

## Region Champs



**Skylar Sinon and the Bobcats  
Advance to the State Final Four  
With a Pair of Regional Victories**

# Foxes' Quest for a State Title Ends in Middletown

By Andy Jacobs

The Fox Lane basketball team arrived at Orange County Community College on Friday afternoon still riding on Cloud Nine after capturing the Section 1, Class AA title five days earlier.

Section 9 champion Middletown quickly brought the Foxes back down to earth.

On a day when the Foxes' most feared shooters struggled mightily from the perimeter and star forward Matt Redhead was saddled with serious foul trouble, the Bears opened up a 10-point lead three minutes into the second quarter and went on to a convincing 62-44 victory in the regional final of the state playoffs. Junior guard Jordan Bryan scored 19 points and three teammates also finished in double figures as Middletown earned a coveted berth in next weekend's state final four at the Glens Falls Civic Center.

"There's no secret about it, we're a jump-shooting team," said Fox Lane coach Mike Tomassi afterwards. "We've got a couple of athletic guys, but at the end of the day we rely on our jump shot. I think we got all good shots. Unfortunately, it wasn't our day."

The Foxes, fresh off last Tuesday's 21-point win over Section 4's Horseheads in the opening round of the state tourney, never led at all against a Middletown team playing just a few miles from its own campus. The Bears scored the game's first two baskets, both of them layups, and kept Fox Lane off the scoreboard until Redhead made a pair of free throws nearly three and a half minutes into the contest.

Regrettably for the Foxes, Redhead would only provide two more points the rest of the way and fouled out of the game midway through the fourth quarter. By then, though, Fox Lane trailed by 18 points and it was apparent to the hundreds of Fox fans who filled nearly the entire side of visitors' bleachers that the magical season they had watched unfold would soon be ending.

"We knew exactly what they were gonna do," said Tomassi about the Bears. "It was just, can we stop it or not? And, unfortunately, I think they were a little more athletic than us, a little more physical than us. If you don't bear down and defend and work hard, you get exposed. And, tonight, we got exposed."

After a 5-0 Fox spurt that included a 17-foot pullup jumper by Sean New and a drive through the lane by Alex Olsen tied the game at 7-7, Middletown got a free throw from Bryan to take the lead for good with just under two minutes left in the opening quarter. The Bears scored the last five points of the first period and the first four of the second, opening up a nine-point cushion, and then never allowed the Foxes to get any closer than six points.

The final basket of Redhead's superb Fox Lane career came on a jump shot



The Foxes' Alex Olsen sails in for a basket in Friday's regional final vs. Middletown.



Jamal Jackson-Blake rises for a shot in the lane vs. Section 9 champion Middletown.

from the left corner with 5:30 remaining in the first half and moved the Foxes to within 18-11. Guard Jamal Jackson-Blake provided the last five Fox points of the half with two aggressive baseline drives for layups and then one of two foul shots, but Middletown still had a 28-21 advantage.

"I was happy at halftime," said Tomassi. "We missed six foul shots in the first half, we missed four or five layups, and it easily could've been a seven-point lead the other way, in our favor. But I told the guys the



Fox Lane forward Matt Redhead is consoled by coach Mike Tomassi after fouling out in the Class AA regional final.



Fox Lane's Nick Rosati dribbles the ball near the top of the key during Friday afternoon's game in the state playoffs.

first three minutes of the third quarter was going to dictate this game."

Just 12 seconds into the second half, the Bears' Bryan made an 18-foot jumper. But New answered for the Foxes half a minute later, drilling a 3-pointer from beyond the top of the key that turned out to be his final basket, cutting the Middletown lead to just six points.

Fox fans may have been sensing an inevitable comeback, but Bryan proceeded to score seven points in the midst of an 11-3 Middletown burst that all but decided the outcome. Suddenly the Bears' lead was up to 14 points, and it soon grew to 47-28 when Kenneth Middleton scored a fast-break layup off a Fox turnover with 41 seconds left in the third quarter.

A 3-pointer out of the left corner by Olsen, who finished with a game-high 20 points and also eight rebounds, cut the Fox deficit to 16 points heading to the final quarter. There was a glimmer of hope as Olsen then began the fourth period with a runner in the lane. But any



Sean New launches a 3-point shot during Friday's state playoff game at Orange County Community College.

chance for the Foxes quickly disappeared as Redhead fouled out and they went scoreless for almost five minutes, falling behind by 21 points.

With 73 seconds left on the clock, Tomassi summoned the rest of his starters back to the bench and they spent the game's last moments slumped in their seats, with heads bowed and tears in their eyes.

"Only a couple teams this year have been able to get us out of what we do," said Tomassi. "And when they do, unfortunately we lose games. At the end of the day, an athlete's an athlete and they just might've been a little more athletic. I think the officials let them dictate how physical it was gonna be. You don't like to complain about the officials, but I think early on it was very clear how the game was gonna be called. For them to be physical and not have anybody foul out and us to have one guy, you know, it's kind of head scratching."

