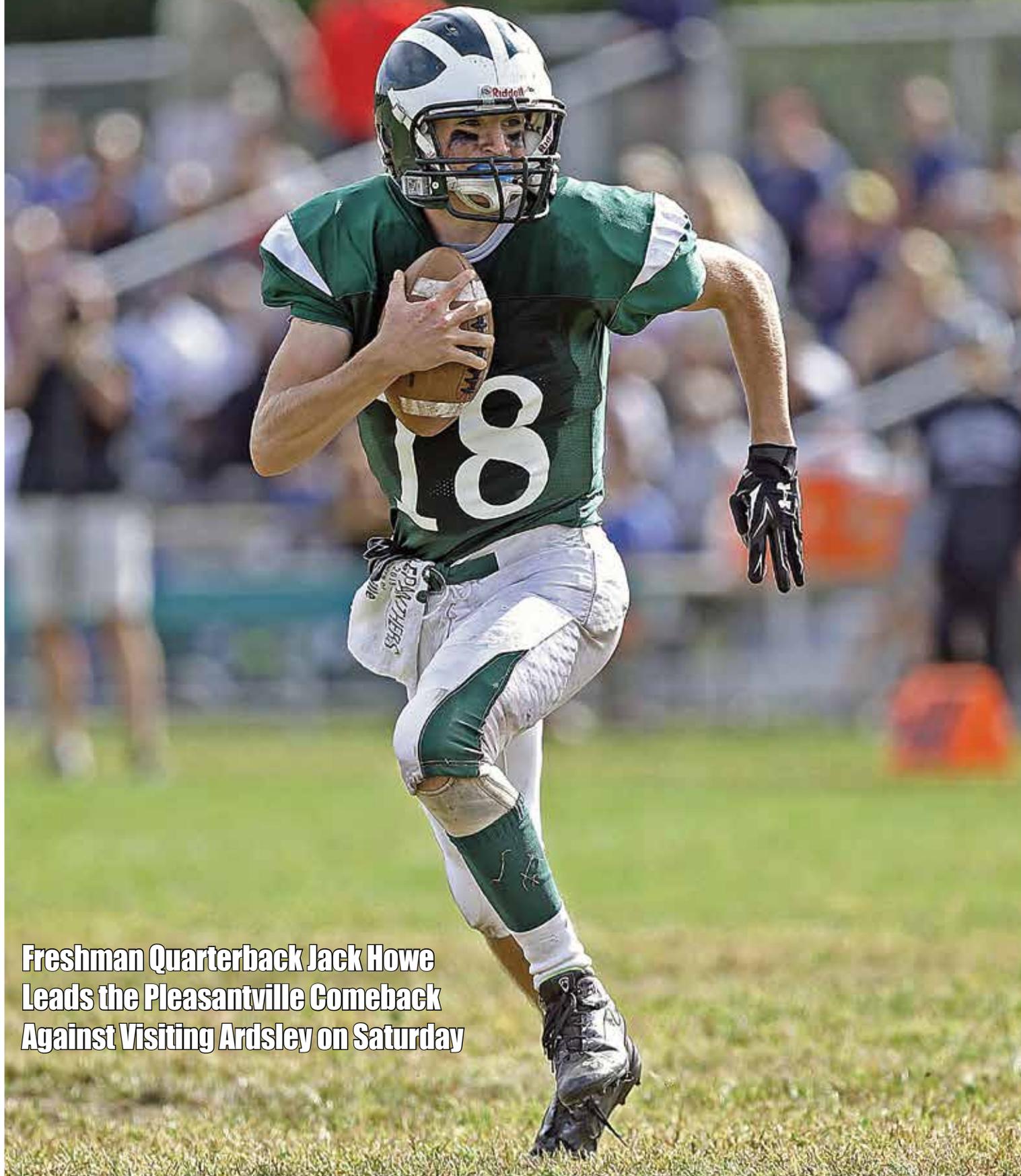


Howe About That?



