

## The Future is Now



**Briarcliff Freshman Matt Waterhouse Scores the Game Winner in Overtime and Finishes the Day With Five Goals as the Bears Dethrone Pleasantville in the Section One Championships**



# Briarcliff's Overtime Goal Ends the Panthers' Four-Year Reign

By Andy Jacobs

Matt Waterhouse had already scored a game-high four goals when last Thursday afternoon's Section One, Class D championship at Lakeland High School headed to overtime.

His fifth, though, eclipsed all the others and will long be remembered at Briarcliff High School.

The freshman midfielder's missile-on-the-move shot from right of the cage 45 seconds into the tense and dramatic extra session found the back of the net, propelling the second-seeded Bears to a 9-8 victory and their first-ever lacrosse championship, while bringing a crushing end to Pleasantville's four-year reign as sectional titlists.

"My first inclination was to go to the cage," said Waterhouse afterwards, recreating the moment he and his teammates won't ever forget. "And when I went to the cage, I didn't think I was gonna hit that last shot. But I did. I'm still so shocked by it. Oh my, I froze. I was just shocked. The whole team came running and they tackled me."

Waterhouse's decisive goal enabled the Bears to avoid what would have been an epic collapse after building a five-goal lead in the third quarter and then allowing the fourth-seeded Panthers to roar back and eventually tie the score with two improbable goals in the last 33 seconds.

"Unbelievable," said Bears head coach Al Meola shortly after his jubilant players had been handed their championship



The Bears' Matt Waterhouse, who scored five goals, fires a shot at the cage in the first half of Thursday's Class D title game.

plaque. "We knew it was gonna be tough. We knew it wasn't gonna be easy. At the end of the day, it was a great game. If you're a spectator, you loved that game. If you're a coach, you lost some time off your ticker. But we got the 'W.' That's all we care about right now. We're moving on."

In a rematch of the 2017 Class C final and last year's Class D semifinal, both won by the Panthers, the third time proved to be the charm for Briarcliff. Waterhouse, a lanky speedster whose acceleration ability will likely create many headaches for opposing coaches over the next few years, served notice that he was up for the challenge when he sent a lefty rocket past Panther goalie Brian Wilson just 76 seconds after the opening face-off to put the Bears on the scoreboard first.

Pleasantville managed to tie the game midway through the first quarter on a goal by senior star Jack Howe, who had scored six times, highlighted by his winner in overtime, during Monday's 11-10 road victory over top-seeded Bronxville. But the Bears regained the lead again when Waterhouse made a long run from the left corner across the field before firing a one-hopper into the net with 59 seconds left in the period.

The Bears scored again just past the midway point of the second quarter on



Pleasantville's Matt May searches for an open teammate in the Section One, Class D championship game.



Junior midfielder Michael Donoghue of Briarcliff approaches midfield as he controls the ball in the Class D title game vs. Pleasantville.

Noah Benson's shot from left of the cage, assisted by Jack Ricciardi, with P'ville down a man. Briarcliff's lead grew to 5-1 with 3:03 left in the half after goals by Kyle Proctor and Waterhouse just 34 seconds apart. A goal by Pleasantville's Jack Halloran just before the buzzer sounded enabled the Panthers to leave the field at halftime with a bit more belief.

"We felt very confident coming into the game," said disappointed Panthers coach Chris Kear. "We felt we had a good game plan, and I think overall we just made too many mental errors and countless turnovers that came back to bite us."

If Halloran's last-second goal gave the Panthers some much-needed momentum, it didn't last long. Less than two minutes into the third quarter, Ricciardi, another of the Bears' promising freshmen, came around from the back of the cage and fired a lefty shot past Wilson from right of the crease.

Waterhouse, already with a hat trick



Briarcliff senior goalie Ian Leahy keeps his eyes on the ball as he guards the cage vs. Pleasantville.

in the first half, added his fourth goal of the day with a low shot on the run that extended Briarcliff's big lead to 7-2 with 6:57 remaining in the third quarter. But the Bears wouldn't score again over the next 12 minutes of playing time. Meanwhile, the Panthers began a comeback bid with Matt May's shot into an open cage 22 seconds after the goal by Waterhouse.

Howe's second goal of the afternoon, past screened Briarcliff goalie Ian Leahy, cut the Panther deficit to 7-4 with 2:07 left in the quarter. Pleasantville, forced to play without leading scorer Jake Coleman, who injured his shoulder in the

*continued on next page*



Briarcliff's Spencer Rockmore carries the championship plaque after the Bears defeated Pleasantville in overtime.



