

Jack on the Attack



**Briarcliff Freshman Jack Ricciardi
Finishes With Three Goals Saturday
as the Bears Edge Host Pleasantville**

Foxes Start Fast and Hold Off a Greeley Rally

By Rob DiAntonio

Fox Lane's boys' lacrosse team got off to a blazing start and then held off a late surge from host Horace Greeley to pull off a 12-9 win last Tuesday afternoon.

The Foxes were firing on all cylinders from the start. Just 14 seconds into the game, Dillon Morgan flew through the air while absorbing a check and scored. Jake Wollman scored on the doorstep to make it 2-0 with 2:03 left in the first quarter. Wollman found a cutting Everett Banks to stretch the lead to 3-0 with 31.4 seconds left in the first quarter.

"This is always a good game for both schools; it's a rivalry," Fox Lane coach Craig Henley said. "We've always been in the same league and now we're in the same class. They understand the implications. More than anything, you like to beat your neighbors for bragging rights throughout the towns. It was important to them."

Banks snuck in from the back side, wrapped around and scored to make it 4-0 two minutes into the second quarter. It was the second of Banks' game-high five goals.

Seth Brail (3G, 2A) got Greeley on the board just 35 seconds later. Fox Lane answered when Jake Bazyk rifled in a goal on the run just 23 seconds after that.

"Not only do they play well together, but they're all close buddies," Henley said when asked about the variety of players that can score for the Foxes. "They're great kids. It's nice to see them succeed, spread the ball around and get excited for each other to make those plays. It is nice to see how unselfish they can be."

Banks charged in and beat Greeley keeper Matt Maitland with a high shot to give the Foxes a 6-1 lead midway through the second quarter.

Greeley started the second half by quickly going a man down. It didn't deter the Quakers in their comeback efforts. Forty seconds into the third, Brail fed Eli Rosenblum (3G) for a goal to make it 6-2.

Morgan grabbed the ensuing face-off for Fox Lane, raced down the field, dove and scored to make it 7-2 just seven seconds later. Rosenblum responded for Greeley two minutes later. Wollman of the Foxes received a pass in front of the cage,

threw a fake and then finished to make it a five-goal game again.

Greeley then received consecutive goals from Danny Meringolo and Jack Rifkin to trim the deficit to 8-5 with 1:42 left in the third quarter.

According to Quaker coach Brian Zusi, his players made some adjustments on face-offs in the second half.

They also were coming away with more ground balls and "playing at a higher speed and finally settled in and ran our zone offense better," he said.

"If we played that way for 48 minutes, it's a vastly different game," Zusi added. "When you lose by three in a game where I don't want to say we spotted them four goals, but if we play the whole game like we played the second half that's a whole different story. It's not taking anything away from Fox Lane. They played a great game."

Bazyk charged in and scored with 15.1 seconds left in the third quarter to get the lead back to four goals for the Foxes. Banks started the fourth quarter with a goal, but Greeley answered with goals from Harris Allen and Rosenblum to get the deficit back to three goals at 10-7 with 4:14 to go.

"Complacency," Henley said when asked what changed that let the Quakers creep back in the game. "Thinking we were doing enough and that the other team would let it happen. Greeley's a good team that doesn't need a reason to



Greeley's James Allen fires a deep shot in the Quakers' home game vs. Fox Lane.



Fox Lane's Joe Rozgonyi dodges from behind the cage as Greeley's Brent Rosendorf defends.

fight. We talked a little at halftime that they'll come out with a chip on their shoulder. We kind of weathered the storm for a little while, but ultimately lost the last two quarters of the game."

Fox Lane, however, was finally able to put an end to the Greeley comeback try when Joe Rozgonyi wrapped around and finished with 3:42 to go and Banks followed with a goal 41 seconds later to make it 12-7.

The Quakers netted two late goals, one of which was tossed the length of the field by goalie Maitland and tipped in by Brail.

Sean Bailey made eight saves in the cage for the Foxes.

