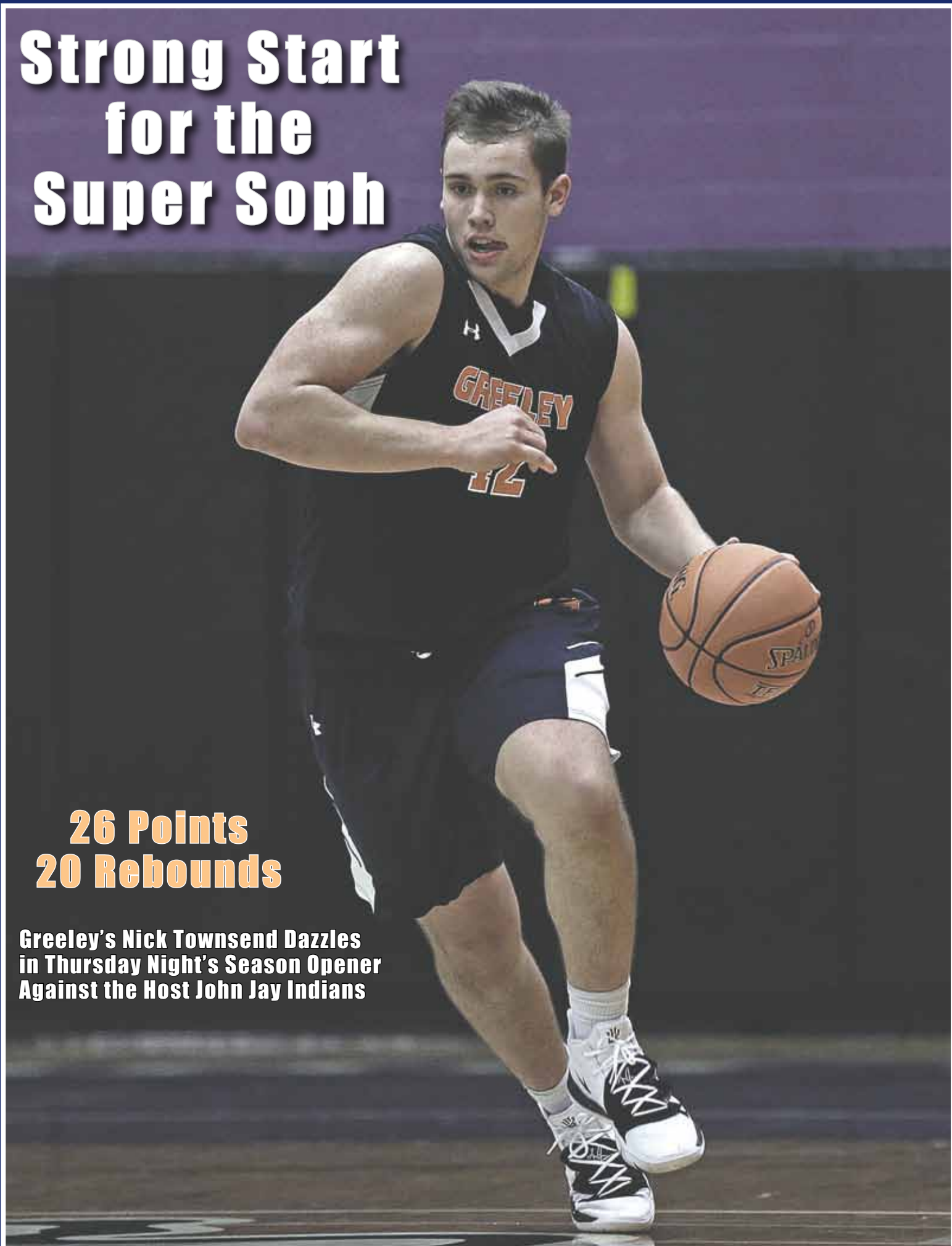


## Strong Start for the Super Soph

**26 Points  
20 Rebounds**

**Greeley's Nick Townsend Dazzles  
in Thursday Night's Season Opener  
Against the Host John Jay Indians**



# Briarcliff Girls Defeat Hastings to Win the Booster Club Tourney

By Andy Jacobs

With the graduation of two-thirds of the heralded star triumvirate that led the Briarcliff girls' basketball team to the last three Class B sectional finals, the 2019-20 season figures to be one of transition for the Bears.