The Panthers' Jack Howe, closely guarded by Briarcliff's Nick Reish, gets set to unleash a shot at the cage in Thursday's title game.

ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS



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Bronxville game, got even closer when Pat Doherty made a cross-crease pass to Jack Roye, who converted from the left doorstep with 33 seconds to go in the period.

Briarcliff finally ended its scoring drought as Proctor came from behind the cage and set up Spencer Rockmore in front for a goal that gave the Bears an 8-5 cushion with 6:36 left in the contest. As the clock ticked down to under five minutes, it seemed a Briarcliff coronation was inevitable.

"At times, it seemed like they were giving up even when there was a lot of time left in the game," said the Panthers' Kear about his players. "You never give up. If we had not given up so soon, I think we would've been fine."

Still, the Panthers' 'drive for five' was hardly finished. Halloran, with Howe screening the goalie, sent a blistering shot into the cage with 4:40 remaining. That set the stage for a final minute that defied any logic. Pleasantville, despite being down a man, got a goal from Roye with 33 seconds on the clock, then forced a key turnover with 11 seconds to go.

Howe quickly passed the ball up the field and May, running hard to his right, shot the ball past Leahy with three seconds left, tying the score and leaving the stunned Bears in disbelief.

"Yeah, that was tough," said Meola. "We had time to kill, get in the box and run some stuff. We called a timeout. We didn't execute what we wanted. I think they sort of got a little nervous and rattled. Keeping it in and all the pressure, and Pleasantville did a great job. We made those mistakes, so we made it interesting. I was just trying



Briarcliff freshman Jack Ricciardi is watched by Pleasantville's Ray Raefski as he controls the ball behind the cage during the Class D sectional final.



The Bears' Anthony Capasso gets set to fire a shot in the 9-8 overtime victory over defending champion Pleasantville last Thursday afternoon.



Pleasantville's Jack Howe has reason to smile while Briarcliff's Noah Benson (left) and Andrew Kanovsky look on in disbelief after the Panthers tied the game with three seconds left.

to tell everyone to 'hit the reset button. Everyone needs to calm down. We're gonna be fine. We've got the ball."

The Bears did have the ball to start overtime, but a clutch save by Wilson on a shot from Anthony Capasso gave Pleasantville momentary possession. Unfortunately for the Panthers, Wilson's clearing pass toward midfield was picked off by Proctor. Moments later, the Bears came out of a timeout with their fortunes about to be decided by Waterhouse, who was able to run past Brennan McDermott and release his decisive shot just before help could arrive.

"We went into a set we call 'Ohio,' which is sort of like an open set," said Meola. "We masked it like we weren't in it and then he (Waterhouse) came around the top. He set up his dodge and we cleared through and he was able to get that shot off. It's still so surreal, honestly."

"I was so shocked that this was happening," said Waterhouse, who

was instantly greeted by all his giddy teammates behind the cage. "Yeah, there was definitely a lot of weight on top of me. But, honestly, we're all full of happiness and great emotion."

"I was just so nervous," conceded Meola, whose first title ironically came on the campus of the same school he once played for. "If we lost in overtime, I think I would've been heartbroken going home on that bus. I wouldn't have been able to sleep for a while, just kind of playing it back in your head all the time."

That misfortune now awaits Kear, who has led Pleasantville to seven consecutive appearances in sectional finals.

"We definitely had our chances, but hats off to Briarcliff because they played well and they took care of their opportunities," he said. "It's just one of those days where we just didn't bring our 'A' game and they did, and that was the difference in the game. We were just waiting for that spark and it just didn't materialize."



The Briarcliff Bears celebrate after capturing their first-ever lacrosse championship last Thursday afternoon at Lakeland High School.



The Panthers' Jack Roye works his way past Briarcliff's Kevin O'Donnell in the second half of the Class D championship game.



Pat Doherty of Pleasantville moves behind the cage with the ball during the first half of the Class D championship game.



Briarcliff's Spencer Rockmore runs with the ball behind the cage in the sectional final at Lakeland High School.

ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS



# Donato provides Westlake With Some Relief in Sectional Win

By Rob DiAntonio

It was a situation that most pitchers dread to be called into, but Westlake's Steve Donato wasn't fazed in the slightest.