Fox Lane (9-4) defeated visiting Warwick Valley 13-9 last Saturday. Banks tallied four goals, while Rozgonyi added three. Bazyk and Jack Chasse had two goals apiece.

The Foxes close out the regular season with three games. They host Byram Hills

at 4:30 p.m. on May 7, welcome Suffern at 6 p.m. on May 11 and play their fourth straight home game when John Jay-Cross River comes to Bedford on May 13 at 5 p.m.

"We have some injuries that we're getting guys back from now," Henley said. "We have to get back to the drawing board, which is a weird thing to say in May. But they need to catch up to speed with game speed, conditioning and Xs and Os. Our goal will be to get all of our guys on the same page by the end of the season."

Greeley (7-7) fell to host John Jay-Cross River 12-7 last Thursday. Maitland made 16 saves to keep the Quakers in it. Rosenblum had a goal and an assist.

The Quakers conclude the season with home games against Somers (May 8, 4:30 p.m.) and Carmel (May 10, 6 p.m.).

"We have to control what we can control and let the chips fall where they may," Zusi said. "If we win the last two games, that puts us in a better playoff position."



ROB DIANTONIO PHOTOS



Fox Lane's Ethan Carmody congratulates Everett Banks on one of his five goals in the win over Greeley.



Sean Bailey gets set to make a save in front of the cage for the Foxes.



Greeley goalie Matt Maitland races up the field with the ball vs. the visiting Foxes.

Jake Bazyk of Fox Lane attacks the cage while being defended by Horace Greeley's Chad Frieder in last Tuesday's 12-9 Fox win.

Panthers' Comeback Bid Against Briarcliff Falls a Bit Short

By Andy Jacobs

Time may be running out for the 2019 Pleasantville boys' lacrosse team in its effort to add a fifth consecutive Section One championship plaque to the school's trophy case.

That seemed to be a message on Saturday afternoon when a clock malfunction eventually rendered the scoreboard useless and a second-half comeback bid by the Panthers was thwarted by the sound of the final horn.

Visiting Briarcliff, led by freshman Jack Ricciardi's three goals, came away with a 9-8 victory in the latest showdown between the neighboring rivals. A goal by Noah Benson nearly five minutes into the game broke a 1-1 tie and gave the Bears, who never trailed, a lead they managed to maintain the rest of the way.

"I think just careless passes on the offensive end," said Panthers head coach Chris Kear about the biggest reason for his team's third loss in its last five games. "We had the ball, and we talked about if they don't have it they can't score and they can't win. A lot of these were just unforced errors. Just the unforced errors in the offensive end, they cost us possessions and, hence, scoring opportunities."

"It wasn't easy, that's for sure," said Briarcliff coach Al Meola. "They're a freakin' good lacrosse team. It's nice for our guys because it's been since 2016 since we got a win against these guys. Sometimes that starts to get in your head."

The Bears, now 10-4 overall this season and winners of five straight games, jumped out to a 1-0 lead 90 seconds into the contest when Spencer Rockmore scored the first of his two goals from the left doorstep on Briarcliff's second possession of the day. But the Panthers soon took advantage of a man-up opportunity, evening the score with 8:10 left in the opening quarter on the first of Pat Doherty's three goals.

Just 54 seconds after the goal by Doherty, Briarcliff grabbed the lead for good as Benson, from right of the crease, sent a one-hopper past Panther goalie Brian Wilson. Ricciardi, who had half a dozen assists in two of the Bears' most recent wins, came around the back of the cage 45 seconds later and stuffed home a shot from the right side to increase the



Briarcliff's Spencer Rockmore searches for an open teammate in the Bears' win over Pleasantville.

Bears' margin to 3-1 with 6:31 left in the period.

Pleasantville narrowed its deficit to 3-2 with 10 seconds remaining in the first quarter when Jack Royce, who finished the day with four assists, picked up a rebound in front of the cage and easily deposited the ball into the net. But Briarcliff opened up a three-goal advantage with 7:50 to go in the half after Anthony Capasso and Rockmore scored just 31 seconds apart.

