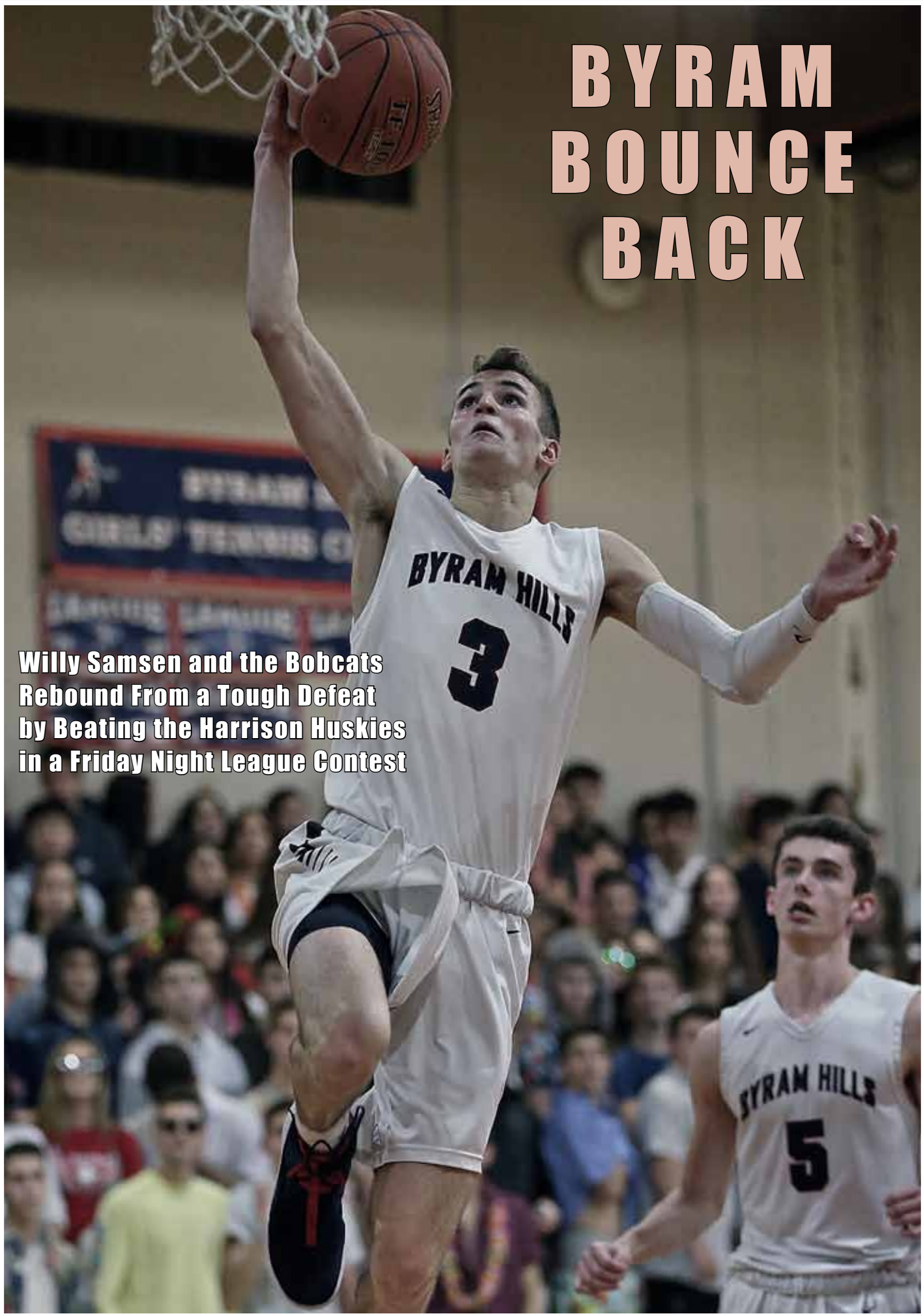


BYRAM
BOUNCE
BACK

Willy Samsen and the Bobcats
Rebound From a Tough Defeat
by Beating the Harrison Huskies
in a Friday Night League Contest



ANDY JACOBS PHOTO

Quakers Extend Their Winning Streak by Routing Panas

By Andy Jacobs

It's been over six weeks since the Horace Greeley boys' basketball team last lost a game.

