

Panther Persistence



**Brendan Halloran and Pleasantville
Stage a Pair of Second-Half Comebacks
to Stretch Their Winning Streak to Seven**

Byram Hills Runs Away from the Wildcats Despite a Slow Start

By Andy Jacobs

More than 15 minutes of playing time had already elapsed on Friday afternoon, but the host Byram Hills girls' lacrosse team was still struggling to pull away from the Westlake Wildcats. So with just a one-goal lead, Bobcats coach Gail Lozado decided it was time to have a chat with her players.

"I called a timeout and told 'em that they were playing flat, that we've got to play our game, not their game," she would say later. "They (the Wildcats) played a very nice defense, but we just had to move through them."

Apparently her team got the message. The Bobcats proceeded to score five consecutive goals to close the half, building an 8-2 advantage en route to a convincing 14-3 victory that was devoid of any suspense in the second half. Emily Byrne finished with five goals and Noelle Love added four as Byram Hills improved to 3-2 this season.

"Yeah, it got away from us," said Wildcats coach Dan Smith following his team's third loss in six games. "I think we started to get a little flatfooted, became complacent and maybe even a little bit scoreboard watching rather than staying home defensively. Ultimately, we ended up getting out-executed."

A goal by Stephanie Mele with 9:14 remaining before halftime moved Westlake to within 3-2 before Lozado's timeout that was soon followed by a Bobcat offensive outburst. With just under eight minutes to go, Byrne converted on a free-position shot. When Love came around from behind the cage and sent an underhanded shot into the net at the 4:55 mark, the Byram Hills lead was suddenly up to three goals.

But the Bobcats were hardly finished. They scored three more times before the end of the half, starting with a Marissa Miller goal on a handoff from Love with 3:22 on the clock. A minute and a half later, Andie Simon put the finishing touch on a Bobcat fast break that started with a Westlake turnover. A goal by Byrne with just 27 seconds to go before halftime enabled Byram Hills to stretch its lead to six.

"Halftime, when it goes from about 3-2, 4-2 to 8-2, it's just about fixing your mistakes," said Smith, who has been at the Wildcat helm every year since the varsity program started there three years ago. "It's just about getting back to basics, understanding footwork, understanding where to be and understanding first slides defensively because that's where I think we were losing it a little bit on their ball movement."

Unfortunately for the Wildcats, the second half began a lot like the first had ended. Shortly after Byram Hills goalie Autumn Lauria stopped a good Westlake scoring chance on the first possession following intermission, the Bobcats struck again and never really had much to worry about the rest of the dismal, overcast day.



The Bobcats' Emily Byrne, who scored five goals, shoots the ball vs. visiting Westlake.



Taylor Verboys of Byram Hills (left) and McKenzie Redfern of Westlake battle in Friday's game, won by the host Bobcats.



Noelle Love of Byram Hills heads for the goal in Friday's Bobcat victory.



Westlake's Anelese Catto tries to shoot the ball as Marissa Miller of Byram Hills defends in Friday's game.

The final 15 minutes seemed more like a practice with the Bobcats often in control of the ball and holding a huge lead, but Lozado was impressed that the overwhelmed opponent didn't give up.

"He does a nice job with his team," she said of Westlake's Smith. "They fought the whole way. I really liked watching them, so it was a great job."

"I hope we don't get frustrated," said Smith, whose team also took its lumps on the road against Albertus Magnus



Byram Hills' Caroline Bucher controls the ball in the 14-3 win on Friday.



Westlake's McKenzie Redfern moves the ball up the field vs. Byram Hills.



Laura Donato of Westlake gathers the ball in Friday's game at Byram Hills.

last Wednesday. "I hope we take this as a learned lesson. The beauty of it is it's 50 minutes behind us and we learn and we go forward."

Meanwhile, the Bobcats are hoping a week of scrimmages down in Florida during spring break will be a catalyst for their own improvement the rest of the season.

"Against the strong teams, we're struggling," said Lozado. "But I expect us to be better and on track in the second half. It's a very new defense we have, brand new. That's the hardest part for me because I'm a defensive coach. So when that comes together, I think we'll be much better."

ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS

Another Second-Half Comeback Keeps the Panthers Undefeated

By Andy Jacobs

For the Pleasantville boys' lacrosse team, Saturday afternoon's showdown with Mahopac must have felt just like, as a renowned sportsman/philosopher once described it, déjà vu all over again.