Another goal by Doherty with 6:43 remaining before halftime brought the Panthers to within 5-3. The flow of the game was soon interrupted by the first of the clock problems and neither team scored again before the intermission.

When the second half began, the Bears, as usual, turned to freshman goalie Evan Van Camp in place of senior Ian Leahy, who had made four saves over the first 24 minutes.

"We've been splitting our guys," said Meola about the Bears' platooning. "We're just trying to deepen our bench at every position. Just in case a guy goes down in sectionals, they're not gonna become a



Nick Reish of Briarcliff takes the ball up the middle of the field in the fourth quarter of Saturday's game at Pleasantville.

deer in headlights and not know what to do out there."

Nearly two and a half minutes into the third quarter, the Panthers' Matt May received a pass from Jack Howe and fired a shot past Van Camp to cut the Briarcliff lead to 5-4. The Bears clung to their one-goal edge for five minutes before erupting for three goals in the span of 70 seconds and opening up an 8-4 cushion.

Sophomore Kyle Proctor began the blitz by taking a pass from Rockmore behind the cage and scoring from the right doorstep immediately after the Bears gained a man-up advantage. With 3:32 to go in the third quarter, Matthew Waterhouse, running to his right, sent a shot past Wilson. A mere six seconds later, after Briarcliff won the faceoff, Ricciardi finished the lightning-quick transition by scoring from left of the cage.

The Panthers, suddenly trailing 8-4, managed to get one goal back, from Jake Coleman, with 1:28 left in the third. A big save by Wilson 30 seconds into the fourth quarter soon paved the way to two more goals by Pleasantville, from May and Doherty, that trimmed the Briarcliff lead to just one goal with still over 10 minutes remaining.

But the Panthers never got even. With 8:55 to go, Ricciardi, after slipping behind



Pleasantville and Briarcliff players battle for control of a ground ball in the first half of Saturday's game, won by the visiting Bears.

the cage, still came around the side and fired in a lefty shot from right of the cage to give the Bears a 9-7 lead. Some clutch saves down the stretch from Van Camp on shots by Coleman, Jack Halloran and May preserved the two-goal spread before Coleman finally found the back of the net with 52 seconds remaining.

Pleasantville had one last gasp, getting possession of the ball with eight seconds left. But the Panthers had to travel the length of the field and their long desperation heave wound up bouncing harmlessly along the turf as time expired.

"We felt pretty confident that we were gonna tie it up," said the Panthers' Kear about the fourth-quarter comeback. "We had our looks. No doubt about it, we had our looks. Right at the end there, we were getting pull after pull after pull and we're missing the cage. You can't score if you can't hit the cage."

"That's a freshman goalie right there," said Meola about the way Van Camp stood up to the Panthers' late pressure. "He finishes our games out, so he had some ice in his veins in that last flurry there. He did a nice job."

Even though Pleasantville dropped to 8-6 with the loss, Kear still has hope his defending state champions will soon be ready to make another memorable playoff run.

"All these regular season games are practice for the playoffs," he said. "So I don't see that as setting us back. I see it as it gives us more opportunities to learn from our mistakes and improve on other things we did wrong. Hopefully we correct four or five of them that results in a one- or two-goal win next time."

It was the Panthers who ended Briarcliff's 2017 season in the Class C title game and again a year ago in the Class D semifinals. So, for Meola and the Bears, Saturday's win had some extra meaning.

"It's a fun environment and it's a great game to be a part of," he said. "It's always down to the nitty gritty lately. I told the boys last year resonated deep down with us, you know, walking off the field losing in the semifinal. So it felt real good today to come out here and get a win and get the monkey off our back, get the albatross off our back that we could actually beat this team."



Pat Doherty maintains control of the ball while slipping on the turf during the Panthers' home game vs. Briarcliff.



Pleasantville goalie Brian Wilson carries the ball up the field after making a save in Saturday afternoon's showdown with Briarcliff.