The Quakers have been doing a lot of winning over that time and show no signs at all of losing interest before the start of sectionals in mid-February. Now 13-2 this season, they stretched their victory streak to double digits last Thursday evening with a 70-47 rout of host Walter Panas.

Freshman Nick Townsend scored 29 points and grabbed 15 rebounds as Greeley easily defeated the Panthers for the second time this season. Chris Melis finished with 14 points, highlighted by a coast-to-coast foray for a left-handed dunk in the third quarter, and guard Michael Salore added 13, including a left-corner 3-pointer 35 seconds into the game that erased the only lead Panas had all evening.

"You know, the first time we played them, at home, they got off to a hot start in the first quarter," said Quakers head coach Felix Nicodemo, recalling the teams' previous meeting three weeks earlier. "They hit five 3s in the first quarter. So our goal was to stop the 3-point shooting, and in the first quarter we held them to eight points."

Greeley's lead was just 7-5 midway through the first quarter before a short toss in the lane by Townsend began a 6-0 burst that was capped by a Salore layup at the end of a fast break started by a Townsend blocked shot. In the final minute of the period, Townsend scored on a layup and Salore followed with a 3-pointer from the right elbow that rattled in, building the Quaker advantage to 12 points.

But the second quarter turned out to be much less lopsided, to the dismay of Nicodemo, who looked on in horror as Derek Pisani came off the Panas bench to



In addition to scoring 29 points and grabbing 15 rebounds, Greeley freshman center Nick Townsend occasionally led the Quaker break in the win over Panas.

connect on five 3-point shots that enabled the Panthers to play to a 19-19 standoff. His final one, with a minute to go in the half, brought Panas to within 35-27 before the quarter ended with the Quakers' Noah Shar and Sean Dunleavy each hitting both ends of 1-and-1 free-throw opportunities.

"In the second quarter, number 1 had five 3s," said Nicodemo, referring to Pisani, the Panthers' diminutive sniper. "They capitalized on five breakdowns and the kid shot five for five. That's gonna happen, but as a coach it seems sometimes other teams' shooting percentage on those breakdowns is remarkable."

The Panthers' 39-27 halftime deficit would have been a bit smaller had it not been for the tenacious offensive rebounding of the Quakers' precocious young center. Townsend had 11 points in the second quarter, scoring four baskets on put-backs in traffic. He was fouled on



Greeley forward Chris Melis glides to the basket for a left-handed dunk in Thursday's win at Walter Panas.

each of the first three and calmly added the free throw on all of them.

"I think I get more frustrated than he does," said Nicodemo about all the contact Townsend has to endure under the boards. "His demeanor is outstanding and his maturity level is off the charts for how he conducts himself on and off the court."

Back-to-back buckets by the Panthers' Steven Stafura and Pisani sliced the Greeley lead to 41-31 nearly two minutes into the second half. But a 3-pointer by Christoph Sauerborn began a 16-3 Quaker spurt over the next four minutes that opened up a 23-point cushion. It was during the big third-quarter run that Melis, a junior forward, had his exclamation-point dunk after making a steal in the backcourt.

"I think when you get a breakaway dunk like that, it's an energy boost and it changes the dynamic of the game, especially in high school basketball," said Nicodemo. "His vertical (leap), he can jump through the roof. And it can definitely be a game changer in terms of momentum."

Panas, trailing 57-36 after three quarters, never got any closer than 19 points in the fourth. Pisani, who led the Panthers with 21 points, only managed to make one 3-pointer after halftime with Shar denying him the ball as much as possible. But that well-contested trey, from just right of the key, came with only two minutes left and banked in off the backboard.

"Tonight, actually only one player hit a 3-pointer," said Nicodemo. "So it was a phenomenal job defensively where we held them to 47 points. The game plan was to shut down their 3-point shooters and I thought we did an excellent job with



Senior guard Noah Shar dribbles across midcourt during Greeley's 70-47 victory over the host Panas Panthers.

that. You know, we pride ourselves on defense, and at the end of the day teams are gonna hit shots. But so are we."