But they showed this past weekend that they're far more likely reloading than rebuilding. Led by senior guard Alana Lombardi, the lone holdover from the team's Big Three of recent years, the Bears once again managed to capture the championship of their annual Booster Club Tournament.

Lombardi finished with a team-high 18 points, earning tourney MVP honors as Briarcliff defeated the Hastings Yellow Jackets 71-62 late Saturday afternoon in the title game of the event's 20th anniversary. The Bears opened up a 23-point advantage late in the third quarter, saw it dwindle to just six midway through the fourth, but held on to improve to 3-0 this season.

"It's a great lesson," said Bears coach Don Hamlin after his players withstood the late surge from the Yellow Jackets. "Sports keeps you humble. You're up 23 and the next thing you know you're up six. You're feeling real good and then you have to find a way to adjust. And luckily we did."

The Bears, who rolled over a late-arriving Poughkeepsie team 70-23 in Friday evening's opening round behind a combined 29 points from Lombardi and impressive freshman Cat Carrafiello, were pushed to the limit by Hastings, which chopped its huge deficit to just 62-56 on a jump shot by Melannie Daley with 3:40 remaining.

But the Yellow Jackets' speedy junior guard was whistled for her fifth foul just five seconds later and the Bears took advantage of her absence to go on a 60-second, 7-0 burst that sealed the outcome. Carrafiello's 3-pointer from the right elbow with 2:37 on the clock stretched the Briarcliff lead back up to 69-56 and enabled Hamlin and his players to finally exhale.



Caroline Barbalato drives toward the lane in Briarcliff's tourney win vs. Hastings on Saturday evening.



Briarcliff senior Alana Lombardi pushes the ball up the floor in Saturday's tournament final.

"The whole time I was just trying to get us to calm down," he said after watching Hastings use runs of 11-0, then 13-3 to get back in the game. "Most of that time we had two freshmen on the floor that played great the whole game. But they got in a big hurry and it got contagious. We all kind of got in a hurry."

In the turnover-plagued first half, Hastings built an early 10-6 lead before the Bears closed the first quarter on a 9-2 run, sparked by Carrafiello, who provided seven of the points after being summoned from the Briarcliff bench. The Yellow Jackets took their last lead of the game, 16-15, two minutes into the second period when Violet Bowen-Rink banked in a 15-foot jumper.

After junior center Jordan Smith tied the contest with a free throw, Kaitlyn Ryan gave the Bears the lead for good when she supplied an old-fashioned 3-point play. Briarcliff wound up on a 13-1 burst that



Briarcliff freshman Cat Carrafiello slips past Violet Bowen-Rink of Hastings for a first-half basket in the Booster Club final.



Briarcliff point guard Julia Barbalato dribbles across midcourt in the Bears' 71-62 win over Hastings in the final of the 2109 Booster Club Tournament.

opened up an 11-point lead. The half ended with back-to-back fast-break layups from freshman Caroline Barbalato and Ryan that gave the Bears a 34-21 cushion.

Lombardi was called for her third foul less than a minute into the second half and Smith picked up her third a few minutes later. That that didn't seem any cause for concern, though, because a 3-pointer from the right corner by Lombardi with 2:47 to go in the third quarter stretched the Briarcliff lead to a whopping 50-27. But Daley erupted for six points in the midst of an 11-0 Hastings blitz that cut the Bears' big lead nearly in half. A long 3-pointer by Jillian Pena just before the buzzer enabled the Yellow Jackets to start the fourth quarter trailing just 53-41.

Baskets from Lombardi, Smith and Julia Dalessandro in the first two minutes of the final period rebuilt the lead back up to 16 points before Hastings responded with its 13-3 spurt that suddenly left the outcome in doubt.

Three free throws from Lombardi and one by senior point guard Julia Barbalato gave the Bears a bit of breathing room before Carrafiello delivered her game-sealing trey with just over two and a half minutes remaining. Hastings scored the final six points of the night, but it was too little and late.

"Hastings was a really strong team," said Lombardi. "We knew they would be strong coming out. But we just told each other, 'Listen, we've got to play defense and move the ball and just do what we do.' We were definitely getting a little bit tired toward the end of the game. We told each other we've got to buckle down right now, play the best defense we can, get on the offensive boards and our time will come. We'll finish our shots. We'll be OK."