**Freshman Quarterback Jack Howe
Leads the Pleasantville Comeback
Against Visiting Ardsley on Saturday**

Resilient Valhalla Edges the Tigers to Remain Undefeated

By Andy Jacobs

Wins have been hard to come by the last couple of years for the Valhalla football team, which endured a six-game losing streak in both 2013 and 2014.

But the move up to Class B this season has seemingly brought a change of fortune to the Vikings. On Friday night, even an early 16-point deficit on the road and the quick loss of a pair of starters couldn't slow the Vikings down.

With Michael Ferrara rushing for 168 yards and quarterback Ralph Gonzalez throwing for 198 more, Valhalla managed to squeak past host Putnam Valley 25-24 to remain unbeaten this season.

"I can't say enough about the effort the kids gave because we lost our starting guard and defensive end in the first quarter," said Vikings head coach Stephen Boyer afterwards. "The kids just never gave up and that's a credit to them."

Facing a Tiger team looking to rebound from a 40-point loss to Westlake a week earlier, the Vikings found themselves in a 16-point hole by the end of the first quarter. Even worse, junior lineman Gianni Montanez had to be carted off the field not even five minutes into the contest after suffering an apparent leg injury on Valhalla's first punt of the evening.

Putnam Valley grabbed the early lead when quarterback Zach Girvalo threw to Mathew Stare for a 20-yard touchdown with 3:50 to go in the opening quarter. Girvalo then tossed to tight end Nicholas Singer for the two-point conversion. The Tigers struck again with 17.6 seconds remaining in the period as Girvalo connected once more with Stare, this time on a 72-yard touchdown pass. Then Girvalo easily scampered around left end for the two-point conversion that left Valhalla 16 points behind.

"After they scored," recalled Boyer, "I called timeout, brought the kids in and said, 'Let's go. We're gonna go right down the field here.' And they responded and cut the deficit. And then the next possession, we scored again. So we were right back in the game."

The second quarter began with the Vikings about to start a five-play, 54-yard drive that culminated less than 90 seconds later with Ferrara running to his left for a 10-yard touchdown. Though the two-point-conversion attempt failed, Valhalla was back in business.

After the Tigers were forced to punt from midfield on their next possession, Valhalla took over at its own 11-yard line. Two plays later, Ferrara, just a sophomore, broke a tackle along the left sideline and raced 86 yards to the end zone for his second touchdown, trimming the Putnam Valley lead to just four points.

"Yeah, Michael kicked out of a tackle and made a nice move," said Boyer. "He's got pure speed, so fortunate to have him, and he outraced the defender. He's been doing that so far for the first four games. So hopefully we continue it for the next two and then



Valhalla senior Matt Garcia has plenty of running room in the Vikings' come-from-behind win over the Tigers.



Valhalla's Michael Ferrara picks up big yardage as he carries the football in Friday night's game.

we'll see what happens in the playoffs."

The Vikings got the ball back once more in the first half, at the Tigers' 40 with three and a half minutes still on the clock. They moved the ball down to the 8-yard line with a minute to go, but Ferrara was stopped a yard short on fourth-and-three and the half ended with Putnam Valley still leading 16-12.

Asked if he thought that missed opportunity would come back to haunt his team, Boyer said, "Oh, absolutely. I was second-guessing myself. Kind of stuck with the run game instead of throwing it. But give credit to them. They did a nice job on the edge and we fell two yards short, a yard short, and then we had a penalty on it anyhow."

Valhalla recovered a Tiger fumble at the Putnam Valley 45-yard line four minutes into the second half. The Vikings proceeded to march 55 yards on five plays, including



Kevin Williams runs with the ball in Valhalla's 25-24 victory over host Putnam Valley.



Valhalla sophomore quarterback Ralph Gonzalez threw for 198 yards in Friday's road win.

Gonzalez passes of 27 yards to Conor Sullivan and then 16 yards down to the 1-yard line to Matt Garcia. One play later, Jason Robles ran through the middle of the line for a touchdown that gave Valhalla its first lead.