With the bases loaded and no outs in the third inning, Donato was summoned to pitch. He proceeded to strike out the next three batters to escape the jam.

He wasn't done there, either. Donato pitched the final five innings and led the fifth-seeded Wildcats to a 4-2 win over eighth-seeded Keio in the Section 1 Class B semifinals on Saturday.

"That was a turning point, but Steve's done that for us before," Westlake coach John Consorti said. "He's comfortable coming in in those situations. I'm glad we have him. That was big for us."

Donato, who struck out seven Unicorn batters and scattered five hits, fanned the first two batters looking and got the third player swinging to get out of the third-inning jam. He utilized a steady diet of curveballs to keep Keio off-balance.

"I wasn't even going for the strikeouts at that point," said Donato, a senior. "I was



Thomas Iazzetta of the Wildcats pitches against visiting Keio.

just trying to get outs. I knew coming into the situation that if I let up one run, our offense was going to pick us up. I think we have one of the best offenses in the section. We're very dangerous. I was just trying to get us back to the plate with minimal damage."

With Westlake trailing 2-1, the Wildcats' Thomas Carpenter started the bottom of the third inning off with a single. He was moved to second on a sacrifice bunt by Thomas Iazzetta and scored when Mike Mancuso beat out an infield single. Salvatore Nardone then hit a pop up near short, but the ball was lost in the sun and dropped in to score Mancuso and give the Wildcats a 3-2 lead.

"At this time of the year, strange things happen in baseball," Consorti said. "Fortunately, for us, we benefitted from one or two of them, but it happens. It's the nature of the game."

Keio threatened in the fifth with a runner on second base, but Westlake catcher Mancuso gunned down the base



Third baseman Thomas Carpenter gets down the tag at third base.

stealer at third.

The Wildcats got an insurance run in the bottom of the fifth when Carpenter started it off with a double down the left-field line. Vincent Spaziente laid down a bunt and the throw was air-mailed over the first baseman's head, allowing Carpenter to score.

It was a game where the Wildcats did the little things to win.

"That's what our coach preaches," Donato said. "Making the plays, getting the bunts down, moving guys over and getting runners in. We were heads up running the bases with Carpenter scoring on the bad throw. It was really big for our team to pick up runs the way we could."

The Unicorns started the seventh inning off with two singles, but Donato settled in after that. He induced a pop out, Mancuso threw out another base stealer for the second out and Donato then got the last batter to ground out to second.

"I think they started to pick up on my curveball because I was using that very often throughout the first few innings,"

Donato said. "I started mixing in my changeup. That's how I got their best hitter to pop up. And then that's how I got the last out too: using my changeup and fastball and getting rid of the curveball."

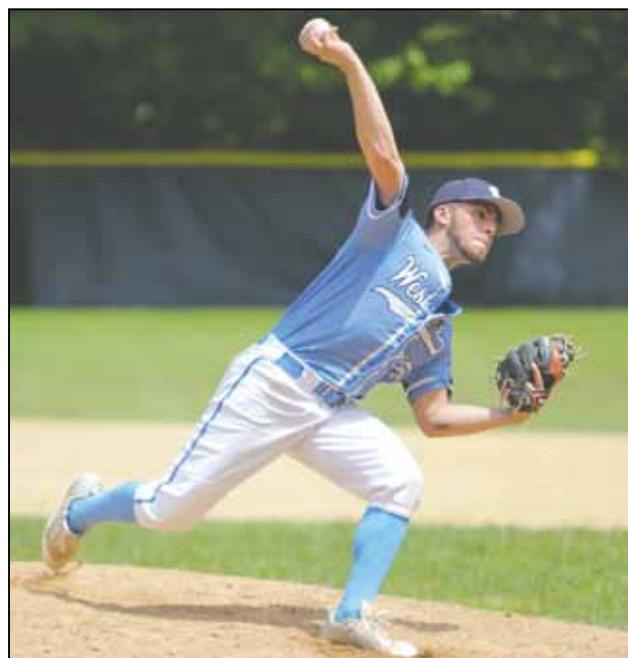
Donato credited his battery mate Mancuso for a strong game behind the plate.

"He's been big all year," Donato said. "If he doesn't get that out (in the seventh), they have runners in scoring position with one out. That's one of the biggest plays of the game. He's not our starting catcher, but he's my battery mate and he always comes up big."