While Lombardi is left this season to fend for herself without the assistance of Maddie Plank and KC Hamlin, she is pleased to have Smith back on the court for the Bears contributing the way she was before a late-season ACL tear ended her 2018-19 campaign and, perhaps, the team's golden opportunity for an elusive sectional championship.

"Jordan is literally our key player out there," said Lombardi. "She's so intimidating and big and she's so fast. No one can guard her out there if she's fully healthy. So she makes a huge difference on our team."

Coach Hamlin, too, is delighted to have Smith back on the court and relishing the



The Bears' Jordan Smith gets inside for a basket in the second half of Saturday's win over Hastings.

fact "when she practices, you can't even tell that she's ever been injured. She looks great."

How far Lombardi and Smith, along with the emergence of the supporting cast, can take Briarcliff this year remains to be seen. But for now Hamlin is content that his team got quite an early-season challenge during its own holiday tournament.

"It's invaluable," he said. "It was perfect, actually. You couldn't draw it up better. Obviously you don't want to give up that big of a lead. But you want to see what happens when we do. And we collected ourselves and we were good. Of course it gives me something to work on Monday."



Senior guard Kaitlyn Ryan dribbles up the court as her coach, Don Hamlin, looks on in Saturday's tourney victory over the Yellow Jackets.

ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS



# Quakers Start the New Season With a Victory at John Jay

By Andy Jacobs

A season of big expectations for the Horace Greeley boys' basketball team got off to a winning start on the road last Thursday evening.

With sophomore sensation Nick Townsend dominating start to finish, scoring 26 points and grabbing 20 rebounds, the Quakers easily defeated the host John Jay Indians 70-53. Greeley used an 11-0 burst in the first quarter to gain command, opened up a 20-point cushion late in the third, and then coasted to a satisfying victory in the opening game of the 2019-20 campaign.

"Nick, obviously, is Nick. He can do it all," said the Quakers' new head coach, Matt Simone, after watching his young tower of power patrol the paint with an increased level of skill developed since the end of last season. "You saw him bringing the ball up for us, he's rebounding the ball for us. So he's kind of our safety blanket."

Townsend was supposed to be just one half of a Greeley dynamic duo, but with star forward Chris Melis currently recovering from recent shoulder surgery the Quakers' immediate fortunes will fall squarely on his broad shoulders. Against the Indians, Townsend scored 16 first-half points, highlighted by three successive buckets in a 70-second span of the second quarter when the Quakers were stretching a five-point lead to double digits.

"Everyone knows how talented of a player he is," said Simone, "but the thing that he developed this offseason, which is really helping us, is how he can handle the ball and he can hit 3s and shoot. So teams that are focusing on throwing bigs at him, he's gonna be able to pull 'em out and dribble by 'em or shoot 3s. So he's really becoming a very well-rounded player where last year he was more of a back-to-the-basket kind of guy."

It took the Quakers three and a half minutes to score their first points of the new season. A 3-pointer by Sean Dunleavy finally got Greeley on the board and tied the score. It was followed a half minute later by a top-of-the-key jumper from Townsend that displayed his new-found range and gave the Quakers a lead they never relinquished.



ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS



The Quakers' Christoph Sauerborn gets set to rise for a jump shot during last week's victory over host John Jay.

Senior guard Christoph Sauerborn, who finished with 16 points and seven assists, provided a pair of drives through the lane for baskets during the Greeley 11-point run and the first quarter ended with the Quakers ahead 11-5. In the second quarter, Townsend erupted for 12 points, but John Jay somehow managed to stay within 26-18 as the teams left for the halftime break.

"Our whole locker room talk at halftime was the first four minutes of the third quarter was gonna decide the game," said Simone. "And our kids responded to that."

Indeed the second half began with a 14-6 Greeley spurt over the first four minutes, starting with a Townsend layup and ending with a Sauerborn 3-pointer from straightaway. With just over a minute left in the period, Seth Brail scored on an acrobatic



Horace Greeley's Owen Parsons is pressured by John Jay's Luke Mercer in last Thursday's game.