Briarcliff freshman Matthew Waterhouse heads toward the cage with Pleasantville's Pat Doherty in pursuit during the Bears' 9-8 victory.

ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS



Horace Greeley's Lily Ives tries to maneuver around Lindsey Grotta of Byram Hills in last Monday evening's game hosted by the Quakers.



Byram Hills second baseman Gianluca Nelson throws to first trying to complete a double play as Greeley baserunner Jake Andersen slides past him.

SPORTS SCENE

Noah Ackerman of Byram Hills runs toward third base in the Bobcats' home win over Greeley last Monday.

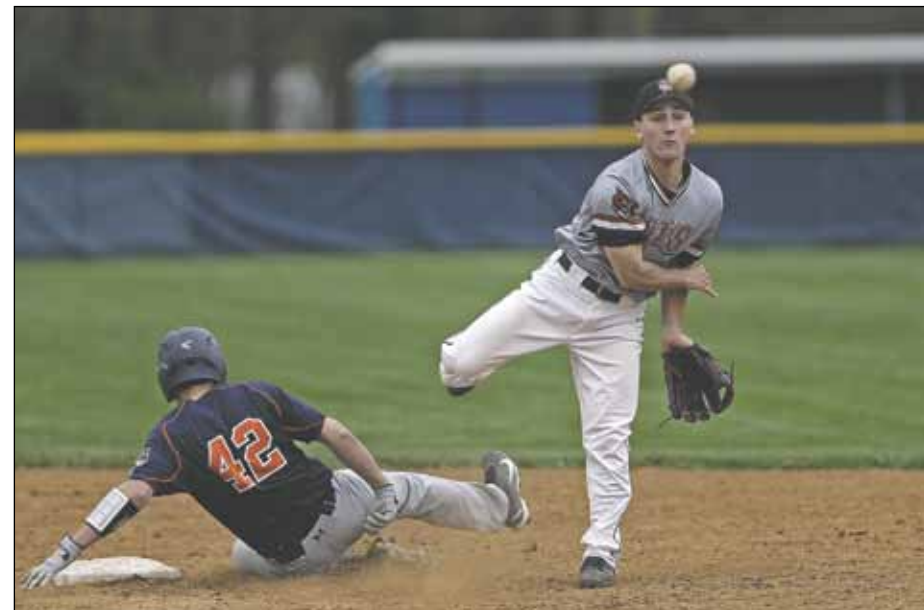


Kallie Hoffman of Byram Hills maintains control of the ball while trying to avoid the defense of Greeley's Elsa Kevorkian during the 13-12 Bobcat victory.

Lindsey Grotta of Byram Hills moves toward the cage for a shot as Greeley's Grace Arrese applies defensive pressure in last Monday's game, won by the Bobcats 13-12.

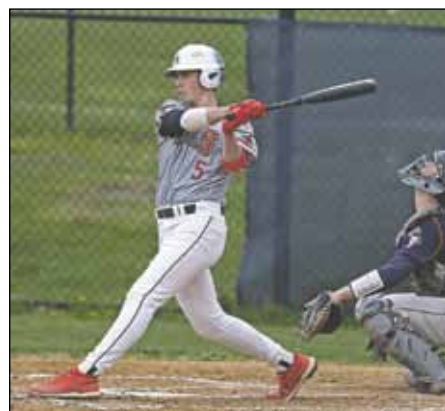


Bella Arrese of Greeley searches for open teammates as she's pressured near midfield in last week's game against Byram Hills.



Byram Hills pitcher Luke Gordon delivers to the plate during the 4-1 victory over Horace Greeley last week.

ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS



Carson Frye of Byram Hills takes a big swing in last Monday's home victory over the Greeley Quakers.



Tyler Rosenberg of Greeley hits the ball toward left field during the Quakers' road game vs. Byram Hills.



Greeley's Madison Rosenthal races across the field with the ball during last Monday night's home game.