Westlake took a 1-0



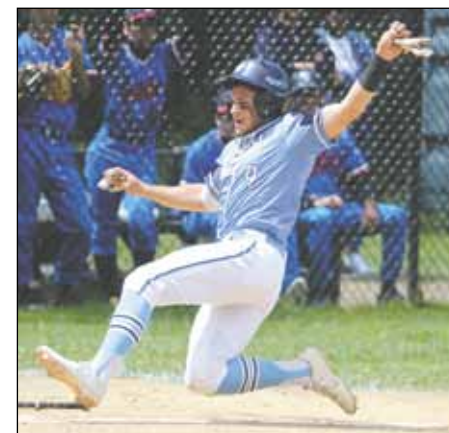
Richard Petrillo takes a rip.



Westlake's Steve Donato pitches against Keio during last Saturday's semifinal.



Stephen Donato reacts after striking out three straight batters with the bases loaded in the third inning.



Thomas Carpenter slides safely into home plate.

lead in the top of the first when Iazzetta doubled to left and Mancuso (2 for 3, 2 RBI) doubled over the left fielder's head to bring him home.

Westlake then defeated visiting Albertus Magnus 8-5 on Monday in the next round of the double-elimination format to advance to the section finals. Richie Petrillo tossed 6.2 innings while striking out four to earn the win. Nardone (home run), Iazzetta (3 for 4) and Donato (RBI) provided the offense.

"We've got a lot of seniors," Consorti said. "They've been three-year starters and Tommy is a four-year player. They've come a long way. This year, we've struggled at times and have played a lot of close games. Some games we weren't too successful in the end, making the mistake that cost us. But it appears that those games are helping us right now because we've been in a lot of tight games this year."

The Wildcats will face the winner of Wednesday's game between Magnus and Briarcliff in the Section 1 Class B championship game on Saturday at Pace University. Westlake goes in with the advantage since it has no losses in the double-elimination format.

"I think we're very dangerous right now," Donato said.



# Rye Shuts Down the Bobcats in the Class C Sectional Final

By Andy Jacobs

Scoring goals seemed to be a cinch for the Byram Hills boys' lacrosse team in its first two playoff games. The Bobcats piled up 33 of them in lopsided wins over Edgemont and Nanuet.

But putting the ball in the back of the net still figured to be a daunting challenge for them on Friday afternoon in their Section One, Class C championship showdown against top-seeded Rye.

Unfortunately for the Bobcats, it certainly was.

The Garnets held Byram Hills scoreless over the final three quarters, overcoming an early 2-1 deficit and scoring seven unanswered goals to capture the title with a convincing 8-2 victory. Liam Hurley and Tommy DeCaro scored two goals apiece, Johnny Hartzell dominated the battle for face-offs and the highly regarded Rye defense did the rest, bringing a disappointing end to the Bobcats' quest for a sectional title.

"Hats off to Rye, they played a great



The Bobcats' Casey Begleiter runs toward the cage in Friday's Class C title game.



Byram Hills' Will Mykytiuk finds his path to the cage shut off by the imposing Rye defense during Friday afternoon's sectional final.

game," said Bobcats head coach Michael Johnson, shortly after his team's season concluded on the turf at Lakeland High School. "It was tough to get into our offensive flow. Their three long poles are really tough guys and they play like workhorses out there. So we had a hard time with them. Turned the ball over a few times and I think from our perspective they moved at a speed we couldn't handle very well."

The second-seeded Bobcats had already been given a taste of what to expect from the stifling Rye defense when the teams met late in the regular season just a couple of weeks ago. This time, with much more at stake, they battled to a scoreless stalemate over the first half of the opening quarter before a goal by Danny Fitzgibbons gave Rye the early edge with 5:20 left in the period.

But soon after, the Bobcats' Casey Begleiter, who had 11 assists in the 18-4 quarterfinal rout of Edgemont, scooped up a ground ball near midfield and raced down the right side of the field toward the cage. He found teammate Alec Geller open in front for a point-blank finish that tied the game with exactly three minutes to go in the first quarter.

With 1:43 remaining, Ben Mautner, who had eight goals against Edgemont, gave the Bobcats a 2-1 advantage, moving



Ben Mautner of Byram Hills gets a step on the defense as he runs with the ball in the Section One, Class C championship game at Lakeland High School.



The Bobcats' Matt Deutsch moves the ball up the field in transition during Friday afternoon's sectional championship game vs. the Rye Garnets.

to his left and then sending a one-hopper into the cage. But the goal by Mautner, a senior attackman, turned out to be the last one Byram Hills would score this season.