Greeley, 7-0 now in league play, closed its week with a 20-point win over Mahopac on Saturday afternoon as Shar scored 21 points and Townsend and Melis combined for 30. The Quakers have five games left before the Class A sectional playoffs start, and they just might run the table.

"I think we're gonna be ready," said Nicodemo, whose team's best preparation for the approaching playoffs figures to come from a clash with the Somers Tuskers on February 7. "At this point, we just want to continue to get better and be peaking at the right time as we head into sectionals."



William Lafortezza brings the ball up the court in the second half of last Thursday's Horace Greeley win over Panas.



Horace Greeley junior Christoph Sauerborn connects on a 3-pointer in the second half of Thursday night's game.



The Quakers' Michael Salore rises for a jump shot from the left corner in the road win over Panas.

ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS

Bobcats Get Back on Track With a Win Over Harrison

By Andy Jacobs

Only 10 seconds had elapsed in the second quarter of Friday night's game when Byram Hills boys' basketball coach Ted Repa, in anger, called for one of those dreaded timeouts his players would prefer to avoid.

Harrison's Alex Siapanides had just drilled a 3-point shot, cutting an early 11-point Huskie deficit down to just two and Repa wasn't too pleased with the sudden turn of events.

"Yeah, it was a defensive breakdown," he would say later. "We left their best shooter when we had him covered. We literally left, and we did it one more time near the end of the game. So it was a little frustrating, but those are the things we're still trying to work through."

Whatever it was Repa told his team must've been heard loud and clear because the Bobcats returned to the floor after the timeout and proceeded to score the game's next 13 straight points, opening up a 15-point cushion that paved the way to a convincing 57-39 home victory. Michael Caporale scored a game-high 15 points and Willy Samsen added 14 as the Bobcats put their stinging last-minute loss to Poughkeepsie just 48 hours earlier behind them.

"Listen, this is a good matchup for us against Harrison," said Repa. "We have a size advantage. So if we don't turn the ball over, we put ourselves in a good position. Turnovers kill us. It's just turnovers and breakdowns on the defensive end, because in a high school game anything can happen. You give a team confidence and all of a sudden you could be in a grind and a shot falls."

The Bobcats, now 12-3 this season, had begun the contest by scoring the first 11 points. Samsen drained a pair of 3-pointers and Sam Goldman provided another one during the opening run. Harrison's first points of the night, on a



Byram Hills' Sam Goldman handles the ball near midcourt in the Bobcats' 57-39 home victory over the Harrison Huskies.

pair of free throws by Siapanides, didn't come until there was only 2:31 left in the opening quarter.

But the period ended with Harrison's Connor Novak hitting a short jumper and then Mike Plotkin connecting on a left-wing 3-pointer at the buzzer to bring the Huskies to within 12-7. When the second quarter began with the trey from Siapanides, Repa didn't hesitate before signaling for a timeout.

"Yes, 100 percent," said Repa, asked if he thought his players had let Harrison back in the game after the spectacular start. "We were very frustrated with the inability to finish that first quarter."

The first 10 points of the Bobcats' big 13-0 second-quarter burst were scored by either center Ben Leff or Caporale before Goldman joined in by hitting a 3-pointer out of the left corner. After a jump shot by the Huskies' Josh Cooper, the Byram game-changing spurt eventually wound up becoming 17-2 as Samsen made two free throws with 2:10 left in the half and Matteo Sinon followed with an 18-foot jumper 45 seconds later.

Harrison started the second half with a pair of baskets to cut the Bobcats' 13-point halftime lead down to 29-20. But then Samsen answered with a 3-point jumper from the right corner that started a 13-3 Bobcat blitz over



Byram Hills senior Ben Leff fires a jump shot over Harrison's Michael Vukel during the third quarter of Friday night's game won by the Bobcats.

the next three and a half minutes. The fourth quarter began with Byram ahead 42-25, though the Huskies weren't quite finished yet.