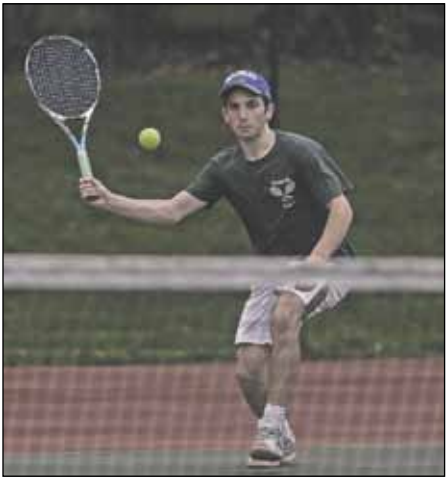
Greeley shortstop Dan Santana tracks a pop fly last Monday afternoon at Byram Hills.



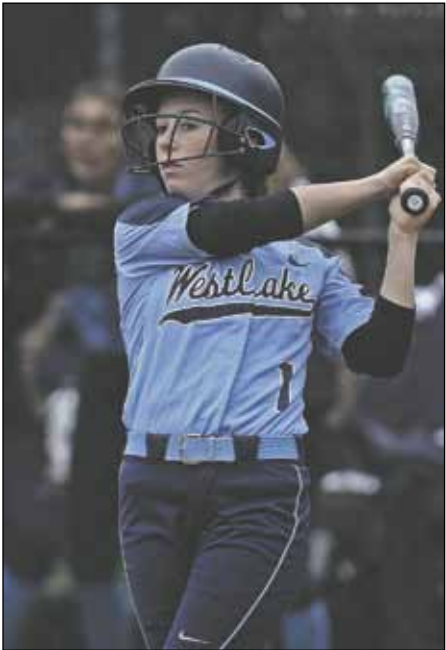
Byram Hills' Grace Scavone controls the ball in the Bobcats' win over host Greeley.



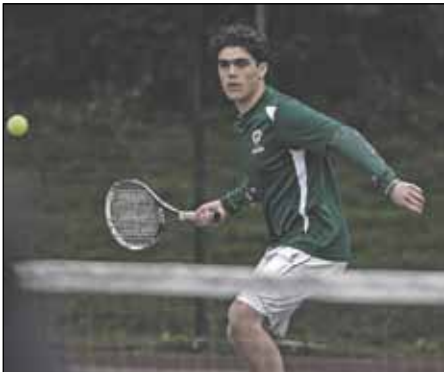
Pleasantville freshman Ashley Rosen pitches in last Wednesday's 9-2 Panther victory over visiting Westlake.



Pleasantville's Dan Wallen moves forward to hit a forehand volley during his match at second singles last week.



Kaitlyn Roemmelt of Westlake smacks a pitch down the line in left field during last week's game at Pleasantville.



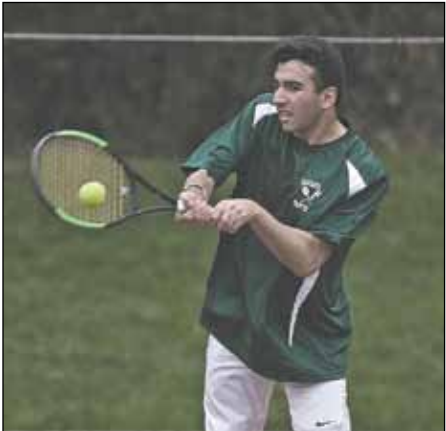
Pleasantville's Keon Ansari concentrates on a forehand return during his match at first doubles against Croton last Wednesday afternoon.



Westlake's Erin Nebel is poised to swing the bat in the Wildcats' road game last Wednesday.



Jacklyn Sicignano of Pleasantville hits the ball to the opposite field vs. visiting Westlake.



Mark Indriolo of Pleasantville smacks a backhand along the baseline in his victory at first singles last Wednesday against visiting Croton.



Westlake second baseman Mia Williams ranges to her right in pursuit of a grounder up the middle against the Pleasantville Panthers.



Pleasantville junior Gillian Gallo gets set to run toward third base during the win over Westlake.