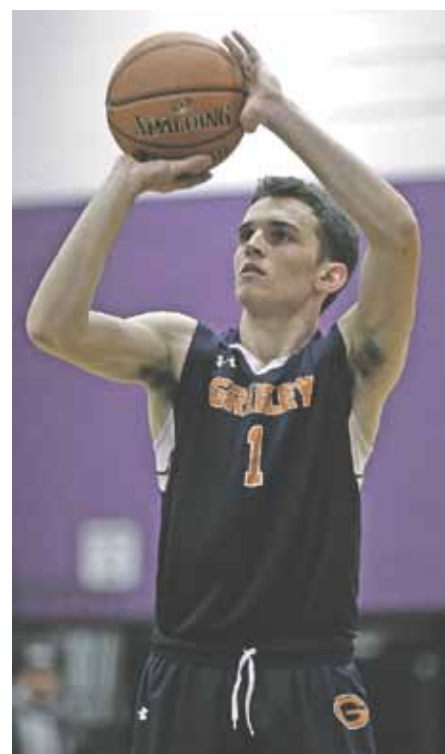


The Quakers' Will Laforteza dribbles toward the top of the key in the second half against the host Indians.

scoop in the lane. He followed that with a left-corner trey that gave Greeley a 20-point advantage.

John Jay went to the fourth quarter trailing by 18 points and never got any closer than 16 the rest of the way. Matt Crowe came off the Greeley bench to supply three baskets in an impressive two-minute highlight reel. His first two, a layup and a 17-foot baseline jumper, were set up by nifty passes from, of course, Townsend, who began the final period on the bench but returned to demonstrate his playmaking skill and add two more inside buckets.

"We knew coming into this that John Jay's always an athletic, tough, physical team," said Simone. "They're gonna pressure us and I think we did a good job with it. We



Greeley guard Sean Dunleavy shoots from the foul line in the 70-53 victory at John Jay.

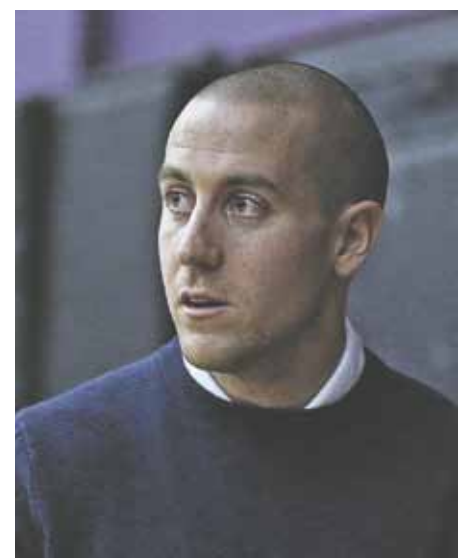


Greeley's Nick Townsend gets to the rim for two of his 26 points in last Thursday's season-opening win at John Jay.

really wanted to focus on our defense and our toughness playing together and we did a great job with that. The biggest thing I'm happy about is guys came in off the bench and were able to keep the level of play for us and we didn't lose the lead or anything. So it was just a really good team effort."

With the return of the high-scoring Melis still a long way off, Simone knows his Quakers will need a lot more dazzling performances from Townsend in the weeks ahead, and increased production from the rest of the squad.

"Obviously that's a huge blow," he said of the absence of Melis. "But we still have the same expectations. I think we've still got a great team. We've still got guys like Christoph and Will Laforteza that we're looking at to kind of step up. So far in the offseason and today they're doing a good job of carrying the load. Everybody's got to step up and chip in a little bit extra. We've got a tough schedule, but I think we can compete with every team we play."



New Greeley head coach Matt Simone looks on as his Quakers play their first game of the season.

Seth Brail of Greeley is pressured as he handles the ball in the first half of Thursday's season-opener in Cross River.



# Foxes Seeking to Continue Their Success on the Mat

By Tony Pinciario

Since 2004, Fox Lane has become the elite among Section 1 wrestling.

The Foxes won five Section 1 Division I (large school) championships under legendary coach Joe Amuso (2004, '08, '09, '11, '12) and last year Fox Lane added its second consecutive title under Anthony Rodrigues. Fox Lane, which went 23-2 last year, also won the 2018 Section 1 Division I Dual-Meet Championship in December.

The seven sectional titles are the most among Division I schools since 2004.