That's because, for the second time within three days, the unbeaten Panthers found themselves facing a three-goal halftime deficit against a quality opponent before recovering in time to make a dramatic comeback and win 8-7. Goals by Brendan Halloran and Josh Della Puca in the fourth quarter enabled Pleasantville to outlast the host Indians on a spectacular spring day.

"I think having that experience just 48 hours ago really helped them stay calm," said Panthers coach Chris Kear afterwards, referring to Thursday's improbable 8-7, come-from-behind victory over Putnam Valley. "At halftime, nobody was rattled. They actually had a real calm demeanor about themselves. Everybody just kept saying, 'big second half.'"

A big second half is precisely what the Panthers delivered, holding Mahopac to just one goal over the final 24 minutes and tying the contest at 6-6 with three unanswered goals in the third quarter, two of them off the stick of Greg Drillock, who finished up with three goals and three assists. It was a goal by Drillock two days earlier against Putnam Valley with only a second remaining that forced overtime and allowed Pleasantville to remain undefeated this season.

The Panthers stepped onto the turf at Mahopac with a 6-0 record, but just 90 seconds in the Indians jumped out to a quick lead on a goal from Kyle Dillon. Just over a minute later, after the teams had traded turnovers, Halloran got Pleasantville on the scoreboard with the first of his two goals. The Indians started to take control as Nicholas Schiero scored back-to-back goals a minute apart later on in the opening quarter.

Mahopac's lead grew to 4-1 with 3:15 left in the first period, but just nine seconds later Della Puca, after winning a faceoff, drilled home a shot from right of the cage and the Panthers began the second quarter trailing 4-2. Nearly two minutes in, the Indians regained their three-goal advantage as Eric Giorno dodged his way to the left side of the cage and sent a shot past Pleasantville goalie Chris Doerr.

Just past the midway point of the second quarter, Mahopac built its largest lead of the day, 6-2, when Christian Donahue spun to his right, then back to his left before firing the ball into the back of the net. The Panthers' Baylor Rosenbaum scored off a feed from Drillock behind the goal with 3:46 remaining in the half and Pleasantville huddled up at intermission trailing by three goals.

"We talked a lot about taking care of the ball more," said Kear, sharing what was said during his halftime chat. "We forced a few passes in the first half, took some silly shots. So the big thing we talked about was just longer possession time, higher quality shots



The Panthers' Greg Drillock fires a shot on goal in the dramatic win at Mahopac.



Pleasantville's Brendan Halloran uses a screen from James Finnegan as he heads for the goal vs. Mahopac on Saturday.



Pleasantville's Baylor Rosenbaum runs past Douglas Huber of Mahopac.

and smarter shots. And we did that."

A turning point came four minutes into the third quarter when an illegal check by Mahopac's Max Littleton just as Halloran went airborne to fire a shot left the Panthers' crafty senior attackman motionless on the turf for nearly 90 seconds.

"He's one of our main guys and seeing him go down like that was a little scary," said Kear about Halloran. "But he's a tough kid and he came right back out a few plays later and was ready to go."

With a man-up advantage for a full two minutes, the Panthers suddenly had an opportunity to climb back in the game. Halfway through the penalty time, Drillock scored to cut the deficit to 6-4. Pleasantville was still in possession of the ball not long after the penalty expired and James Finnegan, on an assist from Drillock, scored from right of the circle, moving the Panthers to within a goal with 4:44 left in the third quarter.

Just 90 seconds later, Drillock spun away

ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS



Austin Tomasetti hangs onto the ball as he's sent to the turf in Pleasantville's 8-7 win Saturday.



Josh Della Puca of Pleasantville works his way to the cage in Saturday's game at Mahopac.



James Finnegan controls the ball in Saturday's big Panther victory.

from the Indians' Dillon and found the back of the net from straightaway, tying the game and setting the stage for a suspense-filled fourth quarter. Mahopac, after being shut out for the entire third period, finally put a shot past Panther junior Oscar Marchi, who took over for Doerr in goal at halftime, almost 90 seconds into the final quarter.

But Dillon's second goal of the game would turn out to be Mahopac's last and the heroics down the stretch would come from the Panthers. A potential tying shot by Halloran with eight and a half minutes left nearly rolled across the goal line before the ball was picked up. With 5:17 to go, it was Halloran who ended a long Pleasantville possession by dashing in from behind the cage and scoring the equalizer from the side of the crease.

Della Puca, who had provided the game-winner eight seconds into overtime against Putnam Valley, came through once again against the Indians, scoring the decisive goal with 4:08 on the clock. After taking the ball behind the cage, he ran to the left side of the net and quickly fired in the shot that gave the Panthers the lead for the first time all afternoon.