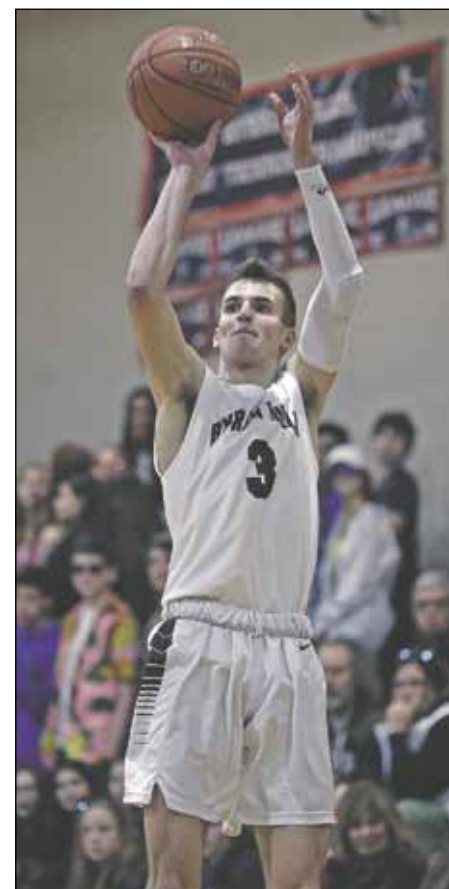
That's because they scored the first six points of the final quarter, closing to within 11 points on a Siapanides trey with 6:48 left on the clock. After five straight points from Caporale, on a put-back and then a 3-point jump shot, another 3-pointer, this one by Will DeLuca with 3:25 to go, cut the Byram lead to 47-34.

The Bobcats then sealed the game with a put-back basket from Leff with three minutes left, followed by two Caporale free throws 30 seconds later. The loudest roar of the night from what remained of the large Bobcat student section was saved for reserve forward Nick Ferrante, whose layup with 20 seconds left closed the evening's scoring.

"I was a little frustrated with certain stretches," said Repa, "and we've got to look at the film and see what happened and see if we can adjust those moments because we can't afford those against the elite teams if we're hoping to make a run."

The Bobcats' second lopsided victory over Harrison this season helped erase the bitter memory of the 63-62 home loss to Poughkeepsie that snapped a seven-game winning streak. The Pioneers scored the game's final eight points, with a 3-pointer by Davontrey Thomas with 10 seconds left deciding the outcome.

"You know what, they were obviously frustrated by the fact that we didn't close that one out when we had opportunities," said Repa about his players. "But in the same breath, it showed us that when we are focused and we play



The Bobcats' Willy Samsen launches a 3-point shot in the first half of Friday's home win.

to our potential, we can compete with and beat anybody. Anyone in the state. However, we could also lose to anyone in the state. So we have to kind of minimize our mistakes. We tend to be our own worst enemy."



Byram Hills senior forward Mike Caporale concentrates on a free throw in the fourth quarter vs. visiting Harrison.



ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS



The Bobcats' Jon Trongone is pressured in the backcourt by Harrison's Alex Siapanides in the first half of Friday night's league game.

Bobcat guard Mike Kalian searches for an open teammate as he handles the ball in the win over the Huskies.

Greeley's Late Lead Disappears in a Loss to Panas

By Rob DiAntonio

Horace Greeley girls' basketball coach Sarah Schum knows her team has talent. The Quakers have been competitive, but closing out games in the fourth quarter has been an issue.

That trend presented itself again in a 46-41 loss to visiting Walter Panas last Thursday evening.

The Quakers had a 33-28 lead after three quarters. An 8-2 Panther run behind sharp shooting from the perimeter saw the visitors take a 36-35 lead with five minutes to play.

The game was tied with two minutes to go, but Quaker Safia Gecaj changed that when she scored on a strong post move with 1:55 on the clock, giving them a 41-39 edge.

Greeley's offensive execution, however, was a problem after that.

Panas went up 43-41 with 52.1 seconds left, prompting Schum to call a timeout. Greeley set up a play, but a poor pass went out of bounds. The Panthers went 3 of 4 from the foul line to seal the win.