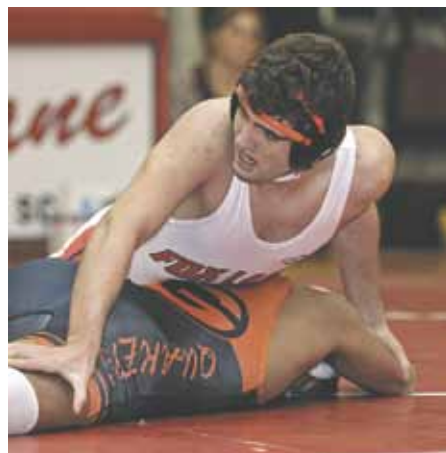
"I really attribute the success our team has had to the work we do not only in-season, but also in the offseason," said senior Quincy Downs, the 2019 Section 1 Division I 160-pound champion and state eighth-place finisher. "The summer lifts, as well as the workouts at Empire Wrestling, has helped a lot this year and over the past years.

"Also, the mentality that coach A-Rod (Anthony Rodrigues) has put in place of never being satisfied and continuing to work towards more in this sport has allowed for success at Fox Lane."

Fox Lane will be among Section 1's top-tier teams once again this season with 10 returning starters, including eight sectional top-six finishers.

This group is highlighted by Downes and Jake Hoffman, the sectional 99-pound titlist and also an eighth-place state finisher.

The returning nucleus also includes Luke Friedman, a sectional runner-up last year, Griffin Zegras and Sam Dixon, both fourth-place finishers, Nino Prisco (fifth), and Thomas Prisco and Jaime Jarquin Duarte, both sixth. Marc Berisha returns after winning a state freestyle title during the offseason and Mitchell Antin is back. Antin,



Marc Berisha of Fox Lane has the upper hand in his 182-pound match last Wednesday afternoon.

a 2018 sixth-place sectional finisher, missed last year with an injury.

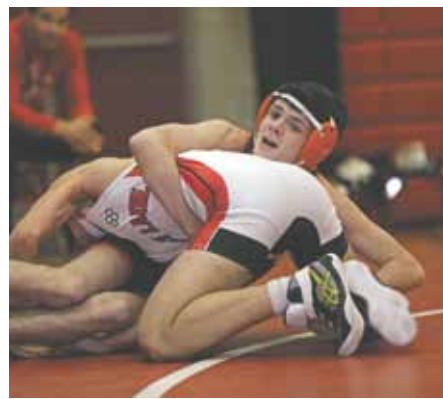
Rodrigues cited eighth-grader John Statmelos as one of the newcomers to varsity.

Fox Lane opened the season with a pair of victories in the Section 1 Division I Dual-Meet Championship, which is not a surprise considering the Foxes' off-season work ethic.

"I like that a lot of the guys trained together over the offseason," said Rodrigues, "creating a connection and a recognition of the hard work we all put in."

"Our goals for this year are, once again, Section 1 champions as well as state champions. We just need to stay focused, humble and driven."

Rodrigues, in his eighth year, will be taking the Foxes to the Ted Murphy Shoreline



Luke Richards of Greeley is on his way to a win in last week's matchup vs. Fox Lane.

Classic, Eastern States and Westchester County Championships.

Not many teams can afford to graduate seven starters and still be a Section 1 power. That is, unless it's Pleasantville and led by veteran coach Bob Bernarducci.

The seven graduates were instrumental in leading Pleasantville to the 2018 Section 1 Division II (small school) Dual-Meet title and a second-place finish in the Section 1 Division II Championship. Sectional champion and state runner-up Victor Perlleshi was among this group. He is wrestling at Johnson and Wales.

Along with the seven graduates, Pleasantville will have a new assistant coach as Steven Tornambe is the new Mahopac coach.

Pleasantville, 20-4 last year, will host Nanuet in the Section 1 Division II Dual-Meet Championship final on Wednesday at 4:30 p.m.

The talented returning nucleus for Bernarducci is led by seniors Len Balducci and Aidan Canfield, both sectional champions.

Balducci is a three-time sectional champion and three-time state place-



Jake Hoffman of Fox Lane is a defending sectional champ.

finisher, including fifth last year.

Senior Nayshaw Marks returns after missing last year with an injury. Marks was a sectional finalist in 2018.