There were some anxious final moments for the Panthers, especially after relinquishing possession due to a moving screen with 48 seconds left. But Marchi only had to make one more save, on a weak shot from Glenn Janik with 18 seconds to go. Just

before the final buzzer, Drillock scooped up a loose ball in front of the Pleasantville net and jubilantly lofted it high and far down the field, starting the Panther postgame celebration.

"I think it's more nerve racking for us, the coaches, than it is for the players because they've been in a few of these really tight games," said Kear. "Their demeanor has been very calm. They've been in these big games. They've been in the sectional final, so a lot of these kids, they have big-game experience."

At least one of his players could be heard amid the sideline euphoria suggesting the two dramatic victories would finally earn the Panthers some respect, but Kear wasn't about to get caught up in how his unbeaten team is perceived around the section.

"We're just trying to get better every game," he said. "We think we have gotten better just in the last two games by playing these tougher teams, and we think it'll serve us well late in the season. So it'll be nice for these kids to get some recognition, but for us it's just about getting better and being the best we can be at the end of the season."

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Austin Duke of Byram Hills follows through on a serve in his recent match vs. host Briarcliff.



Fox Lane's Luke Verrochi moves the ball up the field last Tuesday at John Jay.



Ricky Grassi of Westlake prepares to fire a shot on goal in the Wildcats' road game vs. Briarcliff last week.

SPORTS SCENE



Byram Hills singles player Ben Grossman smacks a forehand in his straight-sets win last week at Briarcliff High School.



Jacob Eisenberg of Briarcliff gets ready to hit a forehand during a singles match vs. Byram Hills.



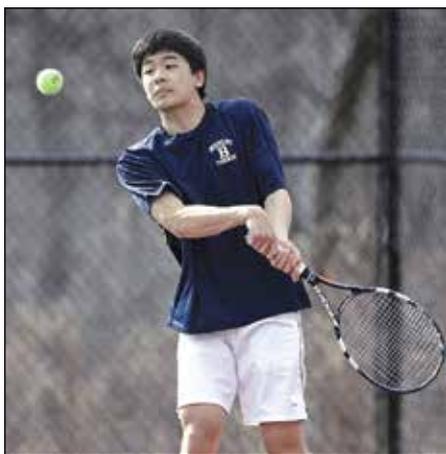
Westlake goalie John Hayes searches for an open teammate after making a save last Thursday vs. host Briarcliff.



Olivia Wangeman of Greeley races toward the goal in last Wednesday's narrow win over host Pleasantville.



Julianna Ursillo of Valhalla moves the ball up the field vs. visiting Fox Lane.



Above: Briarcliff's Austin Li hits a backhand return during his singles match vs. Byram Hills last week.



Caroline Cronin of Fox Lane considers her options as Valhalla's Christy Johnson defends.



Briarcliff's John Plimpton runs past James Gorman of Westlake in last Thursday's game, won by the Bears 12-6.



Left: Westlake's Alexa Pichiarallo pitches in last Thursday's game at Greeley High School.



Lindsay West of Fox Lane gets set to shoot in last Wednesday's victory at Valhalla.



Andrew Harrison of Fox Lane passes the ball in the Foxes' road loss last Tuesday.



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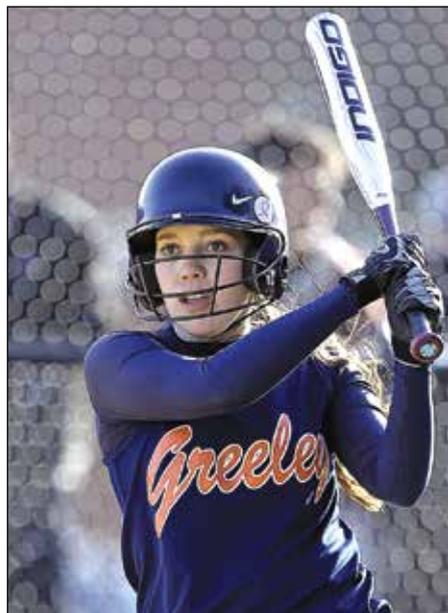
Valhalla's Nikki Loresto tries to get past Fox Lane's Bridget Connors (left) and Brooke Shepherd during a Viking home game.



Horace Greeley's Bernadette Grant moves the ball along the right sideline in the Quakers' win vs. Pleasantville.



