

Maddie in the Middle



**Maddie Plank and the Bears
Narrowly Beat Pleasantville
on Senior Day in Briarcliff**

Greeley's Season Ends With an Outbracket Playoff Loss

By Andy Jacobs

For the Horace Greeley girls' basketball team, Saturday morning's outbracket playoff game down at Harrison High School offered an opportunity to erase six weeks of hardwood frustration.

Instead, the Quakers were left with one last reminder of how elusive wins have been since the calendar turned to 2019.

The host Huskies used a 13-2 run late in the second quarter to take control and went on to a 50-37 victory over the 20th-seeded Quakers, whose disappointing season ended with a 6-15 record. Victoria Lendino scored a game-high 20 points as 13th-seeded Harrison advanced into Wednesday's opening round of the Class A playoffs.

"I think every game on our schedule has been a winnable game, maybe with the exception of Pearl River," said Quakers head coach Sarah Schum shortly after watching her team fall to the Huskies. "I think the other 20 games we've played have been right there. We've fought to win the game and we've been good enough to win the game. It's a couple spurts here and there. It's a couple bad possessions, a couple offensive rebounds. But they've been in every game and this is no different."

The Quakers were led by seniors Brianna Gadaleta and Safia Gecaj, who scored 12 points apiece, and Michaela Santelia, who finished with nine. After the Huskies' Lendino scored the game's first points just over 90 seconds in, Greeley answered with three consecutive baskets — a fast-break spin through the lane by Santelia, a put-back by Gadaleta and a drive for a layup by Gecaj — to grab an early 6-2 lead.

Gecaj followed up her own miss to tie the score at 9-9 with 1:20 left in the first quarter, but junior guard Kat Genda nearly gave the Quakers a three-point lead with a half-court heave that narrowly missed as the buzzer sounded. Back-to-back baskets by Santelia to start the second quarter soon provided a 13-9 edge.

A pair of free throws by Gecaj with 4:24 remaining in the half moved Greeley to a 16-12 advantage, but the Huskies then went on a 7-0 burst, taking the lead for good on Lendino's drive along the right baseline with 2:55 to go before halftime. After the Quakers' Jesse Harris scored on a fast-break layup on a long pass over the Huskies' full-court pressure, Harrison answered with a rare 4-point play by Ashley Staggs and then a layup from Olivia DeBald.

Two free throws by Gecaj with 22.6 seconds left ended the first-half scoring, but the Quakers still trailed 25-20 as they left the court. By the time Greeley would score again, on two free throws from Gadaleta with 4:44 remaining in the third quarter, the Huskies had built their lead to 12 points. A 3-pointer by



Horace Greeley junior guard Kat Genda lines up a shot from the left wing vs. the Harrison Huskies.

Sam Andrews from the right corner, followed by an old-fashioned 3-point play by Lendino 30 seconds later, left the Quakers suddenly facing a double-digit deficit.

"I'm frustrated for them because they put in a lot of time and effort and energy and they try as best they can," said Schum about her players. "I have a lot of multi-sport athletes that don't play basketball year round and we're playing against teams that do play basketball year round. So the skill level isn't as high as some other teams are blessed with. But they work hard and they completely buy in, and when it's basketball season they're in basketball mode."

Harrison only managed to score three points over the final five minutes of the third quarter. So when Gecaj made two free throws with 21 seconds left, the



The Quakers' Jesse Harris pushes the ball up the floor with a pair of Harrison players in pursuit during the Class A outbracket game on Saturday.



Senior forward Michaela Santelia gets set to shoot the ball from the right baseline in Greeley's season-ending loss to Harrison.

Huskies' lead was whittled to just 34-27. A foul shot by Lendino with 2.9 seconds to go gave the hosts an eight-point margin heading to the final period.

Any chance though of a Greeley fourth-quarter comeback was halted by seven turnovers. The Quakers started the period 0-for-3 from the field and they turned the ball over on their other three possessions to begin the quarter. It took them until nearly the midway point to finally score, on a Gecaj layup, and by then Harrison had rebuilt its 12-point cushion.

Still, a bucket by Santelia with exactly



The Quakers' Brianna Gadaleta concentrates on the rim as she shoots a free throw in the final minute of Saturday's outbracket game.