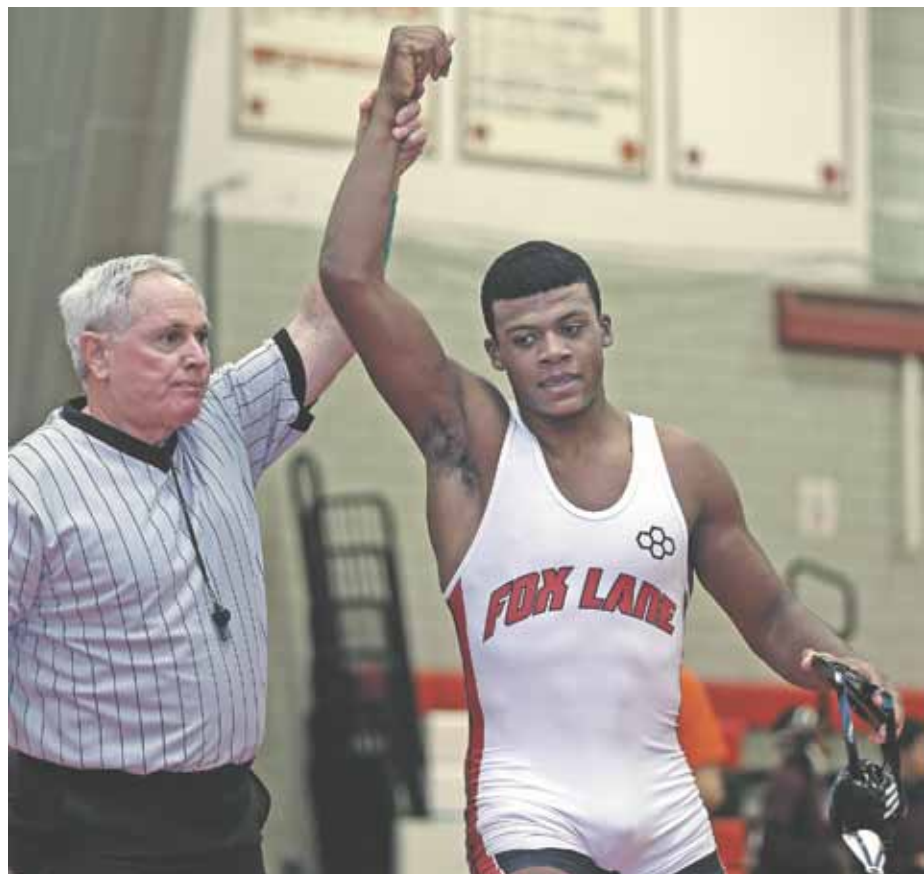
Sophomore Quinn Egan had a strong finish to 2019, winning a sectional title. Classmate Nicolas Paternostro finished third in the section last year.

Pleasantville will be lifted by a healthy Michael Balducci. The junior, and Len's brother, missed the majority of last year with an injury. He returned in time for sectionals and finished fifth. Fellow junior Harrison Halesworth was also injured last year.

Freshman Christian Perlleshi, Victor's brother, was a sectional third-place finisher last year. Jo Jo Alesway, also a freshman, is back for his second varsity season.

Bernarducci pointed out that Luke Lamagna, Zach Malozzi, Chad Saraggonda, Nick Wynn and Liam Dillon are new to varsity.

*continued on next page*



Fox Lane's Quincy Downes is one of the top returning wrestlers in Section One.



Fox Lane's Griffin Zegras is in control during a match vs. Greeley last Wednesday.



# Foxes Seeking to Continue Their Success on the Mat



Pleasantville standout Len Balducci is a three-time sectional champion.



John Fortugno is moments away from pinning Somers' Matt Cascio in a 106-pound match.



Nick Paternostro is one of the leading returnees for a solid Pleasantville team this year.



Quinn Egan of Pleasantville was a winner vs. Ardsley last Thursday.

*continued from previous page*

"I feel we have a strong starting lineup, but I am concerned about our lack of depth," said Bernarducci, in his 29th year. "Our team goals are to repeat as the dual-meet champs, repeat as league champs, and to win the sectionals."

Pleasantville will be going to high-caliber tournaments, including the Eastern States, Westchester County Championship and Yorktown Duals.

Byram Hills begins its second year combined with Valhalla, Westlake and Briarcliff.

