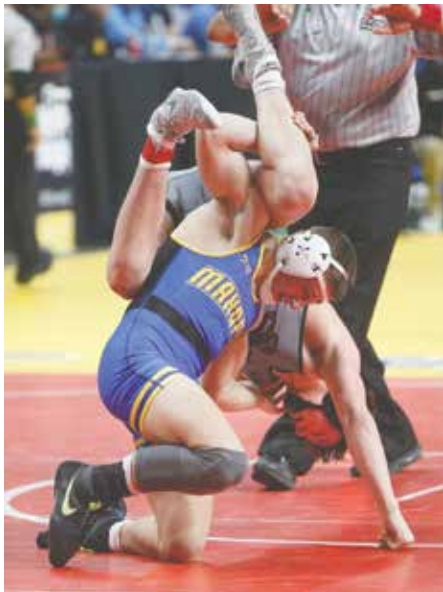
# Mahopac Trio, Yorktown Duo Compete at States



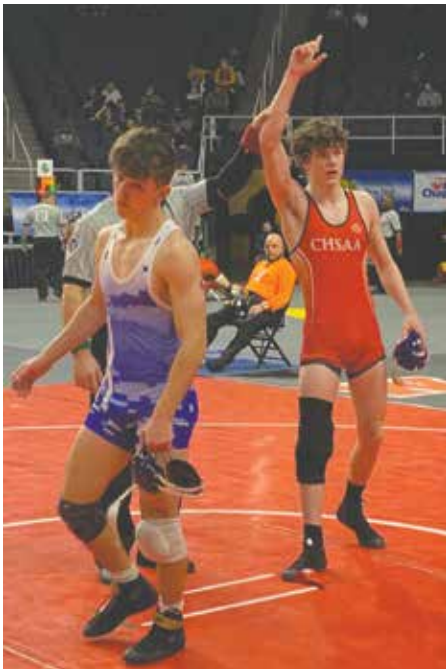
Mahopac’s 145-pound All-NYS grappler Angelo Centrone (middle) placed 8th in NYS tourney in Albany last weekend while teammates Nick Grecco (L) and George Johnson Jr. (R) qualified for NYS tourney but did not make the podium.



Yorktown’s 102-pound wrestler Joe Tornambe (L) placed 7th in NYS while 160-pound teammate Dillon Carter did not make All-NYS but helped put Yorktown on map this season.

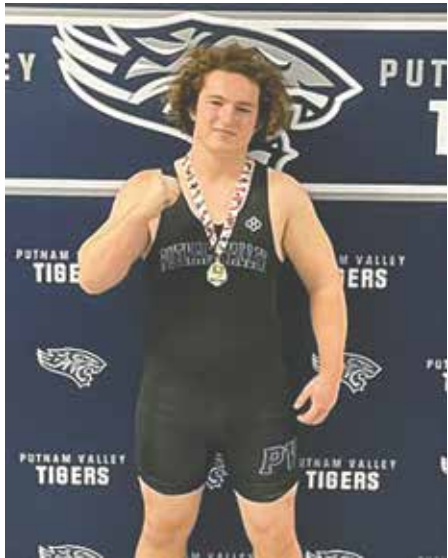


SEAN VICTOR PHOTO  
Mahopac 145-pounder Angelo Centrone in action at NYS Champ[ionships].



Mahopac native and 145-pounder Sean Degl helped continue to evolution of Iona Prep wrestling program at the NYS tourney last weekend in Albany.

## Focus on Wrestling



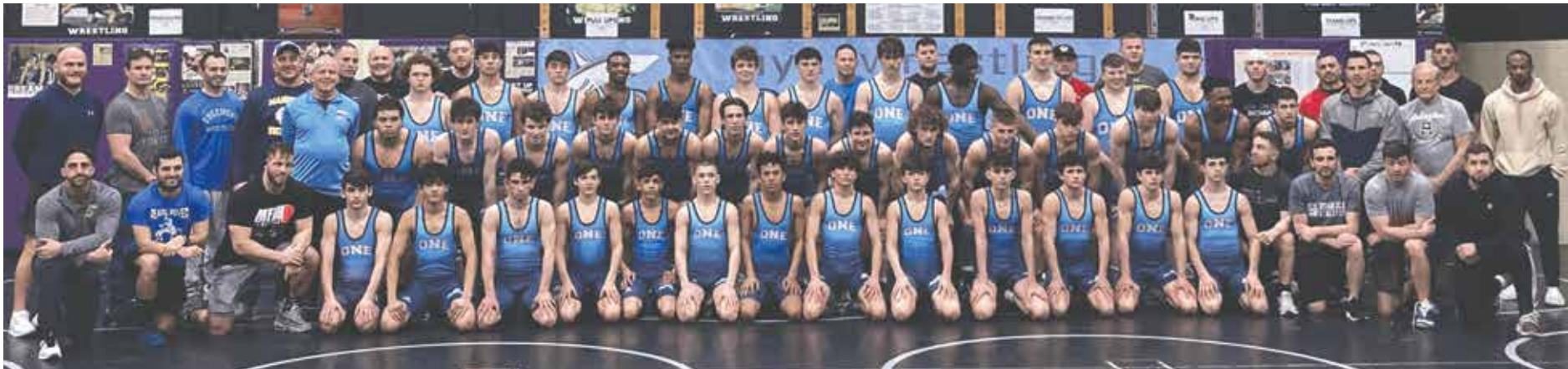
Putnam Valley’s 215-pound grappler Jacob Cassidy became the 34th Section 1 Tiger champ and 38th Tiger grappler since 2000 to qualify for NYS tourney under Coach Will Carano #Incredible.