Just eight seconds later, the Garnets' Hartzell, after gathering the ball on the ensuing face-off and faking a shot, fired the ball past Bobcat goalie Griffen Rakower to again knot the contest. The score then remained even at 2-2 until Rye's Hurley tallied his first goal of the day in traffic from a wide angle to the left of the cage with 5:35 to go in the half.

A couple of minutes later, Hurley scored again from just about the same exact spot on the field, giving the Garnets a 4-2 lead they maintained until halftime arrived. Rakower, who finished with 16 saves, had helped keep the Byram Hills hopes alive with several outstanding saves, but the start of the second half would turn out to be disastrous for the Bobcats.

Rye freshman Caden Whaling scored on the Garnets' first possession of the third quarter and just 19 seconds later, after another Hartzell face-off win, DeCaro provided his first goal by stepping to his right and firing the ball past Rakower into the far side of the net. Just 90 seconds into the second half, Byram suddenly faced a four-goal deficit. It grew to five when DeCaro scored again just seven seconds before the end of the third quarter.

"It was frustrating," said Johnson, "to look up at the scoreboard in the third



Byram Hills senior Alec Geller sends a shot toward the cage in the first quarter of the Class C championship game against top-seeded Rye.

quarter and say, 'Wow, we haven't scored a goal since the first.' We couldn't win face-offs and we kind of got out of our rhythm a little bit."

The Bobcats didn't have the ball much in the fourth quarter and the only goal came from the Garnets' Jack Bartlett with 9:23 left on the clock and Byram down a man. Whatever wind had been left in the Bobcats' sails all but disappeared after the two goals by Rye early in the third quarter.

"Our guys got frustrated," Johnson admitted. "It was one of those things where we came unraveled a little bit and guys wanted to take things into their own hands. That's where we got ourselves into trouble. You know, it's got to be six guys in the box working together and working the ball around. Basic lacrosse."

Just three days earlier, the Bobcats had overwhelmed Nanuet 15-4 in the semifinals as Begleiter scored five goals, while Mautner, Geller and Hayden Fruhling added two apiece. But it was hardly the sort of big-game preparation Byram needed for its championship task against the Garnets.

"Yeah, we played two teams that don't have the skill Rye does," said Johnson about the Bobcats' playoff path. "So it is hard to prepare. And then we were overwhelmed by their speed. But I'm so proud of our guys. They gave their heart today. That's all we can ask."



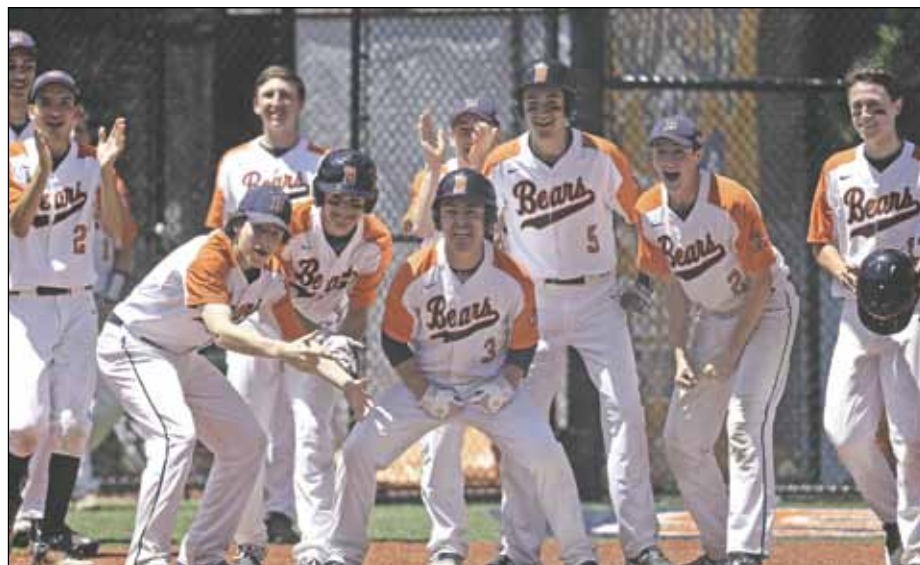
Byram Hills lacrosse players look on dejectedly as the Class C champion Rye Garnets receive their championship plaque after defeating the Bobcats on Friday.