Greeley's Safia Gecaj dribbles the ball toward the top of the key in Saturday's game at Harrison.

three minutes remaining, followed by two free throws from Gadaleta 18 seconds later, brought the Quakers to within 43-35. But then a 3-point shot from the left elbow by the Huskies' Tori Fernandez with 2:21 on the clock all but sealed the outcome. Greeley's only points the rest of the way came on two Gadaleta foul shots with just 17.6 seconds left and Harrison ahead by 13.

"From watching film, I know they have shooters, and the girls know they have shooters," said Schum after the Huskies had used a couple of timely treys in the final quarter to hold off the Quakers. "There were two distinct times where we got caught in the lane and we didn't even go. It's frustrating because that's not like this team. They normally work so hard and they sprint everywhere. I don't know if it was exhaustion. I don't know if it was a little bit of a deflated attitude. But it's tough to watch them almost give up in the lane."

Schum isn't quite sure why a season that began with five wins in eight games spiraled downward so quickly. The Quakers lost 10 straight games at one point and won just once since the end of December.

"I think we ran into a little bit of a snowball effect and had a bunch of losses in a row and it kind of mentally played with us a little bit," she said. "I thought it was gonna be a bit of a different season, but you've gotta kind of roll with the punches. I just hope we can turn the corner. I think we will. I'm excited moving forward."

ROB DIANTONIO PHOTOS

Briarcliff Hangs On to Thwart the Panthers' Upset Bid

By Andy Jacobs

As the Pleasantville girls' basketball team rattled off 10 consecutive points to start the fourth quarter, slicing what had been a 21-point deficit down to just one, there was the temptation to check the scorers' table to see if the black and white visage of Rod Serling materialized there to inform everyone that the host Briarcliff Bears didn't know it yet, but they had just entered the twilight zone.

Last Wednesday afternoon's matchup between the neighboring rivals turned into a bizarre battle in which the Bears, not unexpectedly, built a huge lead before the young Panther squad, very unexpectedly, roared back to even the contest with exactly three minutes to go.

As it turned out, though, Briarcliff scored the final eight points down the stretch and emerged with a surprisingly close 61-53 win over the upset-minded Panthers. Maddie Plank scored the go-ahead basket and wound up with a game-high 27 points as the Bears finished undefeated in league play and secured the top seed in the Class B sectional playoffs.

"It was good for us," said Bears head coach Don Hamlin after his team had been severely tested on its Senior Day right before playoff time. "I thought Pleasantville played great and we found a way to win the game."

The Bears, forced now to play without



Pleasantville freshman Dakota Corey pulls up for a jump shot at the top of the key in the second half of last Wednesday's game at Briarcliff.

sophomore center Jordan Smith, who tore the ACL in her right knee three games earlier, seemed to be in complete command against Pleasantville through the first two and a half quarters. They got seven early points from Alana Lombardi and jumped out to a quick 9-0 lead. An 8-0 burst over the final 95 seconds gave them a 23-9 cushion after one quarter.

"Well, the game plan from the start was to deaden the clock to try to limit their possessions," said Panthers first-year head coach Dillon Clark. "They remind me very much of the old Ossining teams the way they move the ball and get it down the floor and the number of finishers they have, and the strength of the girls to make full-court outlet passes. So that's gotta be an emphasis."

A trio of Panther turnovers in the first minute of the second quarter turned into three baskets for Briarcliff. Lombardi, who finished with 21 points, had the first



Briarcliff senior guard Kacey Hamlin lines up a 3-point shot in the Bears' 61-53 win over visiting Pleasantville.

two and Kacey Hamlin, who provided 13 points, had the third one, which pushed the Bears' run to 14-0 and opened up a 20-point lead.

Sophomore Julia O'Reilly, the Panthers' leading scorer with 13 points, connected on back-to-back 3-pointers late in the second quarter, cutting the Briarcliff lead to 33-21. But P'ville went scoreless over the final 2:40 of the half and trailed at intermission by 16 points.

The Bears, 18-2 this season, started the second half with a put-back basket by Plank, who erupted for 12 of the 14 Briarcliff points in the third quarter. A drive through the lane for a bucket by Plank with 3:39 to go in the period gave the Bears a seemingly insurmountable 46-29 advantage. But the Panthers answered with a 9-2 burst, closing within 10 points on a layup by Analiese Picart.

