

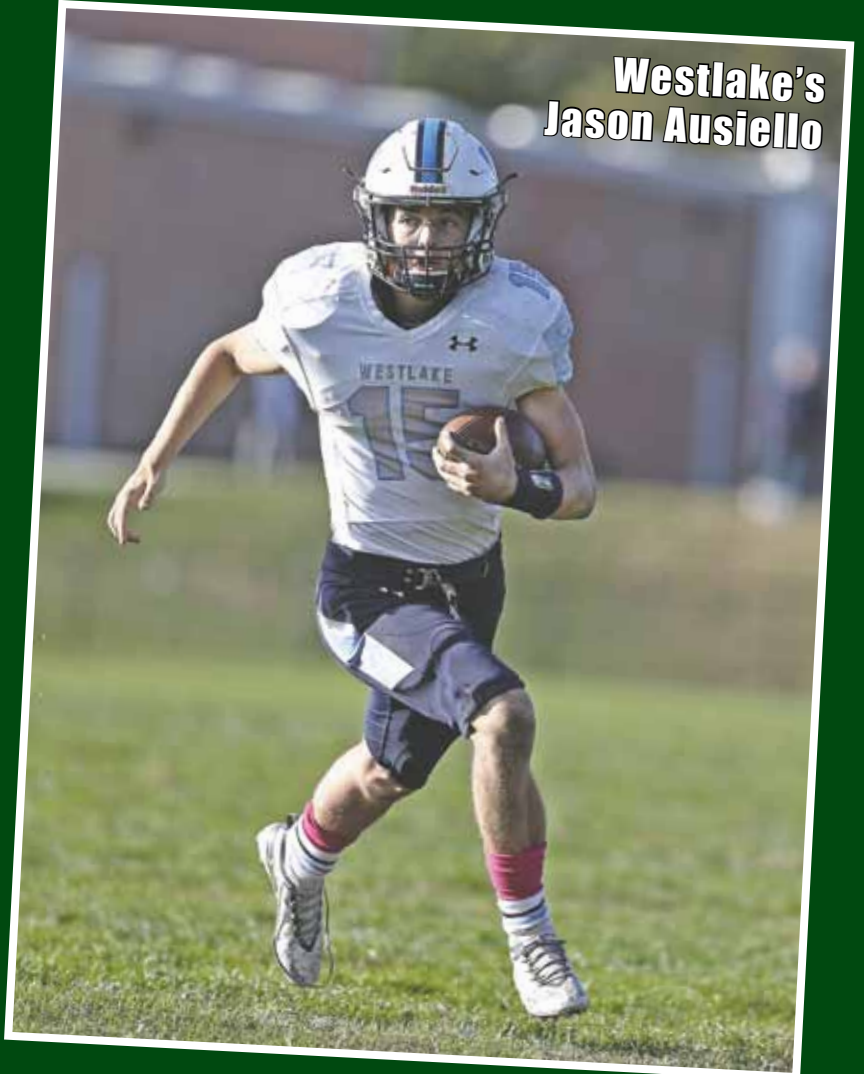
ExaminerSports

Primed for the Playoffs

**Pleasantville's
Jared Wilens**



**Westlake's
Jason Ausiello**



**Byram Hills'
Steven Franco**



The Wildcats' Unlikely Comeback Ends in Defeat at Ardsley

By Andy Jacobs

Just like a bestselling mystery novel, there was one plot twist after another in the second half of Saturday afternoon's football game at Ardsley High School.

By the time the final chapter had concluded, the host Panthers were still undefeated this season, while the Westlake Wildcats were left to ponder what might have happened with an onside kick they never got to try.

With star running back Jalen Leonard-Osbourne rushing for three touchdowns, Ardsley opened up an 18-point advantage early in the fourth quarter before the Wildcats somehow managed to make the final few minutes far more suspenseful than the Panthers were expecting.

But a costly Westlake fumble one yard from the Ardsley goal line with just over four minutes remaining put an end to the Wildcats' comeback hopes and sealed a 21-10 victory for the Panthers in the regular-season finale for both teams.