SEAN VICTOR PHOTO  
Lakeland-Panas captain Conor McGowan suffered heartbreaking double OT loss in NYS Championships.



SEAN VICTOR PHOTO  
Yorktown 102-pounder Joe Tornambe in action at NYS Championships.



TWITTER PHOTOS  
While it wasn’t Section 1’s best performance, the unit still qualified 11 All-NYS wrestlers last Saturday in Albany where the squad did not place a champ in either D-I or D-II for the first time since 2016.



# Sports

## NWE/Putnam Boys' Hoops Notebook

# No.8 Panas, No.13 Lakeland Erased in Class A Quarters *Hornets Bust Up Bracket in Win over Mahopac, Panthers Fall at TZ; PV Ousted in Class B Quarters*

By Ray Gallagher  
Examiner Sports Editor @Directrays

And then there were none.

Outside of Class C **HALDANE's** automatic berth into the Section 1 Final 4, the rest of the boys' basketball teams from the Northern Westchester/Putnam region will have to purchase a ticket to see the playoff hoops action from here on out after both **LAKELAND** and **WALTER PANAS** were ousted in Saturday's Class A quarterfinal round.

Both No.13 Lakeland and No.8 Panas were on the road but each were in a woulda, coulda, shoulda position, particularly the Panthers. Coach Mike Auerbach's team squandered a 32-24 third-quarter lead en route to a 44-41 season-ending setback to top-seeded host Tappan Zee, the second-ranked team in NYS.

In a game that plodded without much pace or tempo, the Dutchmen (20-1) adjusted defensively in the third quarter, leaving their trademark man-to-man D in the dust. The 2-3 zone and full-court defense was problematic and kept Panas (16-7) without a field goal for nearly the entire fourth quarter, enabling Tappan Zee to squeak past one of its top obstacles en route what could be the Dutchmen's fifth sectional championship appearance in the last six years (not including 2021 COVID-abbreviated season).

"It's really like trying to play through quicksand against Tappan Zee," Panas



Lakeland G Chris Whyte-Luciano goes up for two points in Class A playoff win over Michael Callahan's Mahopac Indians last Tuesday.



Lakeland F Logan Shiland is defended by Mahopac's Joey Koch in Hornets' 63-50 Class A playoff win over Hornets Tuesday.



Lakeland G Anthony Jennings led Hornets with 16 points in 63-50 win over Max Gomes and host Mahopac Tuesday.

RAY GALLAGHER PHOTOS

Coach Mike Auerbach said. "Tappan Zee has a way of making teams uncomfortable on the offensive end. You get nothing easy against them. They don't turn the ball over and they get back on defense really well, so you get nothing in transition. They're the best defensive rebounding team in the section every year regardless of their size, so you get very few second chances, and their on-the-ball- and help-defense is very tough.

"They just seem to have a knack for always finding a way to win, especially at home," Auerbach added. "I couldn't be prouder of the effort from our kids, especially playing shorthanded. That's a program that has been on top of Class A for a decade and a half for a reason."

It didn't look good for the Dutchies after All-Section Panas G Alex Tavarez (18 points, 4 rebounds) and G Cameron Nicholas (10 points, 8 boards) both drained third-quarter treys for an eight-point lead with 1:05 left in the third.

"We went into the fourth quarter hyped

up and confident after a few huge shots to end the third," Tavarez said.

But things went haywire in the fourth; including turnovers, charges and some helter skelter possessions.

"After not getting some calls from the refs that we thought we should've got, we got anxious and started playing at their speed and we were not expecting their press in the fourth," Tavarez admitted. "We had high expectations going into the season and it was a very disappointing and hard loss. Nonetheless, I'm extremely proud of my teammates and coaches, who have become family to me throughout the season."

Panas F Maleek McNeil had six points and nine rebounds, and F Dillon Chenard added seven points, five rebounds and five blocks for the Panthers, who walked a fine line between surviving and advancing in its 63-58 win over No.9 Pearl River earlier in the week.

Up 18-2 out of the gate on Pearl River, the Panthers looked like they were in for a cakewalk to the quarterfinals, but the Pirates slowed their roll. Panas, minus All-League F Oliver Smith (ankle issue), who averaged a double-double this season, got a defensive spark off the bench from Jerry Smallwood.

"Smallwood's been in and out of the rotation all season for various reasons, but is very athletic, can defend and score in bunches," Coach Auerbach said. "We had a lot of trouble generating good shots once they went zone."

That zone perplexed the Panthers and the Pirates roared back to tie it at 31-all at half before taking a seven-point lead. The Panthers' season was on the brink of collapse.

"Our offensive struggles continued into

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Lakeland players and coaches let loose after defeating Mahopac in Class A opening round playoff game Tuesday.