A Plank 3-pointer from just left of the key stretched the Bears' lead to 51-38 before O'Reilly closed the third quarter with a short jumper from the right baseline with eight seconds remaining.

"We told the girls at halftime, the goal was to get to 10," said Clark. "We got to 11, and then we had a tie with a little bit to go before seniors stepped up on Senior Night, as they should."

The basket by O'Reilly at the end of the third quarter began a 15-2 Panther run that deadlocked the game at 53 apiece with three minutes to go. The fourth period started with a 15-foot jumper by Mary Grace O'Neill. Freshman Dakota Corey followed with a foul-line pop and



The Bears' Alana Lombardi races across midcourt with the ball in last week's home victory over Pleasantville.

then a 3-pointer from the left elbow. Tina Matica, who scored all 11 of her points after halftime, soon brought P'ville within 51-50 with another trey.

Unfortunately for the Panthers, after a 3-pointer by Jenna McAllister tied the game they never scored again the rest of the way. Plank's put-back basket while getting fouled with 2:10 left after a couple of Briarcliff offensive rebounds gave the Bears a 56-53 lead. Then with 1:38 on the clock, Hamlin received a pass right of the key from Plank out of the post and drained a 3-pointer that dashed the Pleasantville upset hopes.

"We got a timeout when they tied it and we just told 'em to calm down," said coach Hamlin. "I felt like we went through a long period of just watching whoever shot the ball for our team and we didn't hit the offensive boards at all. The possession that we took the lead, I think we had three offensive rebounds and finally finished. That turned it. We stopped watching and started playing a little bit."

"Obviously you're frustrated to lose, you always want to win," said the Panthers' Clark, whose 15-5 team earned the seventh seed in the Class B playoffs. "But, I mean, the second-ranked team in the state, we had 'em tied with two minutes to go in the game. It's anyone's ballgame, and their players made plays. I couldn't be happier with the performance. It just shows that we can play with the top team."

The Bears, meanwhile, will be looking to take the next step, even without Smith, after losing in the final the past two years. Their three stars scored all of Briarcliff's points in the regular-season finale, and Hamlin doesn't think the pressure to finally hoist the Gold Ball will be too much.

"I think they'll be fine," he said. "They've done a lot this year to prepare themselves, and we've found a way in tight games to do what we do best. Hopefully, we'll continue to do that."



Briarcliff's Maddie Plank fires a jump shot from the right corner in the first half of last Wednesday's game.



Panther point guard Tina Matica dribbles the ball up the court in the second half vs. host Briarcliff.

ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS

Pace Women's Team Nearly Overcomes Another Big Deficit

By Andy Jacobs

A recurring theme has emerged this season for the Pace University women's basketball team. The Setters find themselves in a huge early hole, make a furious second-half comeback, then fall just short of winning.

It happened again on Saturday afternoon at the Goldstein Fitness Center, where the hosts erased nearly all of a 17-point fourth-quarter deficit before losing to the Adelphi Panthers 78-72 in a Northeast-10 Conference game that was all but decided when the Setters couldn't secure a needed defensive rebound with 15 seconds remaining.

"We've had a lot of games like this," said disappointed Setters head coach Carrie Seymour shortly after her team had dropped to 9-15 overall and 6-10 in the NE10. "We can't dig ourselves a hole that big. We do it consistently. We can't do it because then you've got to play perfect and we're not gonna be able to play perfect."

For a while, though, it was Adelphi that had to play from behind. Back-to-back 3-pointers by Setter senior Stefanie Svoboda opened up a 13-7 Pace lead with 4:13 left in the opening quarter. But the Panthers, now 12-12 this season, answered with a 12-2 spurt over the next three minutes. A 3-point shot by Julia Strachan just moments before the buzzer gave Adelphi a 22-18 edge after one quarter.

The second quarter began with consecutive baskets from the Setters' Lauren Schetter and then two free throws by Jackie DelliSanti. Adelphi responded with a 7-0 spurt and took the lead for good on a 3-pointer from the right wing by Strachan just over two minutes into the period.