Westlake center fielder Nicole Karaqi throws the ball back to the infield from her knees after trying to make a shoestring catch against host Pleasantville.



Alexandra Broege of Pleasantville awaits a pitch as she bats vs. Westlake.



Pleasantville left fielder Avery Manna chases after a fly ball in last Wednesday's Panther home win.



Shortstop Adriana Piccolino chases a ground ball in last Tuesday's home win over Port Chester. She hit a home run later in the game.



Fox Lane's Olivia Dey controls the ball behind the cage in Friday's game against Suffern.

focus on
FOX LANE



The Foxes' Eugenia Kaltsas runs past a pair of Suffern defenders before firing a shot at the cage in the first half of Friday's game, won by the Mounties.



Emma Greene takes the ball up the field during the second half of Fox Lane's game on Friday vs. Suffern.



Second baseman Valerie Candelaria pursues a pop fly against the Port Chester Rams.



Danielle Sulema hits the ball toward left field during the Foxes' home win over the Rams.



Fox Lane batter Katherine Cristiano follows through on a swing after hitting a pitch into right field.

Junior pitcher Emily Gessler fires to the plate in last week's 6-5 victory against Port Chester.



Natalie Bazyk is determined to get to the cage in the second half of Friday afternoon's home game vs. the Suffern Mounties.



The Foxes' Caitlin Ramage slides home with a run during last Tuesday afternoon's 6-5 victory over visiting Port Chester.

Fox Lane's Hillis Reaches a Baseball Milestone

By Adam Stone

Matt Hillis has spent a lot of time reflecting recently. After decades of coaching baseball, every crack of the bat, every pop of the glove, every sound and smell of the game can evoke a memory. So it might come as a surprise that a major milestone snuck up on him. But it wasn't until the topic of his baseball coaching friend's 100th win came up that he researched exactly where he himself stood. He checked the book, and it turned out he was sitting on 299 wins as Fox Lane baseball coach. Then, this past Thursday, May 2, his Foxes shut out the Port Chester Rams 6-0, and Hillis had reached the magical 300.

"I didn't know about it till the day before," noted Hillis. "You might reflect even more after a milestone win. It's almost like it happens daily now, you're



Fox Lane head coach Matt Hillis

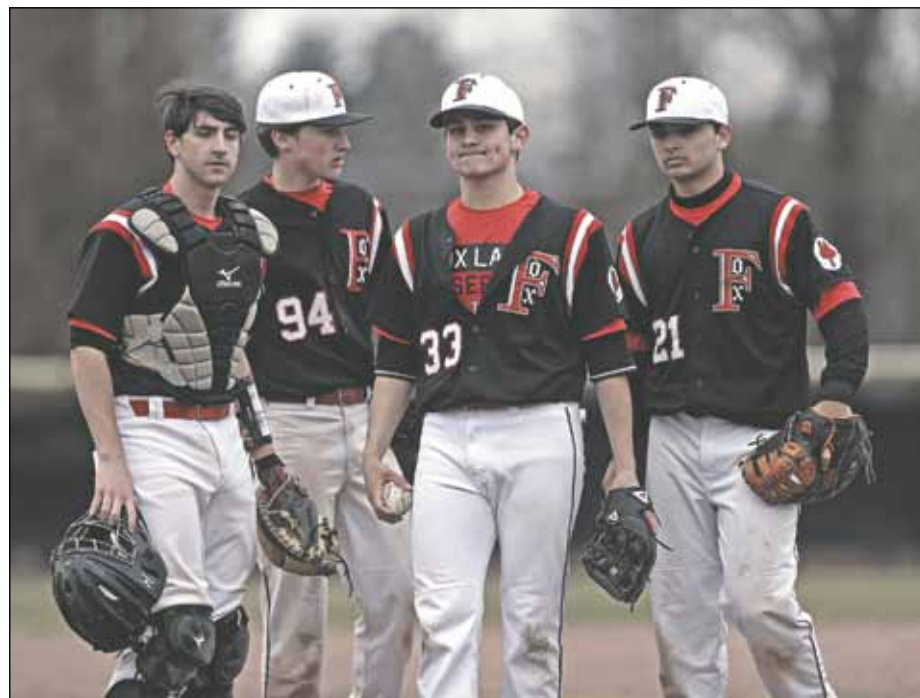
just constantly drumming up memories, almost anywhere you walk on the field reminds you of a moment."