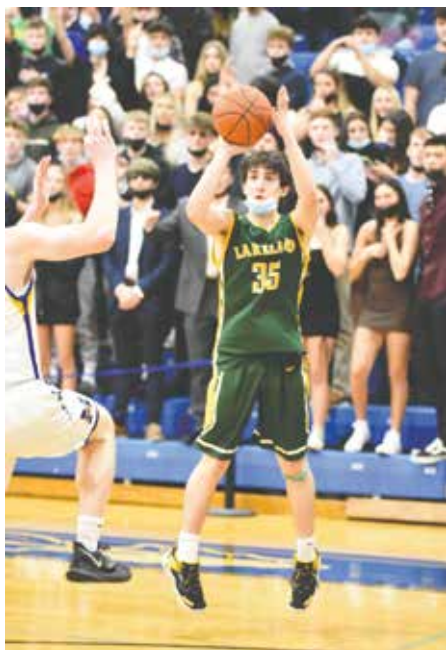
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the third," Auerbach said.

Panas trailed by seven going into the fourth, but saved its season with one of its best quarters of the year on both ends of the court.

"Cameron Nicholas (13 points) and Derek Mojica were huge for us knocking down perimeter shots to take the lid off the hoop," Auerbach said. "We didn't get it inside to Maleek McNeil as much as we'd have liked but when we did he was very efficient."

McNeil finished with 17 points on 6 for 11 from the field, but it was Tavarez (20 points), who saved the day. Coming off a clutch layup for the lead with under a minute left, Tavarez instinctually turned his back on the ball and then swung forward to steal the ensuing inbound pass, got fouled and knocked down both free throws. Chenard, who grabbed some big rebounds



Lakeland G David Mula sinks one of many big blows he would deal to Mahopac in Hornets' 63-50 Class A playoff win over Indians.

in the fourth, iced the win with two from the line with five seconds remaining.

No.13 **LAKELAND** (13-10) advanced to the quarterfinals after its 63-50 upset of No.4 host **MAHOPAC** last Tuesday, but lost to Our Lady of Lourdes for the third time this season in a 47-44 loss to the fifth-seeded Warriors (17-5), who will face TZ in the semifinals before moving on to Section 9 next year. No.3 Byram Hills will take on No.7 Poughkeepsie on the other side of the bracket with Sunday's title berth at Yorktown High on the line.

Like Panas did, Lakeland had its chances, knifing into a 13-point halftime deficit and cutting the lead to two points before missing a go-ahead 3-pointer with five seconds left.



Panas junior G Alex Tavarez's Panthers came up just short in Class A quarterfinal loss to Tappan Zee Saturday.



Mahopac F Ryan Reilly puts a hammer down on Lakeland's Logan Crilly in Indians' 63-50 Class A playoff loss to visiting Hornets Tuesday.



Mahopac G Max Gomes sinks two of his team-high 12 points in 63-50 Class A playoff loss to host Mahopac Tuesday.

"Lourdes is an awesome basketball team, much respect to their coaching staff," Lakeland junior F Andrew Mendel said. "We will have four of our five starters back next year, though. We are fueled and we are going to put in a lot of work in the off-season. We want that gold ball."

Junior G Chris Whyte-Luciano dropped a game-high 18 points for Lakeland (13-10). David Mula added eight points.

The Lakeland/Mahopac game was, in a nutshell,

inexplicable. When Mahopac limited guys like Logan Shiland (7 points), Whyte-Luciano (10 points, 9 boards, 4 assists) to a combined 17 points, the Indians (15-5) figured their chances of winning were

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Panas senior C Maleek McNeil's Panthers found the going tough in fourth quarter of Class A playoff loss to Tappan Zee Saturday.

RAY GALLAGHER PHOTOS



# Sports

## NWE/Putnam Boys' Hoops Notebook



Putnam Valley senior F Arthur Holzman had 10 points in season-ending Class B playoff loss to Bronxville.



Putnam Valley senior G Cole Durocher hit a team-high 14 points in Tigers' Class B playoff loss at Bronxville Saturday.

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pretty good. But when the ball finds nothing but rim, nothing Mahopac did defensively mattered, especially when role players like Mula (10 points, including two huge 3's), mighty Andrew Mendel (12 points, 10 boards) and Anthony Jennings (game-high 16 points, 4 boards) bring the kind of energy and grit they usually bring but also combined for 38 points.

"I've been preaching day in and day out that energy and heart wins games," said Mendel. "Family wins games. We really found out what family meant only like a week ago. Glad we found it at the right time."

And Jennings found his stroke at just the right time. After holding Mahopac to five first-half points, the Indians came out of the break with renewed vigor, but when Jennings splashed from distance and Mula stroked two more triples, Mahopac resistance was tested time and time again.

"The energy in that gym and from my teammates on and off the court was incredible," Jennings said. "My teammates and I just moved the ball around and hit whoever was open at the perfect time, and

the few times I was the man that was open and I hit the good looks from my team being unselfish and looking for that one more pass to find the open man."

Mahopac, winners of 14 of its last 15 games going in, was, for the first time since a Jan. 27 loss to Clarkstown South, out of its comfort zone and unable to sustain any rhythm. Mahopac Coach Tom McMahon praised Lakeland to anyone who would listen.

"I told everyone since we played them back in December that I thought they were really good," McMahon said. "Yet, they were even better than I thought because we did a great job on Shiland, and Whyte-Luciano, but Mula, Mendel and the Jennings kid all stepped up. I'll bet we held Shiland and Whyte to season-lows or close to it, but the other guys on that team really stepped up. We held those three (5, 44 and 35) to 27 total points, which was our goal, but if you can't score, none of it matters. They are a good team with a really good coach that kicked our butts twice this year."