"We just imploded a little bit," Schum said. "We've done it a couple times where we're up five (points) or up nine. We had three turnovers back to back to back and it wasn't Panas causing turnovers. It was a travel, it was us throwing the ball to no one and then another sort of a turnover. It was three in a row."

Schum said the Quakers played better defensively against the Panthers than in their first meeting, a 46-37 loss on the road.

"We've been focusing in on it a little more," she said. "Every league game we're within one, two or three possessions the entire game and then it ends up being a little lopsided toward the end because of fouls. That's kind of how the first Panas game was. We were right there and it

ended up looking worse than it was. They're right there and they work very hard. I just want them to get rewarded for the amount of work that they put in."

Michaela Santelia sparked the Quakers with 14 points. Gecaj tallied nine points. Jesse Harris and Maddy Negroni netted seven points each.

"Sophie Dorst gave us great minutes tonight," Schum said. "Sometimes she gets a lot of minutes and sometimes she's on the bench more than she would like to be. But she came in and gave great minutes. She boxed out really well, got a lot of boards, made smart passes and finished when she had to. In my eyes, she was the standout. Safia and Michaela, they're workhorses. They'll go until they physically can't go anymore and they'll still tell me they're good to go."

After a slow start, Greeley erupted for a 20-point second quarter to take a 24-17 lead into halftime.

But the offense stalled during crunch time.

"For the whole year, we've kind of had a bit of the yips," Schum said. "We get really good looks. They focus and they run the plays correctly. We've had almost a lid on the rim most of the season. It's tough and it's frustrating for me because I want them to succeed. They do all the work to do the right thing and then we just can't finish. I just want them to feel good about doing all the right things and put the final



Sophie Dorst fights for a loose ball during Greeley's home game last Thursday evening.



Maddy Negroni runs the Quaker offense in Thursday's game against Walter Panas.

exclamation point on it. We just need to be able to finish."

The Quakers took on Schum's alma mater Lakeland two days earlier, falling 65-53.

Greeley, which is 5-10 after the loss to Panas, was scheduled to host Yorktown on Jan. 28. The Quakers then head to John Jay in Cross River for a 6:15 p.m. league game on Wednesday, Jan. 30.

"They just have to finish one out," Schum said. "Against Brewster we were up nine at one point. Somers, we were down three in the fourth and then Brianna (Gadaleta) went down with an ankle injury. But we had all the momentum going there. We're in almost every game. We just need to get over the hump and finish. And then I think they'll finish a lot of games. They just need to get the confidence of, 'Hey, we can do this.'"



Greeley's Safia Gecaj makes her move in the lane during Thursday's home game.



The Quakers' Michaela Santelia goes up for two points against the visiting Panthers.



Helen Matthews defends in Horace Greeley's narrow loss to the Panas Panthers.



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Greeley Hockey Team Dominates Carmel on Senior Night

By Andy Jacobs

After two weeks of game inactivity, the Horace Greeley hockey team needed a full period on Sunday night to really get into high gear.

But once they did, there was no stopping them.

The Quakers broke open what had been a close and competitive game by scoring four goals in the second period and five more in the third, cruising to a 10-3 victory over the Carmel Rams. Junior forwards Dylan Mutkoski and Jake Potter combined for five goals as the Quakers ended their long layoff with a rousing win on Senior Night at Brewster Ice Arena.

"You know, I think it was a little rink rust," said Quakers head coach Dan Perito about his team's inability to score more than one goal in the first period. "We got snowed out last weekend. So a full two weeks between games. It's tough to simulate game situations in practice, and the game speed and everything. I think it took us about 17 minutes to get our legs under us."

Mutkoski wound up with a hat trick, but four of the six Greeley seniors honored just before the opening faceoff also provided a goal in the lopsided win.



The Quakers' Dylan Mutkoski chases after the puck in Sunday night's game. He scored three goals in the win over Carmel.



Greeley junior forward Jake Potter moves the puck across the ice vs. the Carmel Rams.