The Foxes wound up making just four of their 22 shots from beyond the 3-point arc, a key ingredient of what Tomassi called "a recipe for disaster." Still, he knows the things his players were able to accomplish this season before running into the Bears in the regional final won't soon be forgotten.

"These guys just believed, just kept working," he said. "This was an unbelievable season. I told the kids that this year is gonna be remembered until they tear Fox Lane down. We're gonna be long, long gone, and the year that Fox Lane beat Mount Vernon in the section final is gonna live on forever."

# Bobcats Win Twice to Earn a Trip to Glens Falls

By Andy Jacobs

The way Byram Hills basketball coach Ted Repa figured it, everything that was going to happen in the state tournament after his team edged Tappan Zee for the Section 1, Class A title a week ago would just be icing on the Bobcats' cake.

Then a conversation with his assistant altered his thinking.

"Dave Mack, he's an upstate New York guy, and he kind of really inspired me," Repa conceded early last week. "He says, 'I hate the fact everybody, they win a Gold Ball and that's it.' Like it's time to make a statement for the whole state."

Repa and the Bobcats just might be doing that. They defeated Section 9 champion Red Hook last Tuesday evening and then Section 4 winner Johnson City on Saturday night, advancing to the state's final four next weekend at the Glens Falls Civic Center.

Playing just a few miles from home at the Westchester County Center, the Bobcats used a 14-1 run bridging the third and fourth quarters to gain command in their 53-45 victory over Red Hook in the first round of regional play. Skylar Sinon scored 13 points, while Matt Groll added 11 to go along with 15 rebounds as Byram followed up its dramatic sectional triumph over TZ with a win over a physically imposing Raider team.

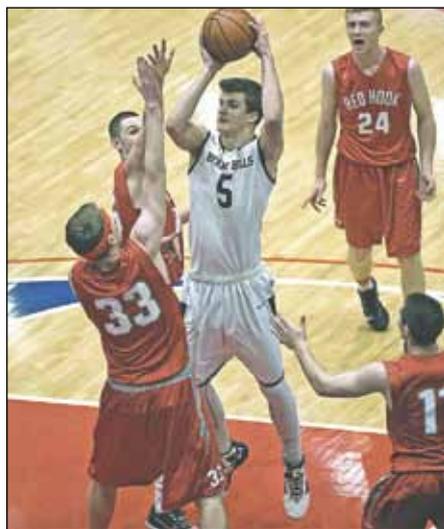
"They were a big, physical, senior-dominant team," said Repa about Red Hook, which had just defeated Poughkeepsie for a third straight time this season to earn the Section 9 title. "That was my biggest concern, just because of their physicality and their experience."

After Red Hook scored the game's first basket, the Bobcats answered with eight successive points, getting a conventional three-point play from Jared Friedberg and then a pair of jump shots by Sinon, including his only trey of the night. The Byram Hills lead was 10-4 after point guard Matt Milone drove the left baseline for a toss off glass with 2:25 left in the first quarter.

But the Bobcats didn't score again the rest of the period, enabling Red Hook to move within three points after the first eight minutes. The lead changed hands four times in the second quarter, which ended with the teams in a 22-22 deadlock.

Just 25 seconds into the second half, the Raiders' Beau Smith was whistled for his fourth foul. Still, Red Hook was able to retake the lead at 27-26 on a fast-break layup by Nick Morrissey with 4:30 left in the quarter. The Bobcats finally seized the advantage for good when Groll got inside for a bucket while getting fouled and added the free throw.

The basket by Groll started the Bobcats' decisive 14-1 burst and was soon followed by a 3-pointer from Willy Samsen as the shot clock was about to expire. Lou Filippelli provided a basket with 1:35 to go in the quarter that gave the Bobcats the



Matt Groll of Byram Hills is surrounded by Red Hook players as he shoots the ball in the first half of last Tuesday's game at the Westchester County Center.



Liam Nowlin concentrates on a fourth-quarter free throw in the 53-45 Byram Hills win over Red Hook.

34-27 lead they took to the final period.

Red Hook's troubles continued to mount as Nick Michitsch picked up his fourth foul in the final minute of the third quarter. After a free throw from Morrissey to start the fourth, the Bobcats answered with consecutive baskets by Sinon and then a bank shot by Liam Nowlin that stretched their advantage to 40-28 with 5:22 remaining.