"I thought our kids played as good as you can play," said Wildcats coach John Castellano following his team's third loss in seven games. "If we had gotten that one in, it might've been a little different. You know, four minutes to play, I've got two timeouts. All of a sudden the momentum changes a little bit and anything can happen at that point."

The Wildcats, riding a two-game winning streak, were held scoreless until Josh Gelman booted a 32-yard field goal on the last play of the first half, cutting Ardsley's lead to just 7-3. But any momentum Gelman's kick provided quickly evaporated in the third quarter as Westlake badly lost the battle for field position.

Osbourne, who had scored on a 10-yard touchdown run nearly four minutes into the game, added a one-yard TD run to cap a six-play, 43-yard drive on Ardsley's first possession of the second half. When he ran around right end six yards for another touchdown two and a half minutes into the fourth quarter to give the Panthers a 21-3



Eric Nieves of Westlake turns upfield as he carries the ball vs. host Ardsley.

cushion, it appeared the Wildcats' hopes were all but gone.

But a 56-yard pass play by quarterback Jason Ausiello to Carter Falkenberg down the right sideline set the stage for a seven-yard touchdown pass to Nick Martinez two plays later. With the point-after kick from Bailey Rodgers and 7:16 still left on the clock, Westlake was suddenly within 11 points and just moments away from threatening to get even closer.

A fumble by Osbourne on first down was picked up by Martinez, who returned the ball 15 yards to the Panther 22-yard line. After two incomplete passes and a quarterback sack, Westlake faced a fourth-and-17 predicament. The Wildcats came out of a timeout and Ausiello raced out of the pocket and down the left sideline to the 12-yard line for a first down.



Westlake senior Nick Martinez starts running with the ball after catching a screen pass from quarterback Jason Ausiello.

A pass over the middle to Brendan DiLiberti and a flag on Ardsley put the ball at the 1-yard line with 4:34 remaining. But on first down, the Wildcats, trying to power their way up the middle to get over the goal line, fumbled the ball away. Westlake fans anticipating a pivotal onside kick never got the chance to see what might have happened.

By the time the Wildcats got the ball back again, there was just one minute to go and their comeback bid had all but ended. Ardsley then closed out its seventh straight win with Ryan Watson intercepting a pass in the end zone on the game's final play.

"I think if we had gotten a score there on first and goal from the 1, if we had just protected the ball there, then all of a sudden 21-17 and you never know what happens," said Castellano. "You just never know. I mean, I'm not saying they won't go down the field and score to make it 28-17, but you just never know. It's a whole different game at that point."

The Wildcats, seeded fourth in the Class



The Wildcats' James Murray tries to get to the outside in the first quarter of Saturday's final game of the regular season.

B sectional playoffs, now host fifth-seeded Nanuet on Saturday at 2:00. Castellano is hoping the competitive fight they showed against the best team in Class B will be a springboard to postseason success.

"Listen, they're a very good football team," he said about the Panthers. "You could see with the naked eye the size difference up front was astronomical. They're so much bigger than us. But I thought we might've played one of our best games of the year. This was a good test for us against a quality opponent and I thought we handled ourselves pretty good."

Chances are, the Wildcats haven't seen the last of the Panthers just yet. With a win over Nanuet, they would likely have to make another trip to Ardsley.

"Now in two weeks," said Castellano, "if we have to come back here, then at least we know we can be on the field with a very good football team, a defending Section One champion, and say, 'Hey, we're a play away, two plays away, three plays, you know?' So I thought, all in all, I was happy with that."



ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS



Westlake quarterback Jason Ausiello runs with the football in the fourth quarter of Saturday's game at Ardsley.



The Wildcats' Andrew Llamas takes the ball up the field after intercepting a pass in the first half of Saturday's game.

Westlake's Matt Sardo looks for some running room during Saturday afternoon's game at Ardsley.

Picca's Fourth-Quarter TD Pass Lifts Bobcats Past Pleasantville

By Andy Jacobs

The Pleasantville football team had an answer the first three times Byram Hills grabbed the lead on Friday night.

The fourth time, though, proved to be too much for the Panthers.