Lakeland Coach Steve Fallo hadn't seen his team reach this level all season but knew they had it in them.

"You can't play better defense than we did today, especially in the first half," Fallo said. "That was an exhibition. It really was incredible. When you hold a team to five points in the half, they have to be dejected.

## Girls Hoops continued...

*continued from page 3*

short of 1,000 career points as a result. The team's leading scorer, Hormazabal, was sidelined in the first half of the Byram Hills' game with a serious knee injury. Lakeland finished the season with an 18-5 record.

"It was a special year because we felt, as a team, that we had a special connection and we all had fun playing together," sophomore wing Ava Lugo said. "We had a starting five composed of two seniors, two sophomores and one freshman. It was a solid mix and we were able to feed off each other each and every game."

Lakeland was undefeated through 10 games before intra-district rival Panas handed the Hornets their first loss.

Lakeland would return the favor and beat Panas in the Giglio games.

"We didn't play well that first game against Panas and they were such a fast, young, aggressive team that they got the best of us," Lugo said. "Then we had our rematch in our annual Giglio games and we prevailed, giving them their second loss of the season."

Lugo also highlighted the team's win over Peekskill because of the energy and excitement the host Red Devils created.

"It was a great season for us," Lugo said. "We will hopefully be back in the next few years."

—Ray Gallagher contributed to this story

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

**No.1 PANAS** – Coach Auerbach's Class A Panthers (16-7) simply can't play a fourth quarter like they did against a program like Tappan Zee and expect to win.

**No.2 LAKELAND** – Coach Fallo's Class A Hornets (13-10) might enter the 2022-23 campaign as the No.1 team in this useless but fun-loving poll, provided they really stick this off-season.

**No.3 HALDANE** – Coach V's Class C state-ranked (No.5) Blue Devils (18-2) are one team on one mission and the expectation won't conclude without a trip to Glens Falls and the Cool Insuring Arena but they've got a tuneup with Lefell for the big test coming against the Hamilton/Tuckahoe winner. Either way, the Blue Devils will be playing in the finals at Yorktown High School, 11 a.m. Saturday.

**No.4 MAHOPAC** – Coach McMahon's fourth-seeded Class A Indians (15-5) picked a really bad time to play the worst first half Mahopac has played in, well, quite some time #LetsLeaveltAtThat.

**No.5 SOMERS** – Coach DiCintio's Class A Tuskers (12-10) will look back on that season-ending Class A playoff loss to Byram Hills with a whole lot of woulda, coulda, shoulda. Do like what they return in 2022, though. Can we get a league title please #1989.

**HM PUTNAM VALLEY** – Coach Morales' Class B Tigers (10-11) may have seen their seniors lay enough of a foundation to restore the luster. Freshman Nate Shillingford's senior year could be one we look back upon fondly when this current group of sensational 6th-7th-graders join the mix, should they stay in the Valley.

**HM YORKTOWN** – Coach Pavella's 16th-seeded Class A Huskers (11-11) got a taste of what it'll take to reach the next level in a 61-43 setback against top-seeded Tappan Zee, which has been setting the bar for "steady program" the last decade. Between sophomore G Justin Price, who had 14 points in loss to TZ, and soph G Billy Feeks, Huskers are in good hands, minus the loss of Eddie Brucaj, who had quite the career.

The kids stepped up. Jennings is usually a role player for us and he comes out and has the game of his life today. Mula hit some big shots and Mendel gave us a strong presence inside. Guys that usually play different types of roles for us really stepped it up today."

Senior G Max Gomes scored 12 second-half points and had seven rebounds and three steals for Mahopac (15-5) while senior G Patrick McMahon added 10 points and five rebounds.

No.14 **SOMERS** had the potential to bust up one side of the Class A bracket when it went up 14 points on No.3 host **BYRAM HILLS**, but the Bobcats did what they oftentimes do en route to a 69-63 OT triumph of the Tuskers (12-10). Somers had the ball and a chance to win in regulation but couldn't convert against a Byram program that has traditionally battled to the finish.

"The wheels just came off when we lost a major player in our rotation," Somers

Coach Chris DiCintio said. "I feel like we're in great shape for next year, though."

Somers senior G Bennett Leitner went for 16 points while passing the torch to junior F Matt Fitzsimons (16 points), sophomore wing Andrew Violante (13 points) and junior F Dylan Ingraham (9). Dan Bernstein and Tyson Repa had 19 apiece for the resilient 'Cats.

"We had them on the ropes but they came back and we couldn't weather their storm," Fitzsimons said. "That said, fate just wasn't on our side and it ended an amazing season."

### CLASS B

No.1 Bronxville was feeling the pinch of No.9 **PUTNAM VALLEY** before the Broncos (18-4) imposed their will in the final quarter, leading to a 54-42 win over the upset-minded Tigers (10-11), who saw senior G Cole Durocher go for 14 points while senior F Arthur Holzman added 10.



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# Sports

## Byram Hills Overcomes Another Deficit to Defeat the Eagles

By Andy Jacobs

Ted Repa has undoubtedly coached more talented teams at Byram Hills than his 2021-22 squad, but he would be hard-pressed to recall another with more grit and determination than his current Bobcats.