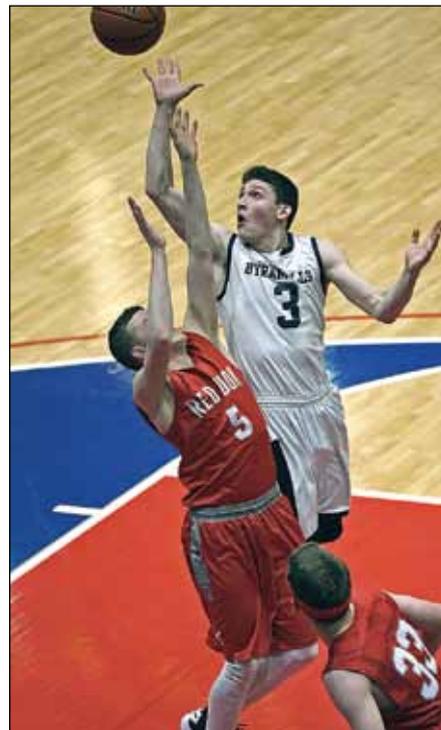
Sinon rose to the occasion by scoring eight of his points in the fourth quarter when the Bobcats were trying to protect their lead.

"You know, a player that good is not gonna be held down for long," said Repa, "and I'm really, really happy for his performance. I mean, he's a really special, unique player and is only gonna get better."

A 7-0 spurt by the Raiders narrowed their deficit to 40-35 midway through the fourth quarter before a cutting Milone



The Bobcats' Lou Filippelli is sandwiched by Red Hook's Colin Bemis (33) and Nick Morrissey as he awaits a rebound.



The Bobcats' Jared Friedberg tosses up a shot over Red Hook's Connor Christensen during last Tuesday's regional playoff game.

took a pass from Filippelli and scored on a layup. Two free throws by Filippelli built the Byram lead back up to nine points, but Red Hook was still within 46-41 after a 15-foot leaver by Dennis Hare with 1:53 on the clock.

Groll found Sinon open underneath for a basket with 1:05 remaining, then Colin Bemis, who led Red Hook with 16 points, scored 15 seconds later to slice the Bobcats' lead to 48-43. The Bobcats, though, ended the drama as Sinon went coast to coast for a layup with 48 seconds left and Nowlin added two free throws 20 seconds later for a nine-point cushion.

After putting an end to the Raiders' season, Repa was quick to credit the influence his assistant, Mack, had on the outcome.

"I think everybody feeds off his energy and the kids were ready to go," he said, while also noting that from what they saw on film, Red Hook's perimeter game wasn't a big worry.

"They're a very good team," he added.



Byram Hills point guard Matt Milone pushes the ball up the court vs. Red Hook in last week's state tournament game at the County Center.



Byram Hills coach Ted Repa calls out a play in the Bobcats' victory over Red Hook in the state playoffs.

"Very strong, senior-dominant team, and that's always a concern. But we thought we had a good game plan against them with the matchup. The matchup zone worked really well today. The first maybe four possessions were straight man and then we went purely matchup, other than a couple of possessions."

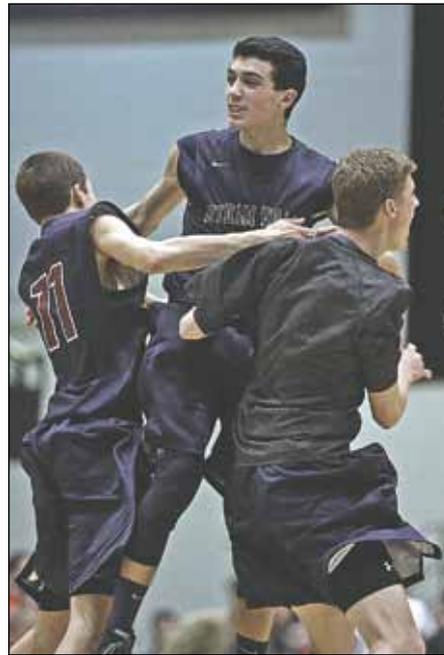
The win over Red Hook was followed four days later by a much longer trip up to Cortland, where the Bobcats hung on to defeat Johnson City 50-48 in the regional final. Sinon scored 13 of his 15 points in the second half, Groll provided 14 points and 12 rebounds and Filippelli chipped in with 11 points for Byram, which escaped with the win only after the Wildcats misfired on three straight shots bidding to tie the game on their final possession.

"After we won the Gold Ball," said Repa, "we made a new goal — let's get to the state final four and if we get there, we'll make a new goal. It's a pretty exciting experience."