Nic Picca's seven-yard touchdown pass to Tyler Marcus five minutes into the fourth quarter broke the final tie of the evening and lifted the Bobcats to a 28-21 win over the host Panthers at Parkway Field in the last game of the 2019 regular season.

"In no way, shape or form did I think that we were gonna come in here and roll over Pleasantville," said Bobcats head coach Doug Carpenter after his team had improved to 5-1. "I had a tremendous amount of respect for them going into this game and I have even more now."

The Bobcats, returning from a bye week with standout running back Matt Weiler back in action after a Week One foot injury, wasted little time grabbing their first lead. With a no-huddle offense, they moved the ball 70 yards in three and a half minutes, getting on the scoreboard on Picca's seven-yard touchdown run into the left side of the end zone.

But their 7-0 lead was imperiled on the last play of the first quarter when the Panthers' Lenny Balducci scooped up a short punt while everyone else was caught staring at the ball and bolted all the way down to the Bobcat 2-yard line. Even though P'ville quarterback Michael LaCapria's fourth-down pass to Jude Safieh was broken up, the Panthers still managed to get even later in the period.

Jared Wilens raced 38 yards down the right sideline to put Pleasantville on the scoreboard. The point-after kick by Nicky Doto tied the game at 7-7 with 4:54 to go before halftime. The long run by Wilens helped Panther coach Tony Becerra quickly forget about his team's inability to score from the 2-yard line earlier in the quarter.

"I think we made up for it with the third-down run," he said.

The second half began with the teams still tied at 7-all, but on the second play from scrimmage the Panthers fumbled the ball and the Bobcats' Ryan Abatemarco took it 70 yards down the left sideline for a touchdown. The line-drive PAT from David Gold gave Byram Hills a 14-7 edge.

For the second time, the Panthers had a response. They marched 66 yards on 10 plays, getting even again when LaCapria lofted a pass into the right side of the end zone to Wilens for a 21-yard touchdown and



Byram Hills quarterback Nic Picca carries the ball in Friday night's game at Pleasantville.

Doto followed with the extra point.

On their next possession, the Bobcats gained the upper hand once more by going 70 yards in eight plays. Picca dove up the middle two yards for the touchdown, but the Panthers thought a premature whistle after a Bobcat pass completion on the second play of the drive cost them possession of the ball.

"I'm not gonna put blame on something we don't control like officials," said Becerra. "So I'm not gonna go there. If any blame is gonna be passed along, it's gonna be on what we can control."

Pleasantville, now trailing 21-14 with 2:43 left in the third quarter, soon tied the contest for the third time. A 59-yard run by Matt May paved the way for a seven-yard touchdown by Brennan McDermott with just 12.9 seconds remaining in the period. The PAT from Doto sent the teams into the fourth quarter even at 21-21.

"They showed us some stuff they hadn't



Byram Hills running back Matt Weiler gets set to throw an option pass in the second half of Friday's game.

shown earlier in the year," said the Bobcats' Carpenter. "So a tip of the cap to their staff. I thought their kids played really, really physical. I know they've got a lot of multi-sport athletes, which we're trying to preach a lot at Byram Hills now. And Pleasantville's had some success with multi-sport athletes in recent years. It showed. They had some kids that did some really good things."

Still, the Bobcats wound up scoring the decisive touchdown on their first possession of the final quarter. They went 93 yards on 14 plays, going ahead for good with 6:59 left on Picca's seven-yard pass on the run to Marcus near the right side of the end zone. But the key play of the drive was a third-and-25 pass play to Ben Weinhoff that turned into a 41-yard gain.

"I was pretty calm during moments when



The Panthers' Matt May runs past Daniel Ahern of Byram Hills in Friday night's final game of the regular season.

they scored and we were about to receive the kickoff," said Carpenter, "just because I did believe our kids would rise to the occasion and rise to the challenge. It was a fun Friday night local rivalry football game. This is what the sport should be about."

Unfortunately for the Panthers, now 3-4, they went three-and-out when they got the ball back and were forced to punt. Byram took over with 5:12 remaining and proceeded to run out the clock by picking up several first downs.

"We've got to play better," said Carpenter, whose second-seeded team hosts Bronxville on Saturday in the quarterfinals of the Class B playoffs. "Coming off the bye was interesting. I thought we were healthy and had a good practice week and were ready to roll. Ultimately, it was sloppy at times, but a very tough football game."