The team went 6-8 last year under the Grippi coaching firm – Joey (coach) and Peter (assistant). It is the fifth year for the Grippi brothers.

Byram Hills had a program first last year as Alex Behar (182 pounds) and John Fortugno (106), both sectional runners-up, received wild cards to the New York State Division I Wrestling Championships.

Behar and Fortugno are back as well as Justin Fortugno, a fourth-place sectional place-finisher, and Jacob Petfield. The quartet form the team's nucleus.

"We have a nice mix of experienced veterans and first- and second-year wrestlers," said Grippi, twice a sectional champ and all-American for Springfield College. "Our numbers keep improving every year and the program is really starting to round into shape. My goals this year for our team are a league title as well as getting some more wrestlers to qualify for states. Also, getting our young guys good experience and having them enjoy wrestling."

Byram Hills is making its annual trips to the Ted Murphy Shoreline Classic, Eastern States and Westchester County Championship, as well as the Wrangle at the Plains at Shenendehowa High School.

Horace Greeley co-coaches Mike DeBellis and Anthony Tortora have watched three Division I wrestlers graduate the past two years – Jacob Ferreira (North Carolina State), Aaron Wolk (Brown) and Matthew Schreiber (Binghamton).

Wolk won the Division I 170-pound state

title as well as being a two-time sectional champion. Schreiber was also twice a state champion and placed at the state championships.

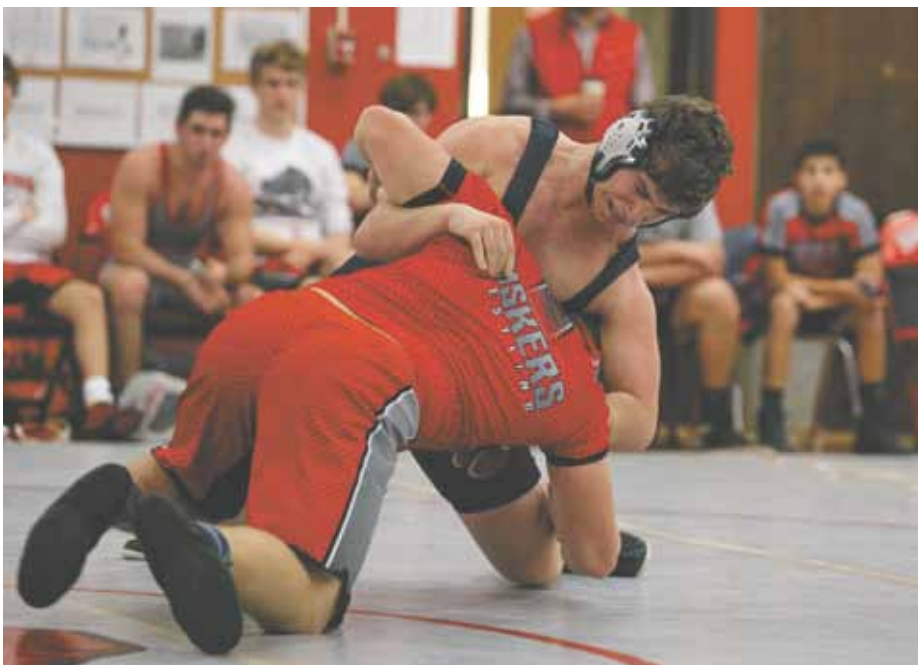
The graduation of Wolk and Schreiber leaves a young Greeley team that is ready for the challenge this season.

Greeley's top returnee is Isabella Garcia, who finished second in the state in the girls' division.

DeBellis and Tortora welcome a large group of new starters -- Vinny Sasso (182 pounds), Tommy Antes (113), Josh Hametz (126), Diego Weiss (106) and Jon Kang (99).

"We have a very young team," DeBellis said. "We look forward to them stepping up and improving every day. They are eager to learn."

Greeley will be travelling to the Ken Haines Tournament (Oswego) after Christmas. The Quakers will also wrestle at the Eastern States, Westchester County Championship and Peter Caruso Memorial (Mahopac).



Byram Hills' Alex Behar works for the pin against Somers' Mike Rivera in a 220-pound match last Wednesday in the Section 1 Dual Meet tournament.



Byram's John Pantusa is in control in a 285-pound match against Somers' Thomas Gall.