Late Saturday afternoon, those spunky, never-say-quit Bobcats staged their second consecutive comeback from a double-digit deficit in the sectional playoffs, rising to the occasion again in the final moments of the fourth quarter to earn a 47-42 quarterfinal victory over the visiting Eastchester Eagles.

Senior forward Bobby Chicoine scored a game-high 18 points and hauled in 11 rebounds, while Danny Bernstein provided an old-fashioned 3-point play with just over a minute remaining to give the Bobcats the lead for good and send them into a showdown against Poughkeepsie this Thursday evening for a berth in the Section 1, Class A final.

"The kids this year have shown this toughness, this resolve, this resiliency, and no different tonight," said Repa after watching his third-seeded team score the game's final seven points to overcome the sixth-seeded Eagles. "That resolve, it's unbelievable. It's not coaching, it's these kids."

The Bobcats had the lead for less than two minutes all afternoon against an Eastchester team that had come into their gym exactly three weeks earlier and handed them a 16-point regular-season defeat. This time, the Eagles limited Byram to just one basket in the first quarter, by Sean Siegel nearly three and a half minutes after the opening jump, and built a 12-4 advantage heading to the second period.

"Defensively, we were great, but the last minute of the first quarter was kind of a disaster," said Repa about his team's slow start. "Turnover after turnover and they capitalized."

The first quarter ended with the Eagles'



Danny Bernstein of Byram Hills drives the right baseline as Eastchester's Ryan Bochenski defends in the fourth quarter of their Section 1, Class A quarterfinal game.

ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS



Byram Hills sophomore Tyson Repa dribbles the ball across the court in the fourth quarter of Saturday's Class A quarterfinal playoff win over Eastchester.

Frankie Provenziale connecting on a 3-point shot and then Eastchester stretched its run to 11-0 when the second began with John Russell scoring on a layup and Luke Delorenzo hitting a short jump hook in the lane. The Bobcats, who had trailed Somers by 14 points in the second half of their opening-round win four days earlier, were suddenly facing a 16-4 deficit.

But the Bobcats immediately began clawing their way back into the contest. Two minutes into the second quarter, Chicoine posted up inside and scored under the basket. Bernstein soon followed with a pullup trey from the left wing. With 4:35 left in the half, Chicoine drained a 3-pointer from the top of the key, cutting the Eagles' lead to just four points.

Eastchester still had a four-point margin after Russell, who scored a team-high 17



Byram Hills senior forward Ben Dreilinger brings the ball up the court in the Bobcat's quarterfinal playoff win over the Eagles.



The Bobcats' Bobby Chicoine pulls down one of his 11 rebounds in the 47-42 playoff win over visiting Eastchester late Saturday afternoon.

points, made a turnaround jumper just inside the top of the key with 1:14 remaining before halftime. But with exactly a minute to go, Chicoine took a pass from Ben Dreilinger to score a layup and then the Bobcats took their only lead of the first half when sophomore Tyson Repa narrowly beat the buzzer with a 3-pointer from just left of the key.

After battling so hard to finally take the 21-20 halftime lead, Byram Hills spent the entire third quarter behind again once the Eagles' 6-foot-6 Michael Lawlor scored on a turnaround jumper in the lane 25 seconds into the period. A 3-point shot by Lawlor from the left corner midway through the quarter gave Eastchester a six-point cushion, and the Bobcats didn't get on the board in the second half until Chicoine converted on a put-back with 3:30 left in the third.

Byram began the fourth quarter trailing 32-28 and the deficit grew to five points a couple minutes in when Brendan Sullivan beat the Bobcats down the floor, received a pass and deftly switched to his left hand for a layup. A desperate coach Repa called a timeout and his team responded again, outscoring the Eagles 14-4 over the game's final five and a half minutes.

The big finish by the Bobcats began with a Chicoine layup and then a conventional 3-point play by Siegel that tied the game at 38-apiece with 4:59 on the clock. Byram then went scoreless for over two minutes while the Eagles retook the lead on a Russell 3-pointer with 3:07 remaining. A free throw from Ryan Bochenski, his only point of the game, gave Eastchester a 42-40 edge with 2:02 to go.

But the Eagles never scored again and Bernstein gave Byram the lead for good when he took a pass under the basket from Benny Rakower and double-pumped in the air before scoring underneath while being fouled. His free throw gave the Bobcats a 43-42 lead with 1:09 to play.

Just nine seconds later, Rakower provided the Bobcats with a huge steal,



Luca Scoli takes the ball to the basket in Saturday's quarterfinal playoff game won by Byram Hills over Eastchester.

jumping the passing lane and diving head first near the Eastchester bench to secure the ball.

"Oh my gosh," said Repa about the incredible hustle play from his senior forward. "That's what Benny does for us. It's the intangibles. Literally willing to do anything and to sacrifice anything for the team, for the win."

Rakower's big defensive play set the stage for Tyson Repa, who had injured his shoulder celebrating the Bobcats' overtime win over the Tuskers, to deliver the dagger that all but finished the Eagles. With 38 seconds left, he swished his second extremely long, top-of-the-key 3-pointer of the final quarter, giving Byram Hills a four-point advantage. Soon the Bobcat student section would be racing onto the court to congratulate the team for advancing to the semifinals.