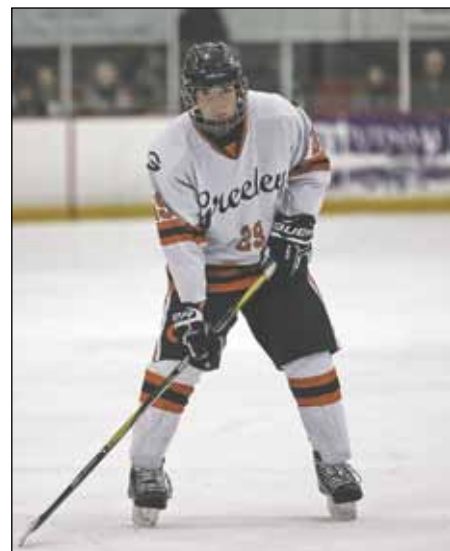
It was Mutkoski who got the Quakers on the scoreboard less than two minutes into the game, winning control of the puck along the boards, skating to his right and whipping a wrist shot past Ram goalie Megan Ravert from straightaway.

"Dylan did a good job digging the puck out of the corner," said Perito. "Skated into some free space, got himself a shooting lane and was able to put one in. That helps settle you in. Second shift, you get one, you kind of ease into things and then you can kind of get the rest of your lines rolling after that."

Though the Quakers had an 11-7 advantage in shots on goal in the first period, they had to settle for the narrow 1-0 lead Mutkoski gave them. But once the second period got under way, the goals started to come in rapid sequence. By the time the period was just 90 seconds old, seniors Liam Whitehouse and Alex Milne had already found the back of the net and the Greeley lead was 3-0.

Whitehouse's goal came on a shot from the blue line just 40 seconds into the second period. Milne scored 56 seconds later, tipping home the rebound of a Whitehouse shot from the right point. But with 12:40 to go in the period, Carmel cut its deficit to 3-1 on a goal by Chris Cieciora in traffic right in front of Quaker goalie Arye Wolberg.

Greeley's lead grew to 4-1 when Potter scored his first goal of the evening, sending an angled shot from the right slot past Ravert six minutes into the period. The Quakers threatened again just 55 seconds later as Mutkoski skated in on a breakaway. He couldn't finish though and nearly two minutes later the Rams cut their deficit to 4-2 on a power-play goal by Brendan Murphy.



Will Silberstein, one of six Greeley seniors honored before Sunday's game, waits for a faceoff in the win over Carmel.



Horace Greeley's Ryan Renzulli skates toward the goal in the second period of the Quakers' 10-3 win over Carmel on Sunday night.



Greeley's Liam Whitehouse takes the puck up the right wing during Sunday's victory over Carmel on Senior Night at the Brewster Ice Arena.

With 4:27 remaining in the second period, Potter scored again as he skated along the right wing before putting a lefty shot by Ravert. The Quakers skated off the ice after two periods with a 5-2 advantage, though it could have been even larger had Ravert not robbed Ryan Renzulli on a point-blank shot that was ticketed for the top of the cage with two and a half minutes to go.

Mutkoski opened the third-period onslaught with an early goal and Evan Scott followed with another two minutes later, driving Ravert out of the game. Breandan Richardson replaced her, but had no more luck stopping the Quakers, who soon got a goal from Renzulli to stretch their lead to 8-2. Mutkoski completed his hat trick with 8:17 to go, taking a lead pass, skating in from the right wing and lofting a shot over Richardson's shoulder.

"He was slow to start with the goal scoring this year," said Perito about Mutkoski, who had six of them in a game against New Rochelle. "So it's nice to see him coming into his own right now in January. He's had a real nice month as far as the goal scoring. He does a lot for us. He kills penalties, he plays center, he plays wing. He does a lot for us besides just scoring goals."



Horace Greeley senior defenseman Tyler Kay searches for a teammate to pass to as he controls the puck along the boards.

Mutkoski and the rest of the Quakers will soon be making up for the lengthy break in their schedule. By Perito's quick calculation, the game against Carmel was the first of eight they will play in a hectic 16-day period just before sectionals start.