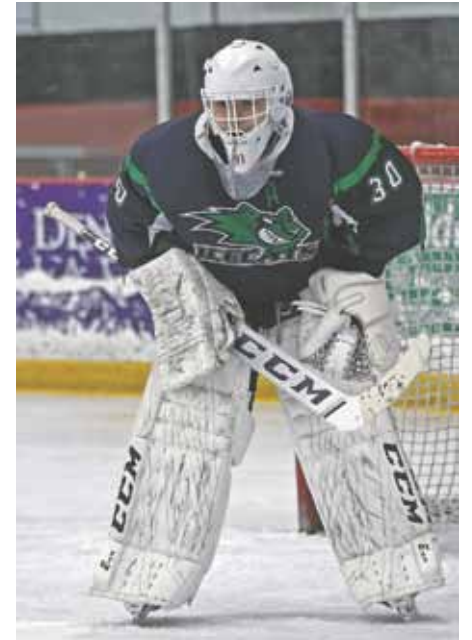
Aaron Bottiglieri of the Mt. Pleasant Ice Cats try to skate around Fox Lane's Michael Gallary at the Brewster Ice Arena.



Mt. Pleasant's Joey Engelman sets his sights on the goal during Sunday's road game vs. Fox Lane at Brewster Ice Arena.



Lucca Conigliaro of Byram Hills moves the puck across the ice in Sunday night's game at Brewster Ice Arena. He finished with two goals.



Mt. Pleasant goalie Thomas Brown stays ready in front of the pipes in the second period of Sunday's game vs. Fox Lane.



Byram Hills' Jesse Rosenberg skates toward center ice in the second period of Sunday's 11-6 loss to the Rivertown Legends.

## *focus on* **HOCKEY**



Fox Lane's Charlie Della Penna sends a shot on goal during Sunday evening's 3-2 win over the Mt. Pleasant Ice Cats.



Fox Lane's Adam Maiorano pursues the loose puck while surrounded by Mt. Pleasant's Michael Donoghue (left) and Aditya Sridhar in Sunday's evening's game at Brewster Ice Arena.



Luca Trotta awaits a faceoff during Sunday night's Byram Hills home game at Brewster Ice Arena.



Jake Wollman of Fox Lane controls the puck in the second period of Sunday's home game at Brewster.



Byram Hills defenseman Owen Fleischer waits for the puck to drop in the Bobcats' home loss to Rivertown on Sunday evening.



Mt. Pleasant's Michael Donoghue takes the puck toward the net in the third period against host Fox Lane on Sunday night.



Michael Gallary of Fox Lane gets set to fire a shot at the goal in the Foxes' 3-2 victory over Mt. Pleasant on Sunday.





Quaker freshman Emma Rose takes the ball to the basket in the first half of the 40-39 loss to Suffern in the season opener.



Kaylin Genda launches a shot from the right corner in last Wednesday evening's Quaker home game.



Jenna McAllister delivers a pass into the corner in Pleasantville's lopsided victory over Blind Brook.

# GIRLS' HOOP

## Quakers Drop Opener to Suffern



Greeley point guard Jessica Harris finds herself double-teamed in the first half of the Quakers' one-point loss last Wednesday evening.



Pleasantville's Lila Donohue fires up a shot from the right corner in the Panthers' win over Blind Brook.



Pleasantville's Julia O'Reilly and Blind Brook's Halle Greague set their sights on a potential rebound during Saturday's game won by the host Panthers.



Senior forward Sophie Dorst led Greeley with 12 points in last Wednesday's game vs. Suffern.

## Panthers Cruise Past Blind Brook



Mary Grace O'Neill gets set to shoot the ball near the 3-point line in Pleasantville's easy win over visiting Blind Brook.



Greeley sophomore Olivia Camhi tries to find a path to the basket as she's closely guarded by Suffern's Samantha Schelling in last week's season-opening game.



The Panthers' Abby McAllister dribbles near midcourt during Saturday afternoon's home game.



Panther point guard Tina Matica pushes the ball up the court in the first half of Saturday's 61-29 rout of Blind Brook.

## Boosting the Bears



**Tournament MVP Alana Lombardi  
Leads Briarcliff to a 71-62 Victory  
Over Hastings in the Title Game  
of the Annual Booster Club Event**