Coach Repa, who had thought his team's title hopes were finished late in the opening round against Somers, was thrilled with the Bobcats' clutch plays down the stretch, on both ends of the court.

"Eastchester's a really good team," he said. "They did a really good job defensively taking us out of what we wanted to do, for the most part. It took a few plays like that to pull it out."



The Bobcats' Benny Rakower sprawls across the floor before grabbing the ball and causing an Eastchester turnover in the fourth quarter that helped secure a Byram playoff win.



# Sports

## Briarcliff Girls Ousted From the Playoffs by Irvington Once Again

By Andy Jacobs

If the past is indeed prologue, then the rivalry between the Briarcliff and Irvington girls' basketball teams has become as predictable as death and taxes, the phases of the moon and the cycle of the tides.

The latest installment of their seemingly annual playoff clashes took place on Saturday when a large matinee audience looked on as the host Bulldogs used a 13-0 blitz to break open a game that had been tied early in the third quarter on their way to a convincing 49-35 victory in a Section 1, Class B quarterfinal.

Freshman guard Alyson Raimondo scored a game-high 17 points, while senior center Katie LeBuhn finished with 13 points and eight rebounds, leading second-seeded Irvington past the seventh-seeded Bears and into a semifinal matchup against Westlake on Thursday evening. For Briarcliff, which finished up its 2021-22 season with a 14-8 record, Caroline Barbalato scored 15 points and Cat Carrafiello added nine.

"The first quarter hurt us," said Bears head coach Denise Hamlin shortly after the final buzzer had brought an end to her team's season. "The first quarter, they were just nervous. Look, when you're playing Irvington, you're playing the best of the best that's out there. So the nerves were real."

Briarcliff missed its first eight shots from the field and didn't get on the scoreboard until the game was more than six minutes old. Rebecca Kratz scored on a fast break with 1:44 remaining in the first quarter after making a steal in the backcourt, but the Bears wound up the period just 1-for-13 shooting the ball and committed eight turnovers.

"It's a nervous place to come to," said Hamlin about the Bulldogs' intimidating



Briarcliff junior guard Caroline Barbalato dribbles into the frontcourt in Saturday's Class B quarterfinal playoff game at Irvington.

upstairs home court. "I tried to settle them down. The second quarter, they settled down. But you play a good team and a quarter is too long to give them."

The Bears, trailing 9-2 after the first eight minutes, got a pair of free throws from both Adriana Scanga and Carrafiello early in the second quarter, then closed to within 13-9 when Barbalato rattled in a long 3-pointer from right of the key with 4:47 left in the half. An old-fashioned 3-point play by Barbalato, who was fouled converting a lefty layup with 1:22 to go, cut the Bulldog lead to 17-14.

With half a minute left in the first half, Barbalato stepped up again for the Bears, draining another deep 3-point



The Bears' Cat Carrafiello gets set to send up a shot over Irvington center Katie LeBuhn in the second half of Saturday's sectional playoff game.

shot, this time from straightaway with the shot clock winding down, and Briarcliff, despite its horrendous start, only trailed by a 19-17 margin after the first two quarters.

Just 90 seconds into the second half, the Bears gave their fans reason to think that the outcome against Irvington might be different this time around as Carrafiello received a pass from Kratz and scored on a reverse layup, tying the contest. But they then proceeded to miss their next nine shots from the field and Irvington, which never trailed all afternoon, went on a 13-0 run that all but dashed the Bears' hopes.

"It was 19-19 and then the wheels fell off," said Hamlin. "I don't know what happened. I just couldn't get them to go anymore. I just couldn't get 'em to go. Not for lack of trying. They tried their best. There's no quit in them."

Irvington, which hadn't played a game in over two weeks, took its first double-digit lead of the day when Anders Knapp scored a fast-break layup with 2:25 remaining in the third quarter. With just over a minute left in the period, the towering LeBuhn passed out of a double



Rebecca Kratz of Briarcliff drives the right baseline past Anders Knapp of Irvington in the Section 1, Class B quarterfinal game this past weekend.

team to a wide-open Claire Friedlander for another layup that capped the big Bulldog run.

Carrafiello, whose aggressive baseline drives were thwarted time and again by LeBuhn, finally ended a nearly six-minute scoring drought for the Bears with two free throws late in the third quarter. Then with just three seconds remaining, Eliza Aldrich scored on a put-back that brought Briarcliff to within 34-23 heading to the final quarter.

An offensive rebound by Aldrich led to a 10-foot jumper by freshman Ava Makaron, cutting the Irvington lead to 35-25 with 5:34 left in the game. But that was as close as the Bears could get and baskets by LeBuhn late in the fourth quarter twice gave the Bulldogs their largest lead of the game, 14 points. Barbalato provided her fourth 3-pointer of the day with 1:19 to go, but by then it was obvious the Briarcliff season would soon be over.

"Hats off to Irvington, but I adore my kids," said Hamlin. "I'm gonna give 'em all a hug, tell 'em I love them and appreciate everything that they did for me and for each other all season long. We had a lot of obstacles in the way during the season and they overcame just about every single one. So the scoreboard said what it said, but I've got a bunch of winners on my team."



Briarcliff senior Kyla Miller grabs a rebound away from Katie LeBuhn of Irvington in the second half of Saturday's quarterfinal.