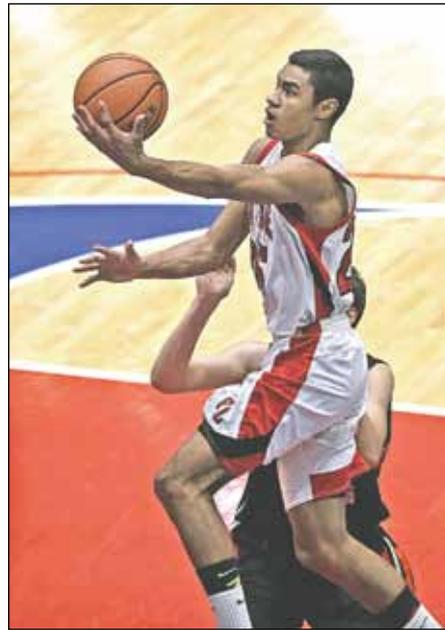
# COUNTY CENTER PANORAMA



Briarcliff's Joe Canonaco celebrates after the Bears defeated Putnam Valley in the Class B title game.

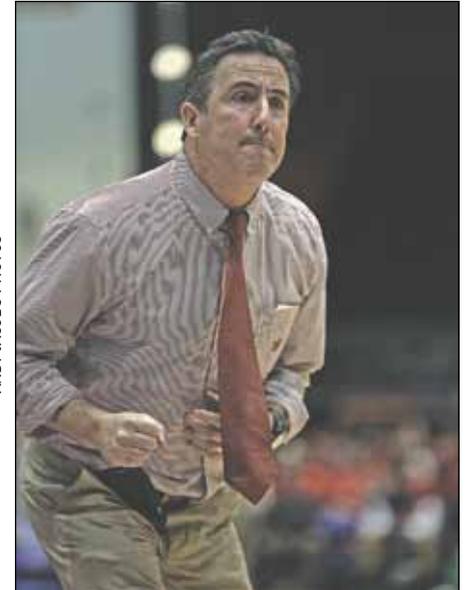


Skylar Sinon of Byram Hills jumps into the arms of his teammates after the Bobcats held on to edge Tappan Zee in the Class A championship game.



ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS

Fox Lane's Alex Olsen takes the ball to the basket during the first half of the Foxes' semifinal win over White Plains.



Valhalla girls' basketball coach Stephen Boyer watches his team battle top-seeded Irvington in the fourth quarter of the Class B semifinals.



Briarcliff junior guard Jack Reish poses with his MVP plaque after the Bears beat Putnam Valley for the Class B title.



Valhalla eighth-grader Shelby Sekinski rises in the lane for a basket vs. the Irvington Bulldogs.



Briarcliff's Sean Crowley is greeted by head coach Cody Moffett late in the Bears' semifinal win over defending champion Woodlands.



Byram Hills and Tappan Zee warm up at halftime of last week's Class A championship game at the Westchester County Center.



The Fox Lane basketball team starts to celebrate at midcourt after shocking top-seeded Mount Vernon in the Class AA championship game.

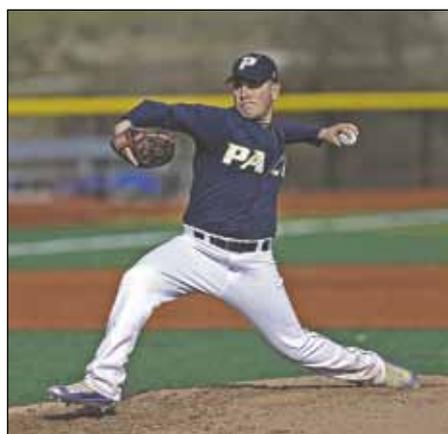


Byram Hills fans celebrate in the County Center's balcony shortly after their Bobcats edged Tappan Zee for the Class A championship.

# SPORTS SCENE



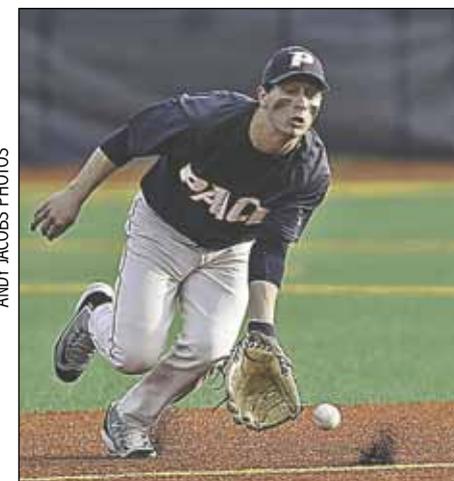
Pace University's Michael Gulino swings the bat in Thursday's home game vs. Bloomfield College.



Pace southpaw Michael Forgione struck out six batters in just three innings last Thursday afternoon.