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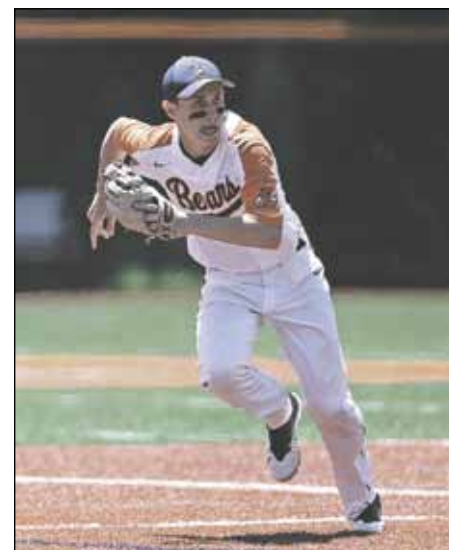




Joseph Murray delivers a pitch during Briarcliff's 11-1 victory over visiting Keio.



Briarcliff players wait at home plate to greet teammate Patrick Poggi after he belted a home run in Monday's playoff win over Keio.



Briarcliff shortstop Alex Benson pursues a ground ball during the Bears' rout of Keio on Monday afternoon.



Third baseman Bobby Chicoine tries to make a tag in Byram Hills' home semifinal game against the Nyack Indians on Monday afternoon.



Nick Skiera of Byram Hills fires a pitch to the plate in Monday's 2-1 playoff loss to visiting Nyack.



Byram Hills second baseman Michael Vasquez races to his left to field a grounder in the elimination game against Nyack on Monday afternoon.



The Bears' Brett Ostrover runs the bases against Keio.



Michael Hardy of Briarcliff watches the flight of his long drive down the left-field line in the 11-1 elimination-game win over Keio.



Byram Hills' Dominic Picca hits a pop fly in the seventh inning against the Nyack Indians.



Byram Hills shortstop Dominic Picca gets set to throw the ball to first base trying to turn a double play in the Bobcats' season-ending 2-1 loss to Nyack.

## *focus on* **SECTION ONE** **BASEBALL** **Semifinals** **Monday, May 27**



# Valhalla Ousted by Magnus in the Class B Softball Playoffs

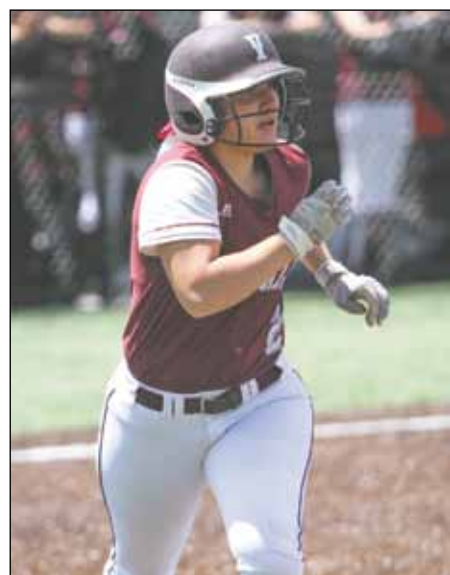
By Rob DiAntonio

They had their share of opportunities, but the Valhalla Vikings couldn't cash in offensively in the Section 1 Class B quarterfinals on Saturday. Fifth-seeded Albertus Magnus, on the other hand, capitalized at the plate and defeated fourth-seeded Valhalla 8-2.

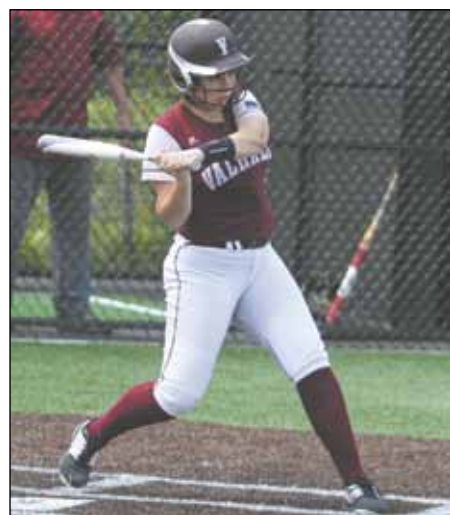
"It was a little uncharacteristic of our play all year," Valhalla coach John Hayes said afterwards. "We weren't aggressive at the plate and took too many strikes. We didn't get the big hits and were a little rattled on defense. I think we actually had more errors than we had hits. The seniors had a great year and just to not play your best on the big day stinks."