But Putnam Valley answered in little more than two minutes, using a flea-flicker 40-yard pass play to Tyler Burkhardt to set up Dillon White's one-yard TD run with 4:44 left in the third quarter. Once again, quarterback Girvalo then ran untouched into the end zone for the two-point conversion, giving the Tigers a 24-18 lead.

The Tigers' advantage didn't last very long as Valhalla responded with a four-play, 75-yard scoring drive capped off by a Gonzalez lob pass down the left sideline into double coverage that Kevin Williams plucked out of the air. He then spun away from both Tiger defenders and outran them all the way to the goal line for an improbable 50-yard touchdown. The point-after kick by Ferrara was good, providing Valhalla with a one-point lead with just under three minutes to go in the period.

"Both teams were going up and down the field," said Boyer. "We just tried to stick with more of our ground game, but we ended up making a few passes. Our quarterback did a



Jason Robles of Valhalla celebrates after scoring a touchdown in the third quarter vs. Putnam Valley.



The Vikings' John Cho returns a kick during Friday night's Viking win over Putnam Valley.

great job throwing the ball and the line did a great job protecting. Kevin Williams made a huge play to give us the lead and Mike Ferrara kicked the extra point just like we've been kind of doing all year. Not great, but he made one when it counted."

Putnam Valley moved to the Vikings' 15-yard line early in the fourth quarter, but on fourth down a 31-yard field goal try was easily blocked by James Flaherty to preserve the Valhalla lead. Midway through the final period, Ferrara picked off a pass at the Viking 23-yard line. The Tigers had one last chance from midfield with 1:37 remaining, but Girvalo's desperation fourth-and-20 pass fell incomplete, all but sealing the outcome.

Now even Boyer himself is having trouble believing his Vikings stand at 4-0 two-thirds of the way through the regular season.

"No way," he said, asked if he expected it. "But I knew we had potential. We're new to Class B and I'm just excited for the boys. And next week is Homecoming, so we'll be ready."

Pleasantville Overcomes a Slow Start to Defeat Ardsley

By Andy Jacobs

Just two minutes into Saturday afternoon's encounter with Ardsley, the Pleasantville football team found itself already behind by 12 points.

Panther head coach Tony Becerra may have been annoyed, but he wasn't really alarmed.

"Well, it's almost like a baseball game when it happens in the first inning," he would say later. "You know you've got a lot of game left."

Sure enough, the Panthers had more than enough time to answer with four scores of their own while blanking Ardsley the rest of the way. With freshman quarterback Jack Howe throwing for a pair of long touchdowns and running for another, Pleasantville defeated the visitors 28-12 at Parkway Field.

"So, so, so important," said Becerra, for emphasis, about getting back in the win column after last week's disappointing outcome against Nanuet. "Friday night game, where we laid an egg, and the boys had to live with it for a week. And to top things off, to spot 'em 12 points in the first quarter; that's probably one of the most satisfying wins that we've had here given what they were up against and what they had to overcome."

What they had to overcome was a slow start straight out of any coach's worst nightmare. Panther defensive end Jack Drillock leveled Ardsley's Jonny Khym for a two-yard loss on the game's first play from scrimmage. But a 64-yard touchdown run by Shemiah Hanasai three plays later left



Brian Reda of Pleasantville goes airborne in disbelief in front of teammate Jack Minerva after discovering the officials ruled his third-quarter reception was an incomplete pass.



The Panthers' Ian Esliker carries the football during the 28-12 win over Ardsley.

Pleasantville trailing 6-0 with 10:09 left in the opening quarter.

The Panthers started from their own 20 after a touchback and disaster struck immediately. On first down, the snap from center went over Howe's head. Ardsley recovered the football in the end zone for another touchdown, just eight seconds after its first. Just a minute and 59 seconds after the opening kickoff, Pleasantville trailed 12-0.