"I'm just so proud of my guys," said Becerra, whose sixth-seeded Panthers travel to Pearl River Saturday night. "Yeah, we made our mistakes, but the bottom line is we played our butts off against a team of this caliber. I hope they can turn the frustration that they feel now into something positive going into the playoffs."



Pleasantville sophomore quarterback Michael LaCapria rolls out to his left before firing a pass in Friday night's game vs. the Bobcats.



Jared Wilens of Pleasantville tries to fend off Ben Barad (left) and Daniel Ahern of Byram Hills during Friday's game at Parkway Field.

ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS



The Bobcats' Steven Franco hangs onto the football after making a first-half catch against host Pleasantville.



Briarcliff senior Maya Celaj surveys the field as she moves the ball ahead in Saturday morning's game at Westlake.



Westlake's Gianna Eglauf controls the ball near Briarcliff's Samantha Franks in the second half of Saturday's game.



Jennifer Straface of Westlake controls the ball in the Wildcats' final game of the regular season.



Westlake senior Maeve Verna prepares to boot the ball away against the visiting Briarcliff Bears.



Kaitlyn Ryan takes the ball along the right sideline in Briarcliff's 1-0 victory at Westlake this past weekend.



Westlake's Maeve Sheehan and Briarcliff's Sophia Zielinski battle for possession of the ball during the second half of Saturday morning's game.



Eliza Aldrich of Briarcliff keeps her eyes on the approaching ball during the Bears' road win on Saturday.



Briarcliff senior Karina Zielinski, flanked by younger sister Sophia, moves the ball toward midfield against host Westlake.



Westlake's Giuliana Piazza tries to win a race for the ball with Briarcliff's Caitlyn Dornau in the second half of Saturday's last game of the regular season.



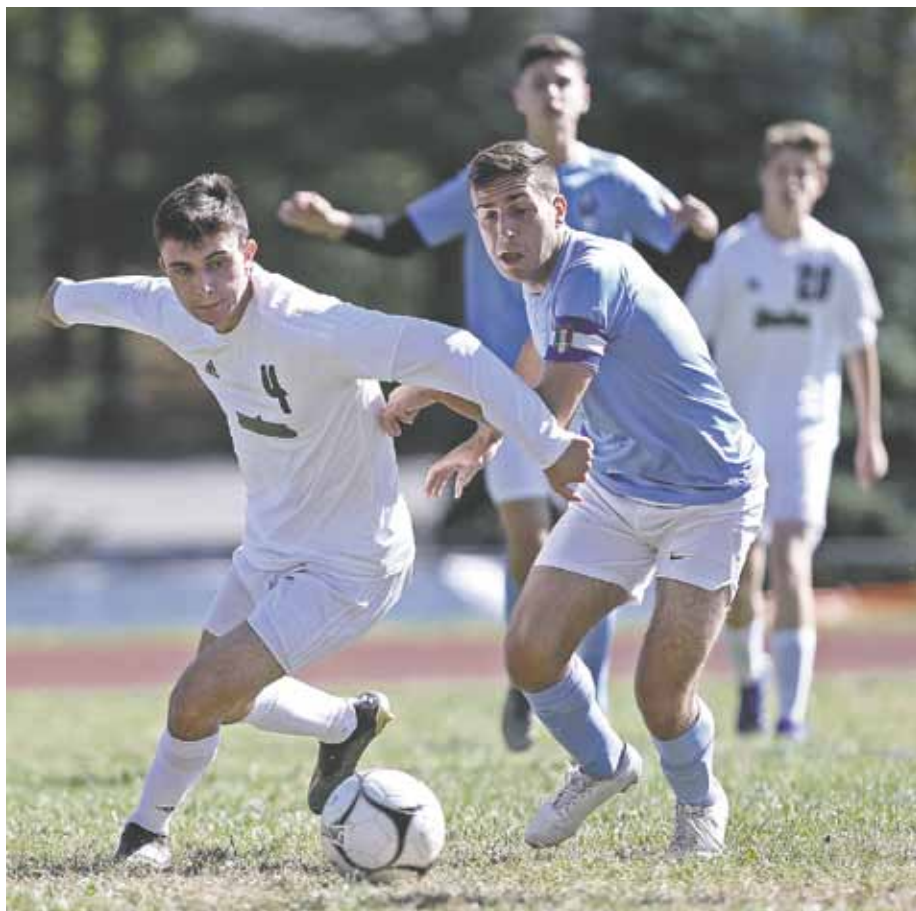
Pleasantville's Jacob Coleman heads for the goal early in the second half of Saturday's game at Westlake.