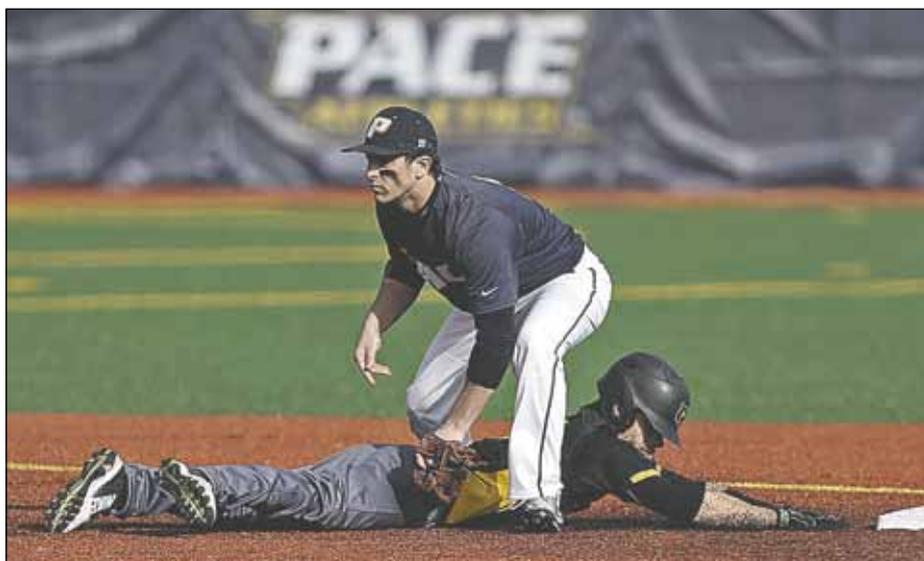


Andrew Coffey races toward third base in the seventh inning of Pace's 3-2 home loss vs. Bloomfield.



ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS

Pace second baseman Michael Salmonese charges in for a slow bouncer during the Setters' game last Thursday afternoon.



Setters shortstop Paul Piccolino puts the pickoff tag on Bloomfield College's Luke Loughery at second base.

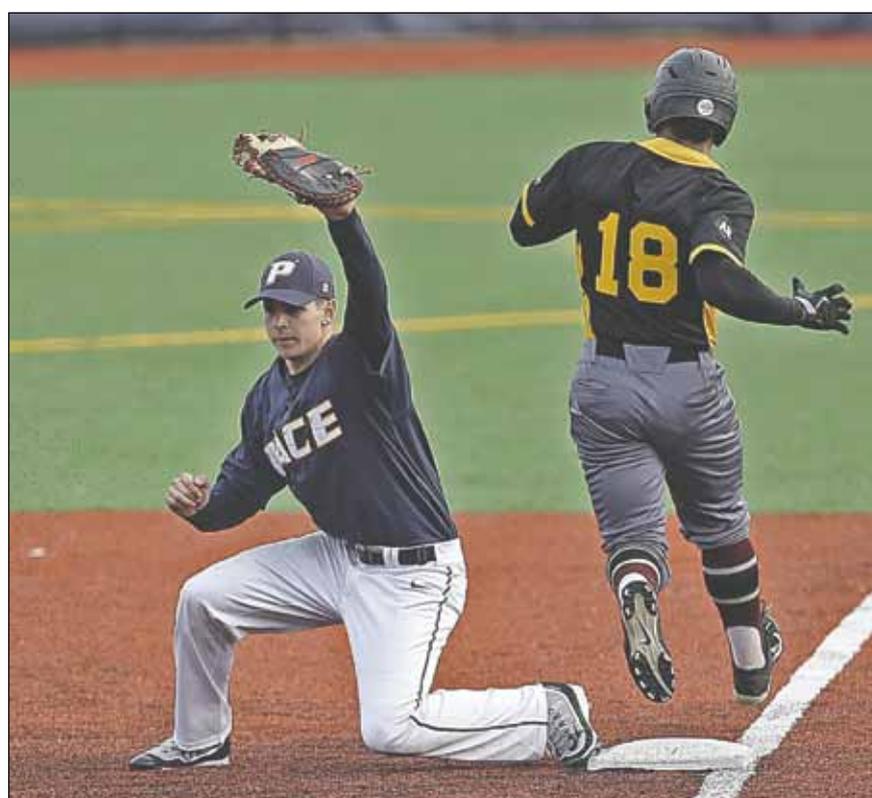


Pace's Alec Petrone sends a pitch toward left field in last Thursday's home game.

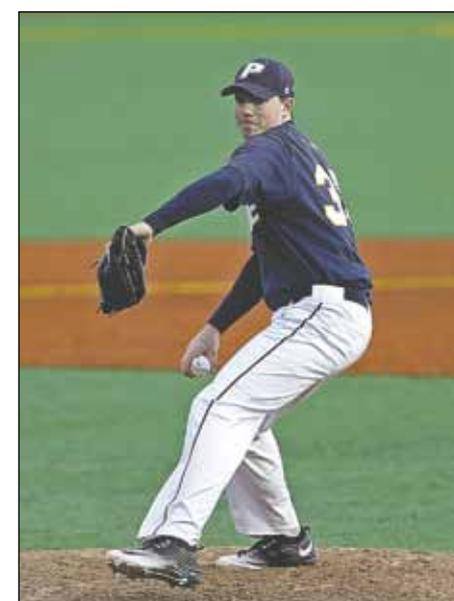
## Pace Baseball



Pace's John Kukura makes contact at the plate in the 3-2 loss to the Bloomfield College Bears, who scored the tying and go-ahead runs with two outs in the ninth inning.