Horace Greeley infielder Ashley Rosenberg fields a late throw as Westlake's Katie Cullen slides into second base.



Above: Greeley's Nicole Walkerwicz swings the bat in Thursday's come-from-behind Quaker win.



Left: Briarcliff batter Sarah Goldstein watches the flight of her foul ball in last Thursday's home game vs. Rye Neck.



Fox Lane's Dion Austrie races toward third base in the Foxes' road win vs. Briarcliff.



Jake Hertz of Briarcliff swings the bat in the Bears' home game vs. Fox Lane last Wednesday. Below: Briarcliff's Teresa Marinaccio pitches in last Thursday's home game vs. Rye Neck.

Lower left: Westlake first baseman Shannon Frisbie stays ready in the infield last week vs. host Greeley.

Below: Fox Lane goalie Phil Greco gets set to clear the ball after making a save vs. host John Jay.



Pleasantville's Maria Howe controls the ball during last Wednesday's home game vs. Greeley. The Panthers battled back from a 14-8 deficit before losing by one goal.



Quakers Fall to John Jay, But Not Without a Battle

By Skip Pearlman

The Horace Greeley boys' lacrosse team went punch for punch with John Jay of Cross River Saturday, but it was the Indians who got in the final two jabs that mattered most - scoring twice in the fourth quarter to walk off with a 10-8 victory in a game played in Chappaqua.

Sam Mishkind's goal 33 seconds into the fourth quarter tied the game for Greeley at 8-8, but the Indians answered with just over five minutes to play, with Shawn Smith delivering the game-deciding goal off a Quaker turnover. Nick Kells gave John Jay an insurance goal with 3:40 remaining.

Jay improved to 6-1 with the win, while the Quakers fell to 1-3. The Indians may have won the game, but some onlookers were surprised to see Greeley play John Jay so tough.

Greeley coach Vin DeGregorio was not one of them.

"I'm very proud of the way the boys played today," DeGregorio said. "They left it all on the field. We know we can play with anyone in Section 1, our kids believe in themselves. They did a god job possessing the ball on offense and taking quality shots, which was nice to see. We certainly matured a bit today as a team. We have some young guys in



Jack Grossman of Horace Greeley takes a stick to the neck Saturday in loss to John Jay.

spots, and it was nice to see them step up. And as far as our defense, they've been great all season so far, and Noah Weisman, our goalie, was unbelievable.

"Being in that situation at the end of the game is difficult," DeGregorio added. "You know you're going to see a well-coached John Jay team with a lot of talent. You try to contain them as long as you can... and they made some plays. For us, it was nice to see Owen Gatto between the lines on the faceoffs, he did a great job for us. And Weisman is an excellent leader on the defensive end. Charlie Mirasola also played well."

Jay coach Tim Schurr said Greeley gave his club a good test. "I think their



Matt Baum of Greeley works around the crease Saturday.

goalie was spectacular," Schurr said. "He made a tremendous number of saves and that was a big difference. I think some of our younger guys were a little exposed today, and we have some guys hurt, some guys sick... and I think they did a great job exploiting our weaknesses. They were well-coached, they were good. In the end, I think some of our defensemen played pretty well - Matt Lanza made some key plays at the end, Bob Giordano was very good, and I thought we got a great effort out of Vince Foti running the field today. And on attack Ryan Lee and Matt Lupinacci were terrific."

Mishkind led Greeley with four goals,



Sam Mishkind scored four goals, including one on this shot, for Greeley Saturday against John Jay.

Matt Baum and Ethan Frieder each had a goal and one assist, Alex Ives and Nate Morris each scored once and Alex Hartman had an assist.

Lee led the Indians with a three goals and one assist, Smith added two goals and two assists and Lupinacci had two goals.

This coming week, Greeley is set to host Nyack today (Tuesday) at 4 p.m. and then travel to play at Lakeland Saturday at 1 p.m.

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Focus on PACE



Ryan Valdez controls the ball in the second half of Saturday's home game.



Joey Whalen of Pace looks to pass the ball in Saturday's 11-10 overtime loss.



Frank Buffalino goes on the attack in Saturday's game vs. Merrimack. The Setters overcame an 8-2 deficit, but then lost in overtime.



Caitlin McCann pitches during Pace's doubleheader on Saturday.



Matthew Cossidente (1) and William Scioscia celebrate a Setter goal on Saturday afternoon.



Pace's Matthew Cossidente runs the ball up the field in Saturday's OT loss to Merrimack.

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Brett Bittiger swings the bat in the Pace victory over visiting Mercy.