Eliza Aldrich of Briarcliff battles with Emmaline LeBuhn of Irvington for rebound position during the Class B sectional playoffs.



Briarcliff freshman Ava Makaron sets her sights on the rim from the right baseline in the first half of the Bears' 49-35 loss to the host Bulldogs in the quarterfinals of the sectional playoffs.

ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS



## Sports

# Larregue's Late Basket Lifts Briarcliff Past the Vikings

After losing to Briarcliff twice in 10 days back in January, the Valhalla Vikings arrived in Bear territory on Friday afternoon hoping the third time would be the charm.

And it nearly was.

It took Jayden Larregue's coast-to-coast foray down the court for a dazzling lefty shot off glass with just 6.9 seconds remaining to provide the winning margin for second-seeded Briarcliff in a 70-69 victory over Valhalla in a thrilling Section 1, Class B quarterfinal game.

The basket by Larregue brought a disappointing end for the seventh-seeded Vikings, who had battled back from an 11-point fourth-quarter deficit. A pair of free throws by Michael Giuliano with 12.3 seconds left had given Valhalla its only lead since Basiaka Butcher opened the game with a 15-foot baseline jumper five seconds after the opening tip.

The Bears, now 15-6 and set to host third-seeded Hastings on Wednesday at 5:00, got 22 points from forward Luke McCann and 21 from Larregue. Valhalla, which finished its season with a 13-8 record, was led by Butcher's 19 points and Devan Cooper's 15.

A rare 4-point play by Giuliano midway through the first quarter brought the Vikings within a point, but Briarcliff then went on a 10-0 spurt to take command. Larregue's 3-pointer from the right corner with 1:45 left in the first quarter capped off the Bear blitz, but the period ended with three straight baskets by the Vikings, two of them by Butcher, and Valhalla only trailed by a 19-14 margin heading into the second quarter.

Another trey by Giuliano early in the second period cut the Viking deficit to two points, but they could get no closer the rest of the half, which ended with McCann collecting six points in the final 30 seconds to stake Briarcliff to a 44-36 halftime advantage.

In the third quarter, the Bears opened up their largest lead of the afternoon, 50-37, when Elliot Jones passed to McCann for a layup with 4:43 remaining. But a 10-2 Valhalla run late in the quarter, highlighted by a 3-pointer from Mikaele Martinez and an old-fashion 3-point play by Julian Amorosa, brought the Vikings to within 54-53. The



Luke McCann scored a game-high 22 points in the Bears' playoff win over Valhalla.



Valhalla point guard Devan Cooper concluded his junior season with 15 points against the Bears.

quarter ended with a layup by the Bears' Saad Hussain.

The fourth quarter began with the Bears looking like they would pull away for good as Ben Siegel connected on a 3-point shot from the left corner and Evan Van Camp followed with another one from the left wing. When Larregue drove in for a lefty layup with 6:04 on the clock, Briarcliff's lead was suddenly 64-53.

But Butcher began another Viking flurry with a layup and Giuliano's put-back basket

with 4:08 to go cut the Briarcliff lead to seven points. Back-to-back buckets by Butcher 20 seconds apart narrowed the Vikings' deficit to 68-67 with 1:18 remaining in the game. Giuliano was fouled fighting for a rebound with 12.3 seconds left and he calmly sank both shots to give Valhalla the lead.

Unfortunately for the Vikings, they couldn't stop Larregue on the biggest play of the day. He took an inbound pass and dribbled up the court past defenders using just his left hand. When he got to the basket,

he extended his left hand out as far as he could and banked in the shot that saved the Bears.

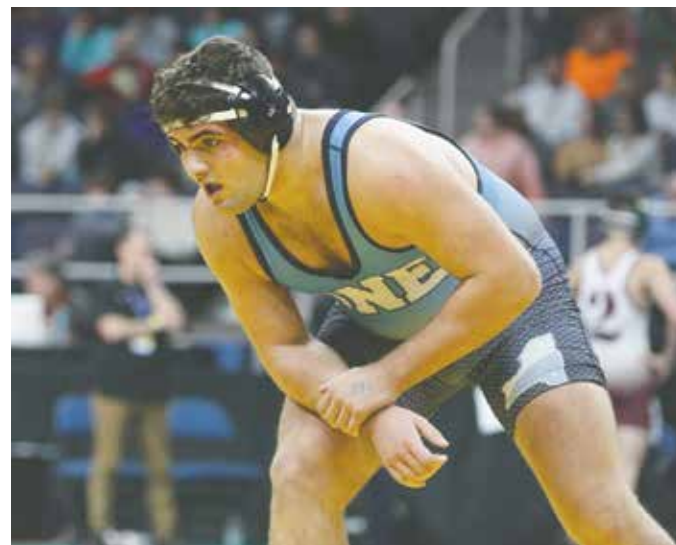
Valhalla had one last chance, though, inbound the ball with 3.3 seconds remaining. But the Vikings had to go the length of the court and Cooper's desperation shot from well beyond the midcourt line wound up smacking into the ceiling, putting an end to the Vikings' title quest.

-Andy Jacobs



## STATE WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Fox Lane's Marc Berisha (right) looks for a takedown as he wrestles at 285 pounds at the state championships in Albany this past weekend, while teammate Jake Hoffman is in control en route to earning a sixth-place finish and all-state honors at 152 pounds.