Pace first baseman Garrett De Lotto scoops up a low throw to complete a double play in the ninth inning of Thursday's game.



The Setters' Kyle Cashman pitches in relief in the ninth inning of Thursday afternoon's game vs. the Bloomfield College Bears.

# Bears Knocked Out of the State Playoffs by Marlboro

By Andy Jacobs

Briarcliff seniors Josiah Cobbs and Sean Crowley dejectedly lowered their heads as they walked in unison back to the Bears' bench with only a second remaining in last Wednesday's opening-round Class B state playoff game. As they made their way off the court, head coach Cody Moffett intercepted them, threw his arms around both and then held them in a lengthy, emotional embrace.

"I just told 'em I love them," Moffett would share later. "I told 'em, 'I'm extremely thankful and extremely proud of what you guys have brought to our program. You have taken this program a step further and really established it as a winning culture.'"

Just a few minutes earlier, the Bears' quest to cap a remarkable season with a state championship had ended in disappointment as Section 9 champion Marlboro won the regional semifinal 57-49 at a filled-to-capacity Kaplan Recreation Center on the campus of Mount Saint Mary College in Newburgh.

The Iron Dukes, who had handed Briarcliff its only loss back in early December, used a 12-2 run at the start of the third quarter to take command and put an end to the Bears' 22-game winning streak. Senior guard Nick Mongelli made five 3-pointers and finished with 17 points as Marlboro advanced to face Southampton in the regional final.

"That's the way it goes sometimes," said Moffett, whose team tried all it could to overcome a 16-point third-quarter deficit. "We had a few open looks towards the basket. It just didn't drop for us, shots that we normally make. I'm just proud of these guys' effort because they never at any point in the game, no matter what the score was, never did they give up."

Just 72 hours after the Bears had captured their first Section 1 championship in nine years by beating Putnam Valley at the Westchester County Center, they took the court against Marlboro anxious to avenge their loss three months earlier. Sophomore guard Jack Ryan dazzled in the opening moments, scoring three quick baskets, including a 3-pointer, and the game was tied 7-7 three minutes after the opening tip.

Unfortunately for the Bears, Mongelli, scoreless in the first game between the teams, this time came out on fire and connected on three early shots from beyond the 3-point line, helping Marlboro grab a 17-10 advantage after one quarter. The Iron Dukes never trailed again once forward Jack Rusk canned an 18-foot jumper from the right corner that gave them a 9-7 lead midway through the opening period.

The Bears, though, began the second quarter with an 8-2 spurt that sliced their deficit to just one point and forced Marlboro to call a timeout. After yet another Mongelli 3-pointer with five



Briarcliff guard Jack Reish shoots the ball under pressure during the Bears' state playoff game vs. Section 9 champ Marlboro.



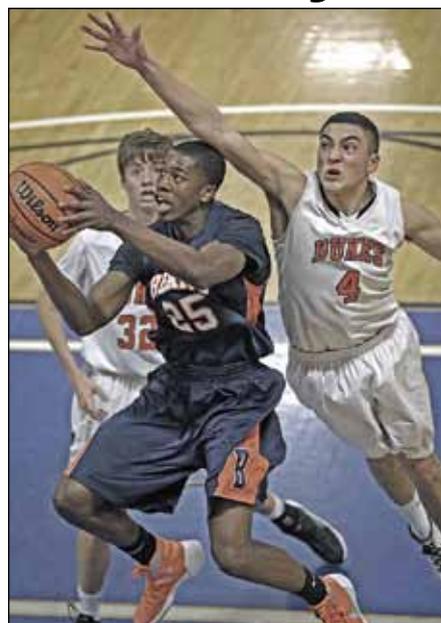
Briarcliff's Matt Perlmutter dribbles into the lane vs. the Marlboro Iron Dukes in the opening round of the state playoffs.

minutes left in the half, Cobbs scored on a put-back to move Briarcliff within 22-20. Three-point baskets from Jaiden Allen and Xavier Oliver later stretched the Iron Duke lead to seven points, but the half ended with the Bears getting a buzzer-beating layup from Jack Reish to trail 30-25.

"We were feeling good at halftime because of the way they shot the ball," said Moffett. "I think they made seven 3s. For them to make seven 3s and to only be down by five, we felt we were fortunate."

The third quarter began with Oliver immediately driving the left baseline for a basket. Marlboro soon added a bucket from Tyler Jollie and then a trey by Joe Nugent that left the Bears facing a 12-point deficit. They were still trailing by a dozen points after a Cobbs 3-pointer halfway through the period, but a 3-point shot by Rusk with 3:05 to go gave Marlboro a 46-30 cushion, its largest lead of the evening.