Leaders of strong programs realize that moments of game-time success are built on player and coach development, including at the youth level. John Boucher's son David, a high school junior, is a pitcher for Fox Lane, and Boucher's older son Andrew played for Hillis in 2010 and 2011.

"Annually, (Hillis) and his players hold a clinic for the Mount Kisco Little League and youth baseball program, which is something he does not have to do," observed Boucher, a Mount Kisco Little League coach himself. "The Little League players learn skills, and the Little League coaches learn drills and techniques to help them better teach the game."

When speaking to those who know Hillis' body of work best, a common theme emerges: that of a man intent on building a sturdy, consistent, unified organization with all stakeholders embracing the approach while instilling positive values into the student-athletes who go through the program.

"Matt Hillis is a master coach and leader," remarked Chris Coughlin, Director of Health, Physical Education and Athletics at Fox Lane High School. "Coach Hillis is not just the head coach of our varsity team, he runs our baseball program like a college program. He has been so successful because he employs a systematic approach to the program



The Fox Lane infield awaits a visit to the mound from head coach Matt Hillis during a win over Carmel earlier this season.

having all levels focus on a common approach to the game. He has developed a strong and proud culture of success that many of our talented athletes seek to be a part of. His 300 wins on the field do not compare to the immeasurable positive impact he has had on his players' lives teaching lessons of determination, commitment and good sportsmanship."

The dedication and planning displayed by Hillis to build an institution, not just transient teams, has not gone unnoticed by the broader Fox Lane athletic community either.

"Matt Hillis is among the most well respected, well liked, winningest coaches to ever work at Fox Lane," Fox Lane Sports Booster Club board members Sharon Luppino and Lauren Torre posted to social media. "We are lucky to have such a dedicated, selfless coach mentoring our baseball players."

A lifetime of coaching baseball didn't always seem inevitable for the 55-year-old Hillis. While playing the majority of his college baseball at Iona, and studying biology, chiropractor school was on the

young man's mind. But in 1989, when an opening to serve as the hitting coach at Columbia University arose, the 24-year-old Hillis seized the opportunity.

"I immediately loved coaching," recalled Hillis, who is also a living environment science teacher at Fox Lane. "I thought it would be really difficult to transition from player to coach, that I'd still have a desire to play. But you have to find a different ambition inside you. Now I'd have to get my players to feel that need to compete and work to get better every day."

After inspiring that need for his players at Columbia, Hillis took a hitting coach job with Army baseball in 1998, and the values he learned working at West Point, and Columbia before it, helped produce the philosophy he eventually brought to Fox Lane. A unified message and a systematic approach are hallmarks of successful college athletic programs, and perhaps even more so in a military setting. Hillis had to know he could bring that view with him to the fields of Fox Lane. In fact, when speaking with former Fox Lane Athletic Director Tom Caione before taking the high school job in 2002, Hillis relayed his need to bring a college program approach to the district's baseball operation. He wasn't just looking to coach. If Hillis were to take on the role, he intended to construct a genuine program.

"I wanted to create a program from modified to varsity where everyone was speaking the same language and preaching the same things," Hillis explained. "If we have that, that's a big step in the right direction. We need coaches to buy in and players will follow suit. That's the foundation of what we've built."

And the foundation for many more memories and milestones to come.



Fox Lane's Matt Hillis delivers signs from third base. He won his 300th game with the Foxes last week.



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**Fox Lane's Olivia Dey and Meagan Moky
Fight for Control of the Descending Ball
in Friday's Home Game Against Suffern**