# Sports



The Tigers' Ineivi Plata tries to drive to the basket in the second quarter against Albertus Magnus in the Section 1, Class AA quarterfinals this past weekend.



White Plains junior guard Aliya McIver pushes the ball up the court with Sierra Linnin of Albertus Magnus in pursuit during Saturday afternoon's Class AA playoff game.



Sequoia Layne of White Plains tosses up a shot in the lane in the first half of Saturday's quarterfinal game won by visiting Albertus Magnus.



White Plains' Anneliese Reggio dribbles the ball out of the backcourt during the first half of Saturday's sectional playoff game against visiting Albertus Magnus.



Capri DeMara of White Plains connects on one of her six 3-pointers in the Tigers' 77-72 loss to Magnus in the Class AA quarterfinals.

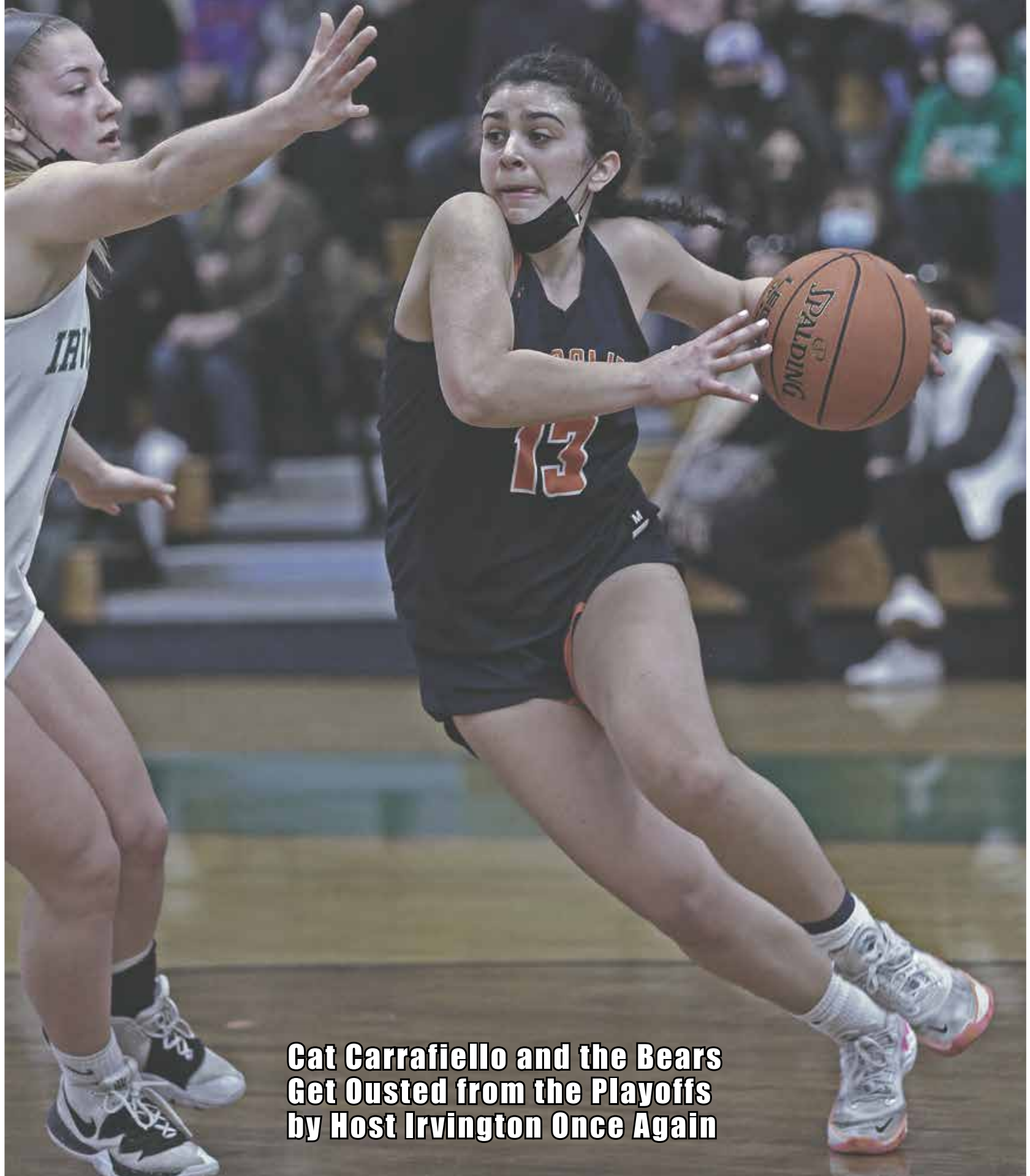


White Plains senior forward Dan Cardozo capped off his amazing final season with the Tigers by scoring their first four goals in last Tuesday's 7-6 overtime playoff loss to Mamaroneck at Ebersole Rink. The four goals gave him an incredible 102 for the season, a new record for New York State. After he recently smashed the scoring record that had been established 13 years ago, his coach, Howie Rubinsten, called him "the best player in the state," pointing out the attributes that have made him such a weapon for the Tigers. "He has blazing speed, great hands and is a natural goal scorer."



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## **Bulldog Road Block**



**Cat Carrafiello and the Bears  
Get Ousted from the Playoffs  
by Host Irvington Once Again**