Briarcliff began the final quarter trailing 48-35 and moved within 11 points with



Josiah Cobbs of Briarcliff takes the ball to the basket from the left baseline in last Wednesday's regional playoff at Mount Saint Mary College.



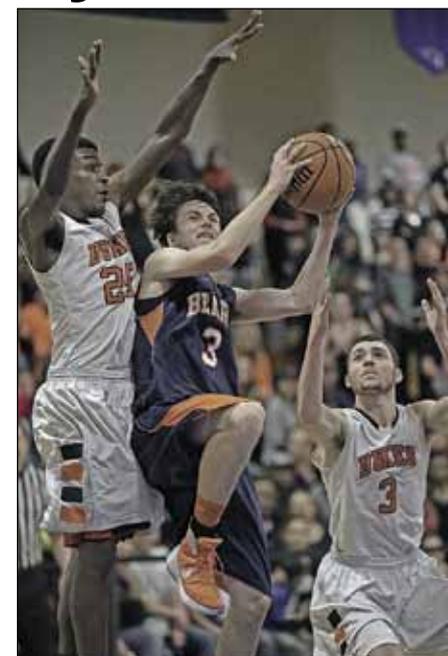
Briarcliff coach Cody Moffett pleads with the officials in last Wednesday night's regional game against Marlboro.

two free throws by Ryan, who led the Bears with 17 points. The lead was cut to nine after two free throws by Crowley with 4:52 remaining, but Cobbs, Reish and Ryan all soon misfired on 3-point attempts that would have provided some added drama.

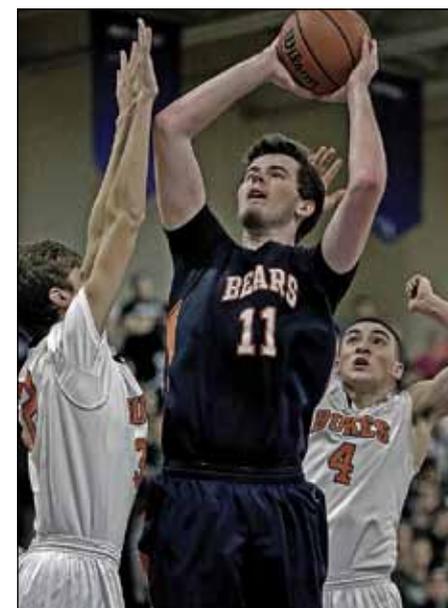
An offensive rebound by Matt Perlmutter set up a 3-pointer by Ryan that closed the gap to seven points with 2:28 still on the clock. But the Bears went scoreless for two minutes and Marlboro all but sealed its win with a Rusk layup with 52 seconds to go. With 29 seconds left, Crowley, who was limited to just eight points as he faced four or six Marlboro arms every time he turned for a jumper in the lane, scored on a drive for the final basket of his Briarcliff career.

Cobbs provided his last bucket in a Bears uniform with five seconds on the clock, floating through the lane for a scoop shot that was too little and late to affect the outcome. Moments later, Moffett called a timeout just so he could sub for his two senior stars and give them a proper sendoff.

"To lose two seniors like Sean Crowley and Josiah Cobbs, it's hard to replace," said Moffett. "So we're gonna have to rely on some younger guys stepping into a new role, embracing it, and then trying to



The Bears' Jack Ryan tries to get to the rim as Marlboro's Joseph Nugent (left) and Tyler Jollie defend in the first half of last Wednesday's playoff game.



Sean Crowley of Briarcliff shoots the ball in traffic vs. host Marlboro in the state's regional playoffs last week.

take this program one step further."

Moffett would have liked to see what might have happened had his team been able to make a few more shots in the fourth quarter.

"That's the thing about high school basketball," he said. "Even though a team has a big lead, you're never really out of it. And we fought our way back, just couldn't get a few baskets to drop that could've made the difference."

**SMALL NEWS  
IS BIG NEWS**

# Huge Turnout Watches the Fox Lane Basketball Team in State Tourney



## Brand New Jasper

Westlake High School will be sending another athlete to play at the Division 1 level. Megan O'Connor will be attending Manhattan College in the fall to play soccer for the Jaspers. The Jaspers were ranked #2 in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference in 2015 with a 11-5-3 record.

A four-year varsity forward/midfielder, Megan has been a dominant force on Westlake's soccer field. The senior co-captain has been the team leader in assists the past two years and one of the Wildcat's top goal scorers. Over her high school career, Megan has received All-League, All-Section Honorable Mention and this past season, All-Section recognition. She has also been named an All-Tournament player at the Mount Pleasant Cup and Bronxville tournaments.