Valhalla fell behind 1-0 in the first inning, but grabbed a one-run lead in the third. Lexi Agins beat out an infield single and stole second. Christina Ferrara then singled and went to second on a throw to set up runners at second and third.

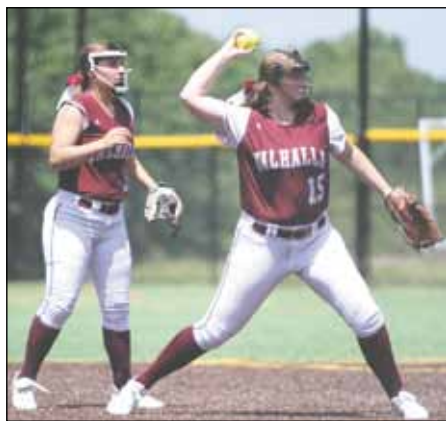
Agins raced home after a wild pitch to tie the game. Ferrara later scored on a passed ball to give the Vikings a 2-1 lead.



Christina Ferrara heads for first.



Julia Serena of the Vikings locks in on a pitch.



Olivia Dillon fires to first.

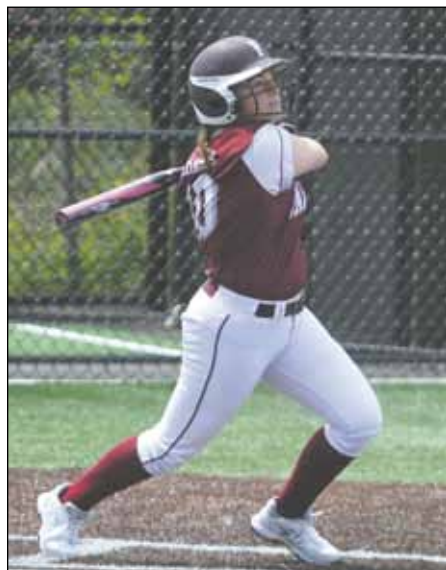
The Falcons regained the lead in the next inning when, with two outs, a hit to left field got past the outfielder and rolled almost to the fence, allowing two runs to score.

"That was a turning point right there," Hayes said. "A low line drive that seemed to be hanging a little bit. She was a little indecisive to go for it or let it drop and got caught in the middle there and then the ball snuck by."

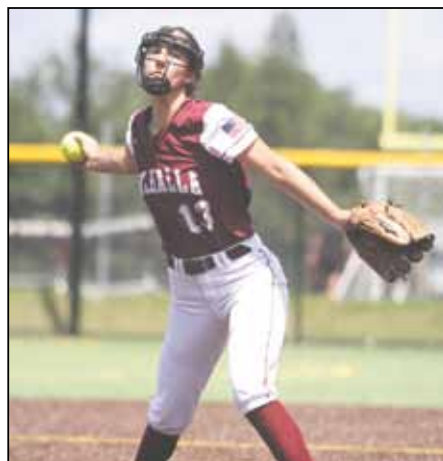
Magnus added a run in the sixth inning on a two-out RBI single. The Falcons then broke the game open with four runs in the top of the seventh, squashing any hopes of a Valhalla comeback.

"That was the straw that broke the camel's back," Hayes said of the Falcons' four-run seventh inning. "We led off with an error and they had another hit and opened it up. That was kind of the game right there."

Valhalla had its chances to get back in the game. With first and second and one out in the fifth inning, a liner off the bat of Gianna Bencivengo was snagged by Magnus' pitcher and she doubled off Ferrara at second base. The Vikings loaded the bases with one out in the sixth,



Juliana Abbondola follows through on a swing.



Jillian Calderola delivers for the Vikings in a Class B quarterfinal vs. Magnus.



Gianna Bencivengo extends to make the catch at first for the out.

but Magnus induced a pop out and fly out to center to escape unscathed.

"We had a couple opportunities and didn't capitalize," Hayes said. "We shot ourselves in the foot on the soft line drive double play. We just honestly were not aggressive enough. We had played these guys a week or two ago, and they won 9-7 on a walk-off. We put the ball in play that day. We just did not hit the ball hard today."

The Vikings finished the season with a 16-6 record and exceeded Hayes' expectations.