Pace University freshman Lauren Hackett sets up the offense early in Saturday's home game.



Pace forward Jackie DelliSanti gets inside for two of her game-high 24 points on Saturday afternoon.

After Pace sophomore Naya Rivera provided two straight buckets to narrow the Setter deficit to just 34-30 with 4:12 to go, Adelphi closed the half on a 12-5 run, building a 46-35 cushion as 6-foot-1 center Leonie Edringer, who had 10 of her team-high 18 points in the quarter, connected on a 10-footer at the buzzer.

"We haven't been giving a good effort against other people's posts," said Seymour. "We're allowing a size advantage to mean that we don't attempt to guard the way we work on in practice. You can't survive like that. We've been beaten up badly in the post the last two games."

Edringer, who began her college career



Freshman guard Brianna Wong of Pace lines up a free throw in the first half vs. visiting Adelphi.



The Setters' Naya Rivera rises in the lane for a shot during the first half of Saturday's game against the Adelphi Panthers.

at Boise State, was 6-for-9 from the field in the first half, helping the Panthers shoot 63 percent over the first 20 minutes.

"The first half, they got a million layups," Seymour said. "It was a lot of transition layups. We started off the first half so lackadaisical and just going through the motions. We had a terrible time guarding the foul-line area in the zone. If you're gonna give 'em layups and wide-open shots, I'm surprised they didn't shoot a better percentage."

A basket by freshman guard Brianna Wong, followed by two more from DelliSanti, narrowed the Pace deficit to 48-41 with 7:20 left in the third quarter. But by the end of the period, Adelphi had increased its lead to 62-49. The Panthers built their largest margin of the day, 66-49, when the fourth quarter began with a reverse layup by Emily Miccile and then a 15-foot pop by the deft-shooting Edringer.

But the Setters soon answered with their customary second-half push, going on a 16-4 blitz over the next five and a half minutes that was triggered by a 3-pointer from Allie Monteleone and capped by a layup from DelliSanti. Suddenly the Adelphi lead was down to just five points and DelliSanti, who scored 18 of her game-high 24 points in the second half, seemed unstoppable.

A lefty toss in the lane by DelliSanti with 1:40 remaining brought the Setters to within 74-69, then a minute later freshman Kelsey Quain drilled her second 3-pointer of the quarter to cut the Panthers' lead to just two. But when Adelphi's Jess



Lauren Schetter of Pace University dribbles along the right baseline during the second half vs. Adelphi.

Camarda misfired on a 3-point shot from the top of the key with 20 seconds to go, teammate Katie Murphy came up with an offensive rebound that ruined the Setters' comeback bid.

Two free throws by Niajah Morgan with 10.2 seconds on the clock gave Adelphi a four-point lead, then the Setters turned the ball over at the other end. Miccile's two foul shots with a second to go provided the Panthers with their final winning margin.

"My biggest concern is that we're not making progress in the same areas," said Seymour. "It's the same story. Not every game, but too frequently. A lot of it has got to do with being prepared. Our practice habits are not good. That's something we've been addressing the entire year. It hurts us in games. Yeah, we picked up the effort after we got down big. I would like to see what we'd look like if we played with that effort for close to, well, 30 minutes would be a big difference for us."



Pace senior guard Stefanie Svoboda dribbles across the court with Adelphi's Jess Camarda in pursuit in the second half of Saturday's game at the Goldstein Fitness Center.

Setters Fall to Adelphi University in an Overtime Thriller

By Andy Jacobs

After their four-game winning streak was snapped on Wednesday night, the Pace University men's basketball team returned to the Goldstein Fitness Center on Saturday intent to get back on track.

For a good portion of the afternoon, it seemed the Setters just might be able to.

But visiting Adelphi University overcame a nine-point, second-half deficit and wound up scoring the last 10 points of overtime to emerge with an 87-77 victory. Despite a game-high 19 points from junior forward Peyton Wejnert and a dozen assists by sophomore point guard Brandon Jacobs that gave him a share of the school's single-season record, the Setters dropped to 15-10 overall and 9-8 in the Northeast-10 Conference.