Her coach Loredana Uguccioni characterizes Megan as a tenacious, versatile and poised player. "Megan has complete control of the field offensively, reading the game beautifully. She

orchestrates her offense, knowing where her teammates will be."

In addition to her school team, Megan plays forward for her club team the New York Soccer Club. The travel team competes all over the U.S. and for the past two years has won the Disney Classic championship. This past year the team went to London to train at the Chelsea Soccer Academy where they also competed and won the Arsenal Cup.

Success follows Megan off the field as well. She is an AP Scholar and a member of the National Honor Society and the school's Social Studies and Spanish honor societies.

"Megan has demonstrated leadership both on and off the field," said Coach U. "She has been a role model for the players that follow in her footsteps.

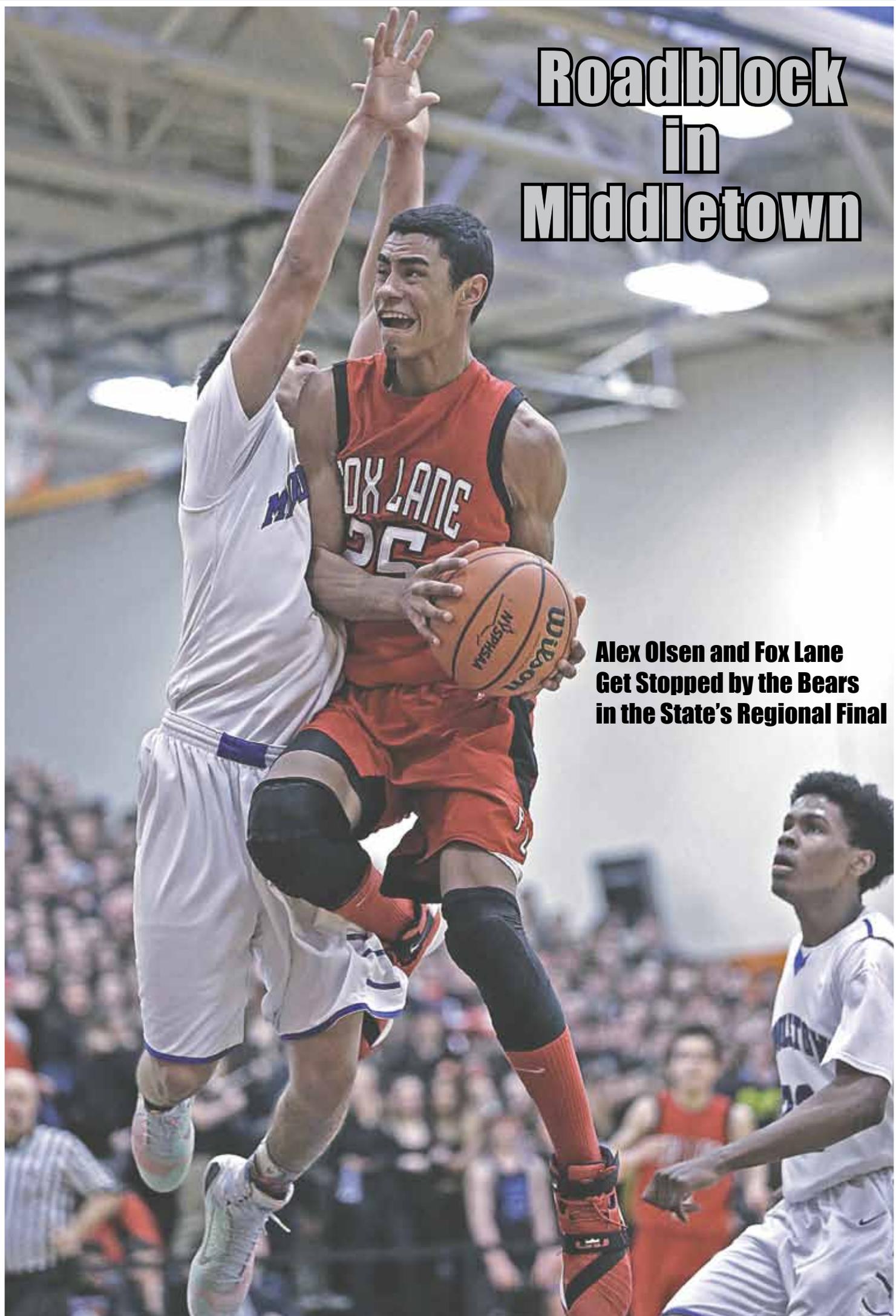
A celebration was held February 24 with family, friends and coaches to congratulate her and wish her well as she trades her Westlake blue for the green and white of Manhattan.



ANGELICA SEIGLER PHOTO

Left to right: father Maurice, Megan O'Connor, mother Carol Ann.

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# Roadblock in Middletown

**Alex Olsen and Fox Lane  
Get Stopped by the Bears  
in the State's Regional Final**