While the Panthers were flustered, they were definitely not finished. It took them less than two and a half minutes to get right back in the game as they moved 74 yards in just three plays for a much-needed touchdown. A Howe swing pass to Javaun Smith turned into a 70-yard catch and run that instantly sliced the Pleasantville deficit in half. The point-after kick by Howe pulled the Panthers to within 12-7 with 8:38 to go in the first quarter.

"Huge, huge," said Becerra of the Panthers' quick response to their early adversity. "We were looking for someone to make a play. You can just feel the confidence come back on our sideline once we got that first score."

The Panthers still trailed by five points as the first quarter came to an end, but they were in the midst of a long and time-consuming drive that began with an interception by Ryan Drillock at the P'ville 35-yard line. After a 10-yard penalty on first down, the Panthers wound up driving 75 yards in 15 plays over the next six minutes.

Michael Hammond barreled through the middle of the line from a yard out on the first play of the second quarter to give Pleasantville a lead it never relinquished. The kick by Howe increased the Panthers' edge to 14-12, a margin they held the rest of the half.

"To their credit, the kids kept their poise and we actually went up two into halftime," said Becerra. "And I told them to keep that poise in the second half. We didn't think the score would stand,



Pleasantville quarterback Jack Howe throws a pass in Saturday's game at Parkway Field.

so we had to stay on the aggression and finish."

Both teams, now 2-2 this season, were forced to punt the first two times they had the ball in the second half, though the Panthers' Brian Reda was convinced he had made a catch for a first down on third-and-11 four minutes into the third quarter. The referee ruled it an incomplete pass, but Reda would get the last laugh later on.

After Ardsley was stopped near midfield on its second possession as Ian Esliker and Charlie McPhee knocked quarterback Julian McGarvey out of bounds for no gain on third-and-eight, the Panthers turned to some razzle-dazzle to earn good field position. Hammond received the punt, then handed the ball to Esliker, who picked up a head of steam and ran all the way to the 50-yard line.

Six plays later, Howe rolled out to his right, faked a pass, and then scooted into the end zone for a three-yard touchdown that enabled the Panthers to build a 21-12 advantage with 36 seconds



Pleasantville sophomore Brian Reda runs through the end zone after catching a 40-yard touchdown pass in the fourth quarter.



Javaun Smith of Pleasantville breaks a tackle in Saturday afternoon's win over visiting Ardsley.



Pleasantville running back Michael Hammond finds he has some company as he carries the ball against Ardsley.

remaining in the third quarter.

"We don't call him a freshman quarterback," said Becerra of the precocious Howe, now firmly entrenched as the Panthers' starting signal caller. "He's a varsity quarterback, so we try not to label him. But, yeah, he played big."

It was Howe who helped clinch the victory for the Panthers when he connected with Reda in stride down the right sideline on a fly pattern that turned into a 40-yard touchdown to give Pleasantville a 16-point cushion with just 5:29 left on the clock.

"We knew there was gonna be a spot with us running the ball and they're starting to load the box because we were killing clock running the ball," said Becerra about the big Howe-to-Reda play. "We knew we would have a spot and a situation like that where we could get behind them, and we did."

Ardsley's last real chance ended when McGarvey was sacked at midfield on fourth down by Eric DeLoughry with three minutes to go. Fittingly, McGarvey was soon dropped for a loss again on the game's final play.

According to Becerra, his players certainly had plenty of incentive against Ardsley after the humbling home loss to Nanuet a week earlier.

"They were ticked off and they were anxious," he said. "They were ticked off over the result and they were anxious to prove themselves again. And it carried over."



Cameron Stafford of Fox Lane runs to a second-place finish in a field of 131 competitors at last Monday's meet.



Fox Lane's Taylor Cutroneo hits a backhand return during her match at first singles vs. John Jay on Friday.

ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS



SPORTS SCENE

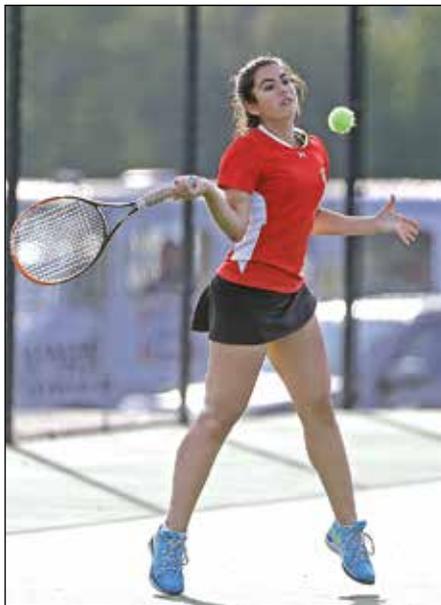
Fox Lane third-singles player Emily Bayuk stretches for a forehand volley during Friday's road match vs. the John Jay Indians.



Eventual winner Vicky Martinez of Fox Lane runs with John Jay's Pippa Nutall at last Monday's meet at Bowdoin Park.



Fox Lane's Alison Moky finished fourth at last week's League 2 race at Bowdoin Park.



Elaina Bruck of Fox Lane smacks a forehand in her match at second singles Friday afternoon at John Jay High School.



Horace Greeley's Claire Hotchkin competes at last week's League 2 meet, where she finished 12th.



Pleasantville's Alex O'Brien watches the ball roll away after a midfield collision in the second half of the Panthers' 1-0 win over visiting Westlake.



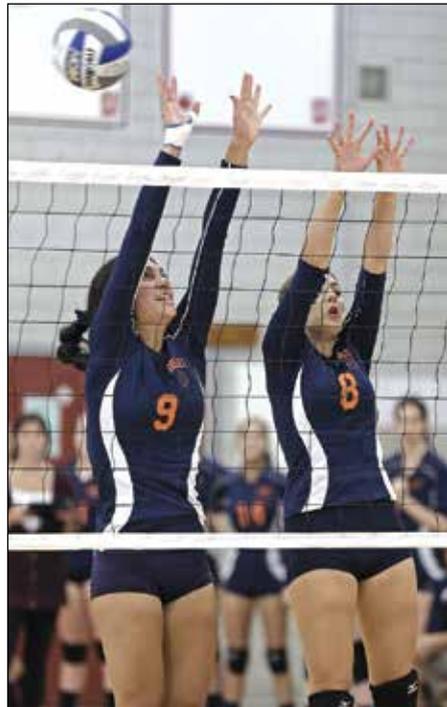
Erin Egan of Pleasantville spins away from Westlake's Alyssa Prauda during Saturday's game, won by the host Panthers.



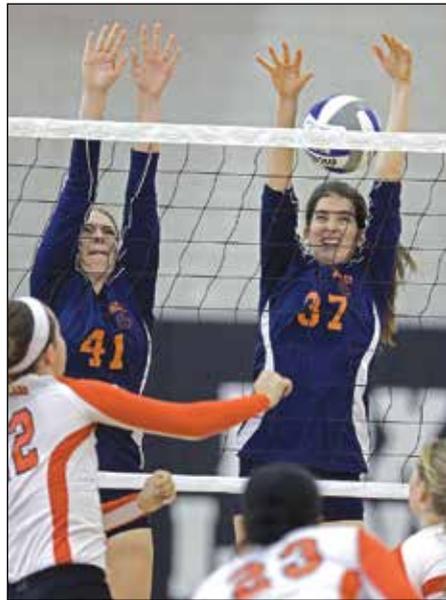
Westlake's Marianna Leone (right) battles with Pleasantville's Bianca Balducci during Saturday's game.



Wesley Ford led Greeley with an 11th-place finish at last Monday's meet at Bowdoin Park.



Jesse Saltzman (left) and Andrea Steiner of Greeley are a bit too late to block the ball vs. host Fox Lane.



Horace Greeley's Bianca Whittington (left) and Emily Mason try to block the ball at last week's road match vs. Fox Lane.