"We've got seven games left," he said. "So it's gonna be a busy two weeks for us. Not a lot of time to think about anything. It's just get back out there and go. It'll be a fun two weeks. Some challenging games, but I think it'll really prep us for the sectionals."



The Quakers' Evan Scott tries to backhand the puck into the net in the third period of Sunday night's game at the Brewster Ice Arena.

Mount Vernon's Size is Too Much for the Foxes

By Rob DiAntonio

An athletic and towering Mount Vernon girls' basketball team proved to be a tall task for Fox Lane on Friday afternoon.

The result was a 74-38 setback for the host Foxes in a league contest.

Trailing 40-14, Fox Lane showed some positive signs coming out of halftime. Natalie Pence forced a steal and found Susan Paul for an easy bucket. Then Melanie Matts nailed a corner jumper for a quick four points to start the third quarter.

"I told the girls, 'Just play your game,'" said Fox Lane assistant coach Darryl Davis, who was filling in for head coach Kris Matts, serving a one-game suspension after receiving two technicals in their previous game. "We'll get open shots. We've got to shoot our shots and be confident when we play."

But the Knights turned up the intensity, forcing countless turnovers with their suffocating press. Rebounding proved

to be difficult against a big Mount Vernon team that was getting plenty of second-chance opportunities on the offensive glass.

"It's very hard," Davis said when asked how difficult it is to match up against a team like the Knights. "They have a well-coached team and a lot of good players. They know how to play together. With the size they have, we're just trying to do our best to stay in the game."

Pence, who recently scored 30 points and made the game-winning 30-foot shot at the buzzer in a home victory over New Rochelle, finished with nine points against the Knights. Leah Figueroa also provided nine points.

Freshman Quoya Schnell brought some energy off the bench for the Foxes in the fourth quarter. She netted five points and dished out a few assists.

"She came in great and gave us a spark," Davis said. "A lot of those girls who come off the bench, they don't really have anything to lose so they just go all out and I appreciate that. It's great to have those type of players."

Mt. Vernon jumped out to an early 9-0 lead before Pence finally got the Foxes on the scoreboard with a scoop shot in the lane with four and a half minutes to go in the first quarter. By the time Nicole



Natalie Pence spots up for a three



Holly Ades is pressured while she attacks the basket.



Nicole Picinich

Picinich made two free throws with 1:15 left in the period, the Mt. Vernon lead had grown to 22-2.

The Foxes, who fell to 3-9, look to get on track when they head to White Plains on Jan. 29. They then host Port Chester at 4:30 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 31.

"We've got to stay together and keep a level head," Davis said. "We've got to be willing to keep working on getting better. Every day at practice, we need to learn something more, tweak things and just stay together as a team. That's the biggest thing."



Nicole Picinich of the Foxes focuses at the line.



Leah Figueroa



Quoya Schnell pushes the pace across half court.

ROB DIANTONIO PHOTOS



Making History

The Pleasantville High School track and field team won the 2019 NYSPHSAA Section 1 Class B League Championships at the New Balance Track & Field Center in New York City on Jan. 13. Led by their coaches, Tim Dirgins and Troye Cornwall, both the girls' and boys' teams took home league titles in the same season for the first time in Pleasantville High School history. Some team members were scheduled to compete Sunday in the Westchester County Championships and others in the Feb. 6 Sectional Championships.

BRIAN CATALANO PHOTO



Ice Cats Lose to BrewTown



Mt. Pleasant senior forward Ian McKenzie carries the puck up the ice in the final period of Sunday's game against BrewTown.



Yuichi Watanabe of the Ice Cats is poised to receive a pass near the blue line in the 4-0 loss to Brewster/Yorktown.



The Ice Cats' Robert Criscuolo awaits a faceoff during Sunday's game at Brewster Ice Arena.



Matthew Labriola of the Mt. Pleasant Ice Cats gets set to fire a shot on goal in the third period of Sunday night's 4-0 loss to the combo team of Brewster and Yorktown.