Pace's Nikole Larm runs to third base on Saturday vs. American International College.



Pace second baseman Andrew Coffey tags out a Mercy runner during a rundown in last week's home game.

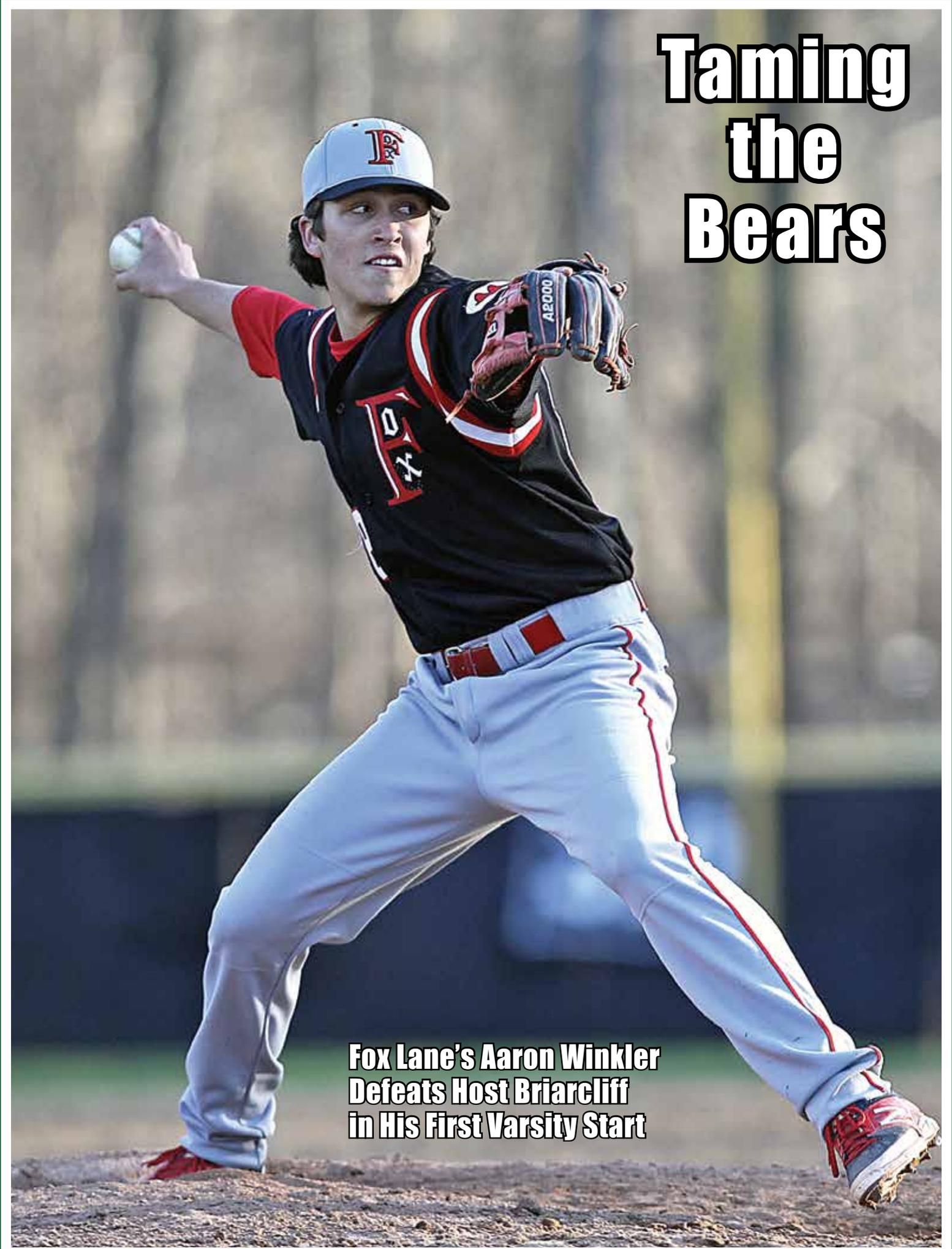


Pace pitcher Mike Sweeney delivers to the plate in last Thursday's 8-1 win over Mercy.



Above: Shelby Yung hits a single to left in the first inning of Saturday's opening game of a doubleheader.

Left: Ian Wukitsch of Pace University is tagged out at second base in the Setters' 8-1 win last Thursday afternoon.



Taming the Bears

**Fox Lane's Aaron Winkler
Defeats Host Briarcliff
in His First Varsity Start**

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