Fox Lane's Danny DiBiase controls the ball near midfield in the Foxes' 2-1 loss to Brewster in double overtime.



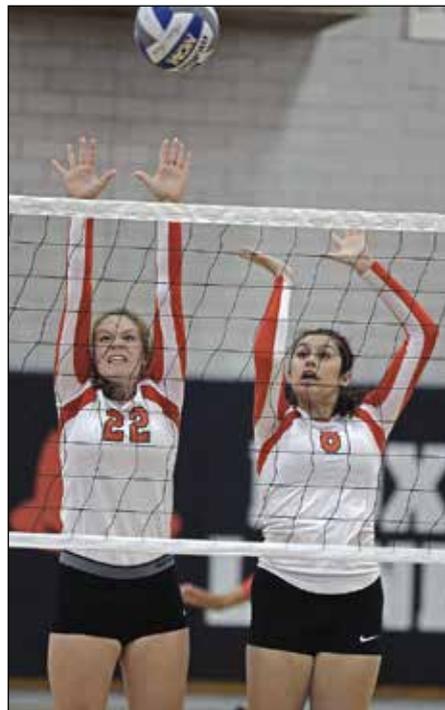
Fox Lane's Emily Tomlinson sends the ball past a pair of Quakers during the Fox victory over Greeley last week.



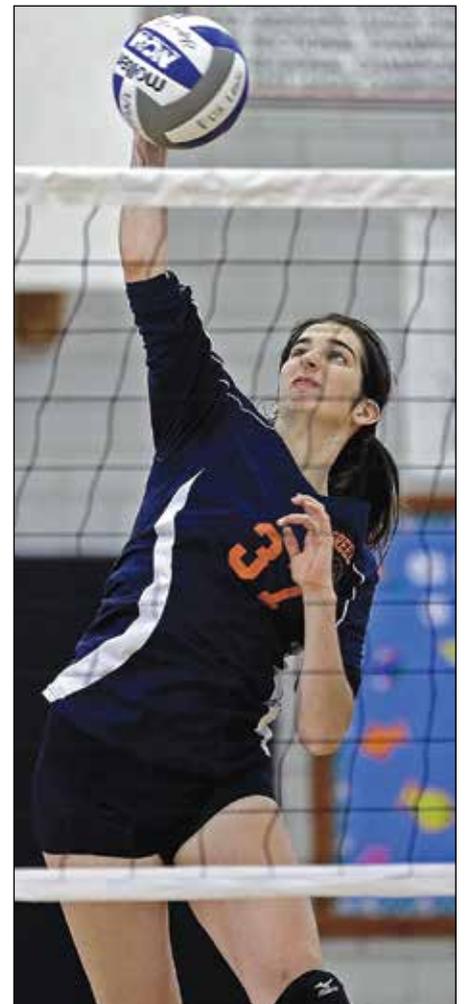
Matt Harrison of Fox Lane takes the ball up the field in Thursday's 2-1 overtime loss to Brewster.



Victor Ramon of Fox Lane has his sights on the loose ball after colliding in front of the goal last Thursday against visiting Brewster.



Fox Lane's Kate Muller (left) and Juliette Miranda rise together trying to block the ball in the Foxes' home win over Greeley last Thursday afternoon.



Greeley middle hitter Emily Mason puts the ball away in Thursday's match at Fox Lane.



Above: Brianna Dawson of Fox Lane bumps the ball during last Thursday's home match vs. Greeley.

Upper left: Fox Lane's Miles Levy runs down the ball in the second half of Thursday's game vs. Brewster.