"I feel like I wouldn't expect anything different when we play them," said Setters head coach Matt Healing afterwards about facing the Panthers. "It seems like every game comes down to the final minutes and overtimes and all of that stuff."

The Setters, trailing Adelphi by a game and a half in the NE10's Southwest Division at the start of the day, found themselves behind 9-2 just three minutes into the contest. But a 3-pointer by Ray Montilus midway through the first half tied the score at 19 apiece and Pace later used a 10-3 spurt to grab an eight-point lead. A 12-foot jump shot by Greg Poleon in the last 30 seconds enabled the Setters to take a 44-36 edge into halftime.

"Just a credit to our guys for the effort they put forth," said Healing. "I thought that we stuck together through a lot of the game. They're a really good offensive team, for sure. Lethal in a lot of different areas. I thought our guys did a great job of defending the majority of the game."

Pace was able to build its largest lead of the day, 48-39, after a fall-away jumper by Poleon from the right baseline and then two free throws from Jacobs early in the second half. They were still leading by nine after Wejnert's old-fashioned 3-point play with 12:32 remaining in the game. But Adelphi then outscored the Setters 21-7 over the next eight minutes, grabbing a 64-63 lead on a two-handed dunk by Denzel Jenoure with six minutes left.



The Setters' Tyrone Cohen, Jr. passes the ball in the first half against the Adelphi University Panthers.



Pace University forward Greg Poleon rises for a jump shot in the Setters' overtime loss to visiting Adelphi on Saturday afternoon.

A corner 3-pointer by Panther sharpshooter Jack Laffey with 3:45 on the clock left Pace suddenly facing a 70-65 deficit. Four straight points by Poleon, who finished with 17, brought the Setters to within one again and Jacobs was able to tie the score at 72 apiece when he banked in a shot while falling down just left of the lane with 49 seconds to go.

The Setters had a chance to win the game in regulation, but Jacobs failed to connect on a 3-pointer just before the buzzer and then again on a 27-footer after an inbounds pass from their own baseline with half a second on the clock.

"Difficult situation there because you only have the half a second," said Healing. "We had an option to screen and get a lob at the basket and we had an option for a guy coming off a screen out to the wing there. It is what is. Maybe more time could've been put on the clock."



Pace freshman guard Jordan Fox looks to feed the post in Saturday's game against the Panthers.



Pace point guard Brandon Jacobs drive past Adelphi's Dwaine Williams in Saturday's game at the Goldstein Fitness Center.

In the five-minute overtime, the Setters were able to tie the score at 74-74 on two Jacobs free throws and again at 77 apiece on a 3-pointer by Tyrone Cohen, Jr. with 2:50 remaining. But the Setters never scored again and Adelphi went ahead for good when Austin Beech drove through the lane for a layup as the shot clock was about to expire with 95 seconds to go. The Setters wound up making just one of their 10 shots from the field in the overtime session and Adelphi sealed the outcome by going 8-for-8 from the line in the final moments.

"Once we got down to crunch time, I just wish we executed a little bit better," said Healing. "I didn't think we executed well enough. We missed two shots that we



Junior guard Ray Montilus shoots the ball during Pace's home game vs. Adelphi.



The Setters' Peyton Wejnert scores on a left-handed layup during Saturday's home game.

normally make to start the overtime."

The Setters had lost by 10 points when they faced Adelphi on the road back in mid-November and Healing predicted the rematch would be an extremely tight battle.

"I told my guys this was gonna be a game of inches," he said. "That was the thing we wrote on the board today and I felt like this is a game we lost by an inch or two. This was a nip and tuck game and just didn't go our way. I'm just so proud of our guys and the way they've fought throughout the season. We clinched a postseason bid tonight even with the loss, which says a lot about where we've come from and what we've been trying to do."



Pace guard Austin Gilbertson shoots the ball from the free-throw line vs. Adelphi.

ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS



Briarcliff star guard Miles Jones levitates in the lane during the first half of last Wednesday's 53-39 home win over Pleasantville.



Briarcliff sophomore guard Aidan Murnane handles the ball in the first half vs. visiting Pleasantville.



Pleasantville senior guard Danny Melillo tries to dribble past Briarcliff's Miles Jones on the left baseline in the second half of last week's game.

focus on
BOYS' HOOP
Pleasantville
vs. Briarcliff



The Bears' Ian Becker battles for possession of the ball along the left baseline with Pleasantville's Aidan Lynch and Brendan O'Neill.