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ANDY JACOBS PHOTO

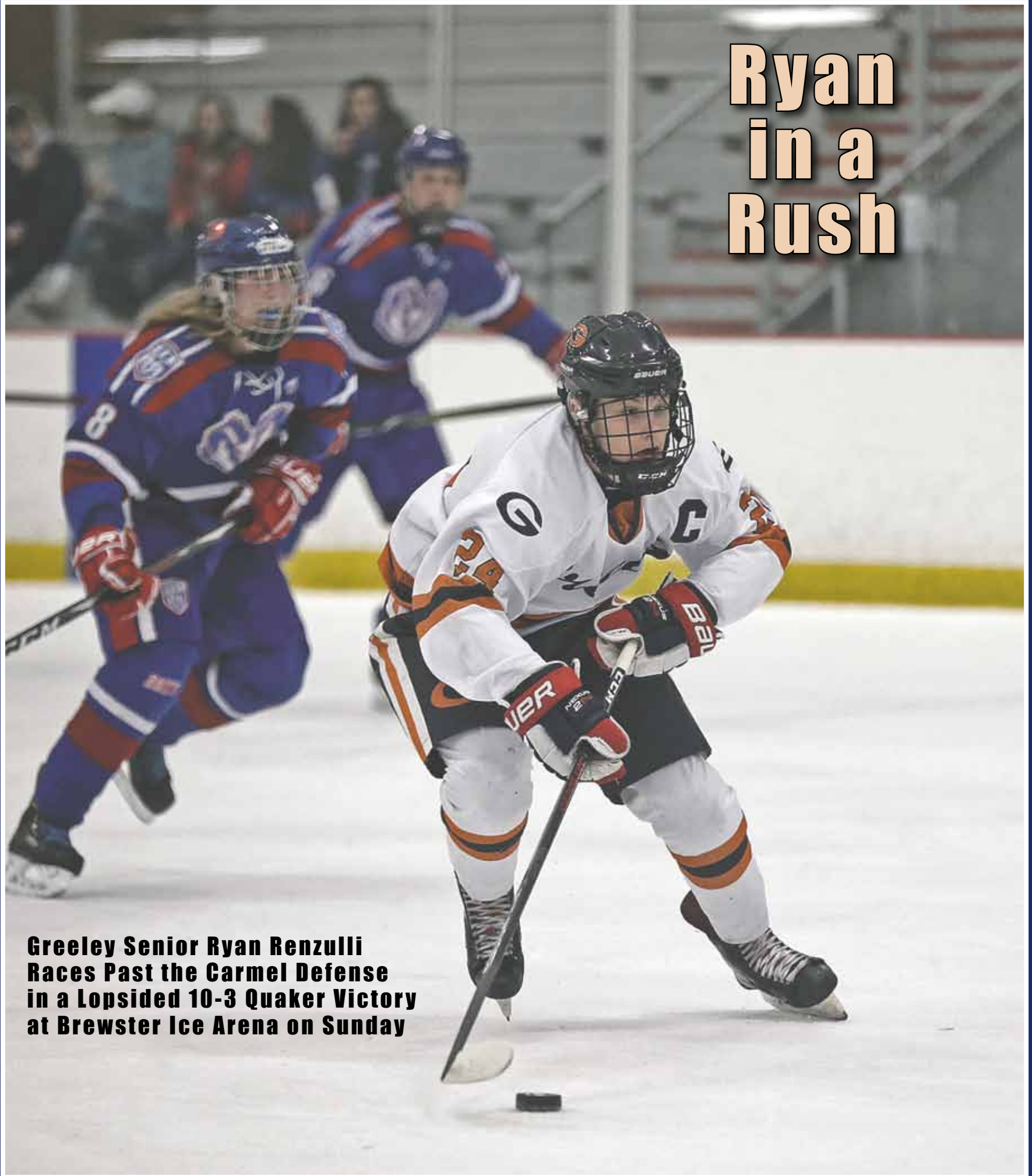
Byram Hills guard Matteo Sinon dribbles up the court during the first half of Friday night's win over Harrison as the large Bobcat student section offers support at the far end of the gym.

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Ryan in a Rush



**Greeley Senior Ryan Renzulli
Races Past the Carmel Defense
in a Lopsided 10-3 Quaker Victory
at Brewster Ice Arena on Sunday**