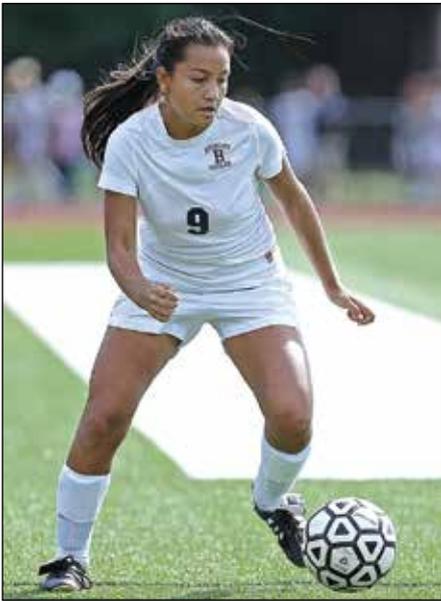


Fox Lane's Ally Hewitt hits a forehand during her match at first doubles last week against John Jay.

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SPORTS SCENE EXTRA

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Briarcliff's Amelia Leahy moves the ball across the field in the Bears' overtime win vs. Valhalla.



Valhalla's Sierra Lockhart and Briarcliff's Stephanie Vream keep their eyes on the ball along the right sideline in Saturday's game, won by the host Bears.



Briarcliff vs. Valhalla Girls' Soccer

Valhalla's Juliana Corradi controls the ball during the second half of Saturday's game.



Nicole Nero of Briarcliff searches for an open teammate as Valhalla's Melissa Giglio defends in the Bears' 2-0 win.



Above: Kaho Maeda of Briarcliff gets set to settle the ball early in the second half.

Upper left: Briarcliff's Kelly O'Donnell chases the ball in Saturday's game.

Left: Emily Strupinsky of Valhalla dribbles the ball up the field as Briarcliff's Kelly O'Donnell gives chase.



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VIKING VICTORY

Valhalla football players, left to right, JJ Pasqualone, Kevin Williams and James Flaherty celebrate after the Vikings defeated host Putnam Valley 25-24 on Friday night to remain undefeated this season. For more details, see page S 2.

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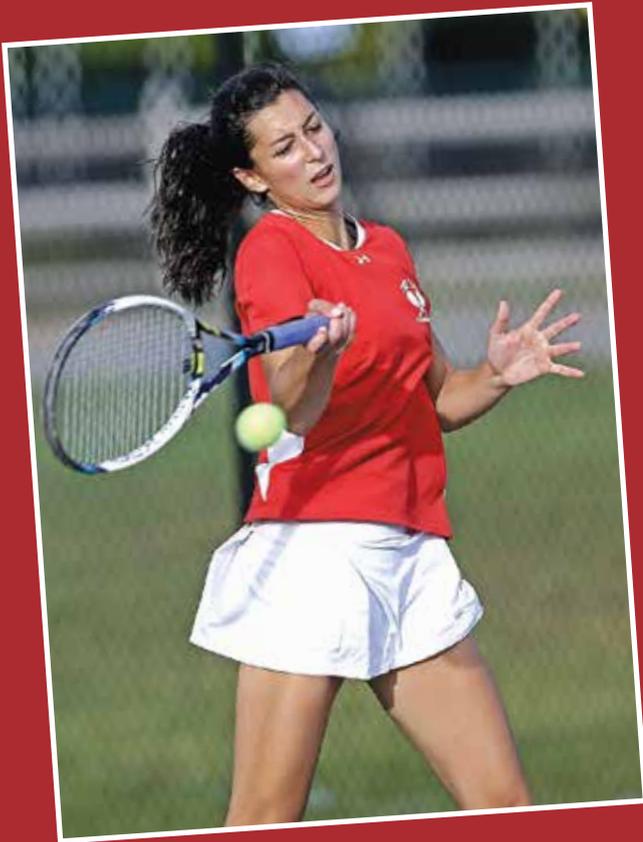
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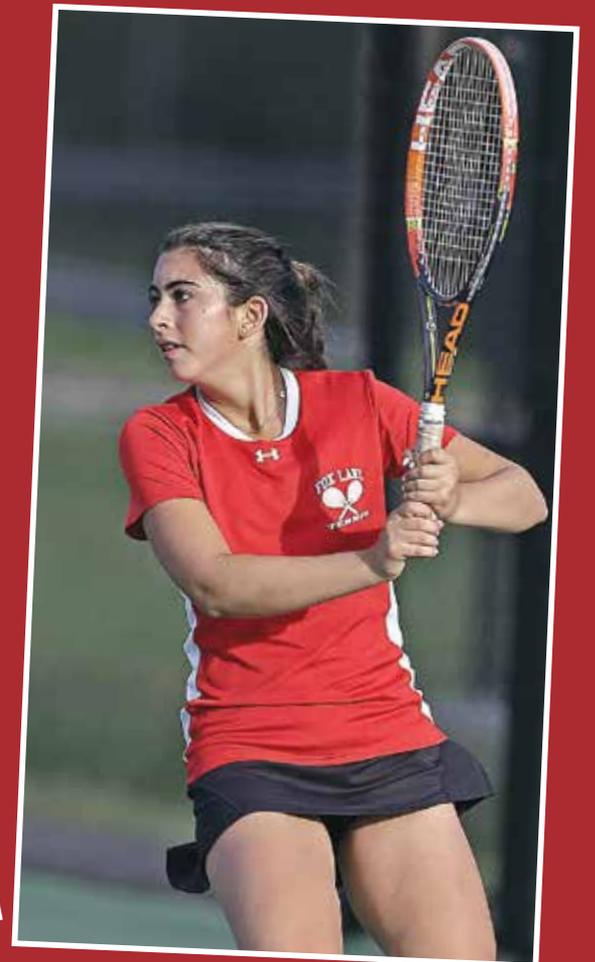
FOXES' FINEST