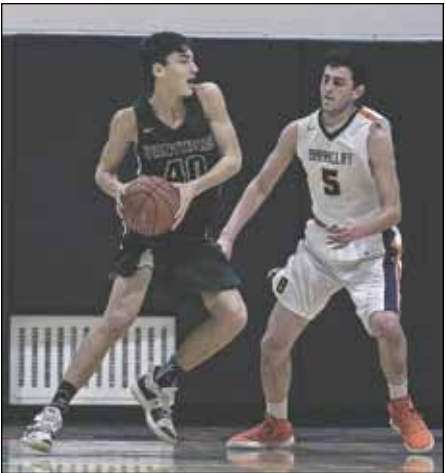
The Panthers' Garrett Carney searches for an open teammate vs. the host Bears.



Pleasantville's Brendan O'Neill comes down with a rebound in front of Briarcliff's Brett Ostrover during the latest hardwood encounter between the two rival schools.



Nick Reish of Briarcliff is closely guarded by Pleasantville's Justin Perlman during the second half of last Wednesday's game won by the host Bears.



The Panthers' Aidan Lynch is guarded by the Bears' Ian Becker in the second half of last week's game at Briarcliff High School.



Briarcliff's Dan Huegel is forced into a tough shot near the left baseline during last Wednesday's game against rival Pleasantville.



The Panthers' Justin Perlman and the Bears' Ian Becker set their sights on a potential rebound.



Briarcliff guard AJ Panarese dribbles the ball in the first half of last week's home game vs. Pleasantville on Senior Night.

Westchester Knicks Win ‘Battle of the Burbs’ in Double-Overtime Thriller



The Knicks’ Billy Garrett, who scored 39 points, grabs a rebound in front of teammate Stephen Zimmerman in Saturday night’s game.



Long Island guard Theo Pinson is forced into a difficult shot along the right baseline during Saturday’s game against Westchester.



Westchester’s Sekou Wiggs shoots from the top of the key in Saturday’s win over Long Island.

The Westchester Knicks overcame a big early deficit and came away with a 134-130 double-overtime victory over the Long Island Nets in an NBA G League game last Saturday night at the Westchester County Center.

Guard Billy Garrett, averaging just under 14 points a game this season, erupted for 39 to help lift the Knicks to their second home win in 24 hours. The Knicks found themselves trailing 21-7 a little more than five minutes into the game as Long Island’s Dzanan Musa exploded for 11 of his team-high 30 points.

But the Knicks quickly answered with a 10-0 run to get back in the contest and the game was close the rest of the way, with 15 lead changes and 16 ties. Long Island had a chance to win at the end of regulation time, but Theo Pinson’s 3-pointer at the buzzer fell short. The Nets’ Jordan McLaughlin had a shot to win it in the first overtime, but his jumper, too, fell well short as time expired.

That set the stage for the second two-minute overtime period and a 3-pointer by the Knicks’ Devon Baulkman with 47 seconds left that broke the final tie of the night and gave Westchester the lead for good. The Knicks, currently 22-17 and in fourth place in the Eastern Conference, have home games this week on Wednesday and Friday at 7 pm (Feb. 20 and 22), then host the Lakeland Magic on Sunday, the 24th at 3:00



Jameel Warney of the Westchester Knicks comes down with a rebound.



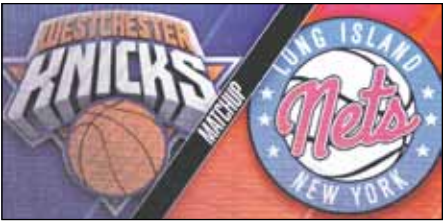
Nets forward Drew Gordon shoots the ball from the free-throw line.



Long Island Nets center Alan Williams shoots the ball over the Knicks’ Jameel Warney at the Westchester County Center.



Mitchell Creek of the Long Island Nets dribbles out of the backcourt as Westchester’s Devon Baulkman tries to catch up in the second half of Saturday night’s game.