Noah Tarchoun of Westlake and Calum Macphee of Pleasantville watch the ball near midfield during Saturday afternoon's game, hosted by the Wildcats.



Patrick Panek of Pleasantville gets set to kick the ball up the field vs. Westlake. His goal in overtime gave the Panthers a 1-0 victory.



Luke Scopino of Pleasantville is closely defended by Gerardo Cicchillo of Westlake during Saturday's regular-season finale, won by the visiting Panthers.



Westlake's Edvin Verzivolti tries to work his way around Pleasantville's Luke Scopino in the first half of Saturday's game.



Westlake's Frank Shkreli chases after the ball in the first half of Saturday's home game vs. the Pleasantville Panthers.



Pleasantville junior Arjun Singh settles the ball as Westlake's Paul Julian arrives looking to take it away.



Gianluca Ruggiero of Westlake boots the ball across the field against visiting Pleasantville.



Westlake's Isaiah Ortiz gains control of the ball in Saturday afternoon's home game vs. Pleasantville.



Greeley's Joseph O'Brien nears the finish line en route to his first-place time of 16:13.2 at last week's league championship.



Members of Fox Lane's girls' cross country team run together at the start of last Tuesday's league championship meet at Croton Point Park.

CROSS COUNTRY

League 1D Championship

Croton Point Park

October 15, 2019



Laura Cunningham was the second Fox Lane runner to cross the finish line and wound up seventh overall.



Among the early leaders at last Tuesday's league championship are Horace Greeley's Joseph O'Brien and Fox Lane's Ensen Scaglio.



Horace Greeley boys are bunched together at the start of last Tuesday's League 1D Championship at Croton Point Park.



Fox Lane boys start their three-mile run during last Tuesday's league championship meet at Croton Point Park.



Greeley's Camila Cognac runs during the early portion of last Tuesday's 3-mile race.



Isabella Smith turned in the second best time for Horace Greeley at last week's league championship.



Meagan Moky of Fox Lane finished in fourth place among the 59 runners entered in the League 1D Championship.



Rishi Young of Horace Greeley wound up in second place at last Tuesday's League 1D Championship.



Asa Friedrich of Fox Lane pulled away from White Plains' Sebastian Quinn to take fourth place, helping the Foxes win the team title.



Victoria Barris sets her sights on the ball after a Pace throw-in during Saturday night's game, won by visiting Saint Anselm 1-0.



Pace junior forward Lynzee Kelty is chased by a trio of Saint Anselm players as she controls the ball during the first half of Saturday night's game.



Pace University freshman Cecilia Puentes boots the ball in the first half of Saturday's game.

focus on
PACE
Women's
Soccer



Shannon Glenn, one of four Pace seniors honored before the game, moves the ball up the middle of the field in Saturday's game.



The Setters' Carolina Ivanov gets set to kick the ball up the field as Nicole White of Saint Anselm defends.



The Setters' Annabella Campagna gets control of the ball early in Saturday's home game vs. Saint Anselm.



The Setters' Kerrigan Quinn turns on the speed as she pursues a through ball in the first half vs. visiting Saint Anselm.



Pace University goalkeeper Jade Mallea makes a leaping save late in the first half vs. Saint Anselm. The visiting Hawks scored a goal in the final seconds of the first half and held on for a 1-0 victory.



The Setters' Dianna Glaser tries to move past Saint Anselm's Erin Paquette in Saturday's game at Pace Stadium.

BEAR STARE



**Samantha Franks and Briarcliff
Beat the Host Westlake Wildcats
in Saturday's Regular-Season Finale**