Taylor Cutroneo blasts a forehand in her match at first singles vs. John Jay.



Matt Harrison looks up the field for open teammates in Thursday's game vs. Brewster.



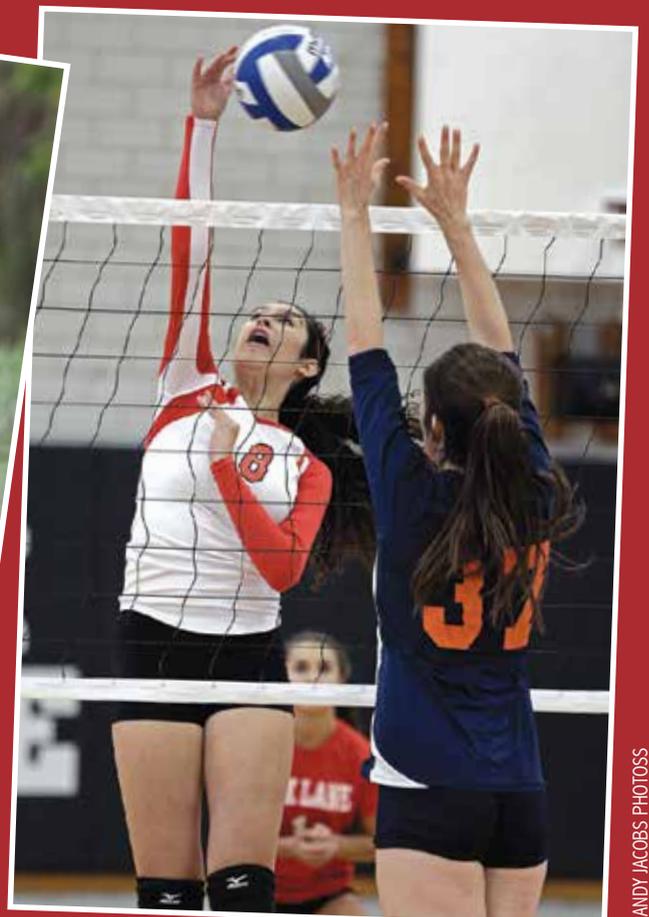
Elaina Bruck prepares for a backhand return at John Jay on Friday.



Vicky Martinez runs to victory at Bowdoin Park last Monday.



Cameron Stafford heads toward the finish line at last Monday's cross country meet.



Juliette Miranda rises above the net in last Thursday's win over Greeley.

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