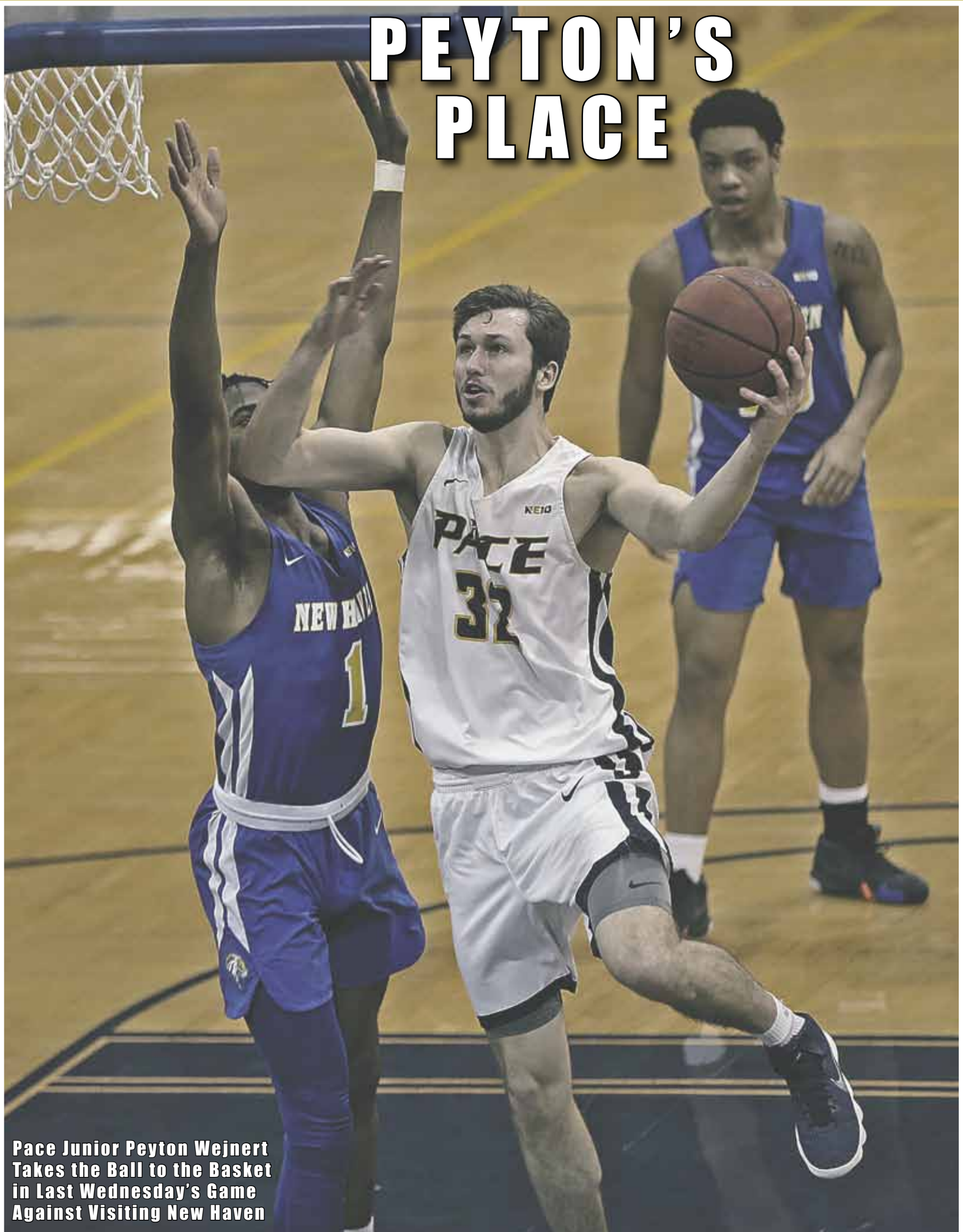


Dzanan Musa, the 2018 first-round draft pick of the Brooklyn Nets, dunks the ball in Long Island’s game vs. the Westchester Knicks.



Paul Watson of the G League Knicks takes the ball to the basket from the right baseline.

PEYTON'S PLACE



Pace Junior Peyton Wejnert Takes the Ball to the Basket in Last Wednesday's Game Against Visiting New Haven