"I didn't expect to be where we were, that simple," Hayes said. "I did not anticipate that they would be as strong as they were. Pitching on the hill, Jillian Calderola, I do believe threw (every game) in our 20-game regular season. We went down to Florida and had 10 practice scrimmages down there. The kid threw all year long and was a rock, a warrior. We have seven seniors. A credit to three of them, who were first-time starters in the outfield. They really played well all year long from the beginning. They learned as they went and then they actually became a threat in the lineup."

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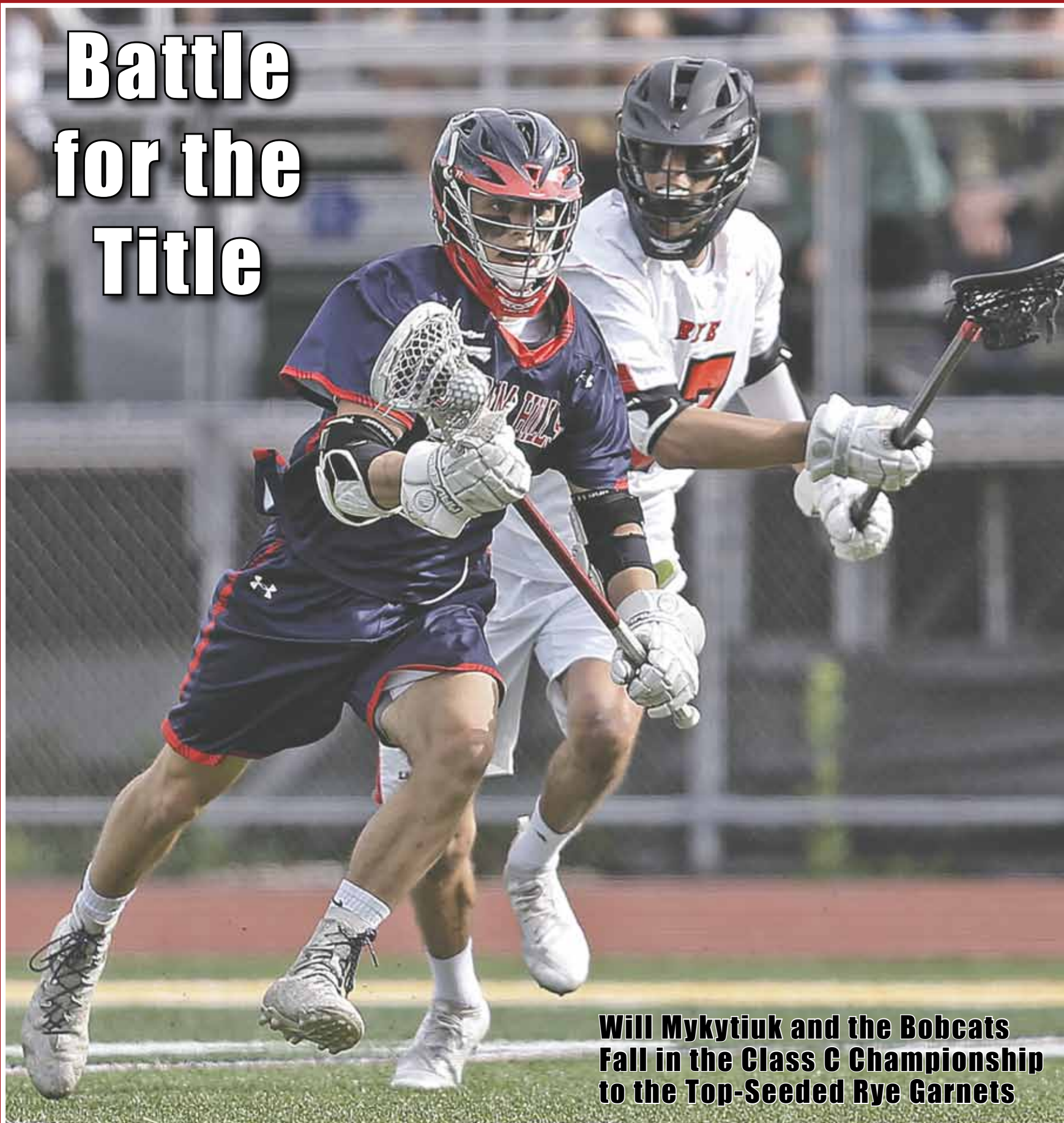
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## Battle for the Title



**Will Mykytiuk and the Bobcats  
Fall in the Class C Championship  
to the Top-Seeded Rye Garnets**