

Examiner Sports

Lakeland, Greeley Led Charge, Combine for 8 All-NYS Field Hockey Nods

By Ray Gallagher
Examiner Sports Editor@Directrays

Both Class A **HORACE GREELEY** and Class B **LAKELAND** were expecting so much more to their respective 2020 field hockey campaigns when the 2019 season had ended 13 months ago. Lakeland was coming off its 10th state title in 11 years, 13th overall, and Greeley was returning nearly 80% of a team that had reached the 2019 state finals. Clearly, optimism was running rampant in both camps during their winter workouts, where both Coach Sharon Sarsen's Hornets and Suki Sandhu's Quakers were chomping at the bit for 2020's arrival.

Then, we all know what happened back in March: COVID-19 put the deathnail into spring prep sports across the country before many states were eventually forced to regionalize their fall sectional playoffs and cancel their respective state tournaments. Such was the case in NYS where Section 1 produced a playoff format that crowned six regional champions, including Horace Greeley, which took home top honors in the Putnam-Northern Westchester large school tournament, and Lakeland, which ran through the



RAY GALLAGHER/ROB DIANTONIO/BOB CASTNER PHOTOS

continued on next page Horace Greeley copped a 2020 Putnam-Northern Westchester large school regional championship.



Lakeland was crowned 2020 Putnam-Northern Westchester small school regional champs.

Sports

continued from previous page



All-Section Carmel sophomore Laila Rosenquest and All-Section Mahopac junior Gabby Gonzalez will be among top players in Section 1 in 2021.



Somers senior M Bella Del Vecchio secured an All-Section nod for the 2020 Tuskers.



All-NYS Mahopac senior M Krista Dietz led Indians to regional semifinals in 2020.



Yorktown G Adeline Araneo made big stops all season to snag All-Section honors.

Putnam-Westchester small school division like waves through an ocean.

It was far from optimal, given the hopes of the student athletes in these two highly respected programs, but it was 100 times better than what our NYSPHSAA winter athletes will have to deal with as 2020 turns to 2021 with the coronavirus pandemic still wreaking havoc on a global scale.

LAKELAND (13-1, 7-0) might have had its unbeaten streak against Section 1 foes snapped at 211 games in a 3-1 loss to Class A Mamaroneck, but that didn't prevent the top-seeded Hornets from knocking off North Salem in the regional finals and getting four All-NYS players, including seniors M Keirra Ettere (33G, 10A, 76P, a lethal finisher), F Emma Fon (19G, 10A, 48P), D Emily McGovern and versatile junior M Mia Smith (10G, 11A, 31P). All-Section HM honors went to sophomore G Celeste Pagliaroli and junior M Jaden Ray (8G, 20A, 36P) while Meg Casey and

continued on next page

Sports

Field Hockey Notebook

continued from previous page



Lakeland senior D Emily McGovern (L) and senior F Emma Fon were both awarded an All-NYS nod in 2020.



Lakeland senior Keirra Ettere and junior Mia Smith formed an unstoppable All-NYS duo in 2020 for Coach Sharon Sarsen's Hornets.



Lakeland Coach Sharon Sarsen guided the 2020 Hornets to Putnam-North. West. small school regional title.

Danielle Hart were selected All-League for a Hornet club that outscored its opponents 89-6 on the year. Lakeland won its 24th consecutive league title and hopes to continue its rich tradition for a long time to come.

"I loved coaching this team and these seniors," legendary Hall of Fame Coach Sharon Sarsen said. "Maybe it was the circumstances but they were so hard-working, humble, thankful, respectful to each other and happy every day to be playing. There was never any drama. They were truly 100% supportive of their teammates and coaches, and they brought all the younger players along with them - sharing their experience and teaching them "the Lakeland way". We, as coaches, never had to do any damage control. Everyone was totally respectful, compliant and a joy to be around. The improvement and execution by our senior class allowed us to play at a high level. We are very proud that we were able to be in a small class of elite teams in Section 1 this year."

HORACE GREELEY continued its recent run of greatness. The state of Suki Sandhu's Greeley field hockey program is such that many believed the top-seeded Quakers were the top team in Section 1 this season, though a 2-1 loss to Lakeland might suggest otherwise. However, Coach Sarsen conceded afterward that her Hornets may have stolen a win that night. Greeley went on to post a 10-1 regular season, 12-1 overall, with a 75-3 overall scoring edge this season. That kind of dominance led to four All-NYS nods, including senior M Lily Schoonmaker (31G, 6A, 68P, 6 hat tricks), senior M Natalie Laskowski (12G, 11A, 35P), senior Caroline Flannery (7G, 11A, 25P) and senior D Emma Terjesen. Colgate-bound Schoonmaker will go down as, perhaps, one of the finest

continued on next page

Sports

continued from previous page

Field Hockey Notebook



Lakeland All-NYS junior M Mia Smith will be the driving force in 2021.



Greeley senior M Lily Schoonmaker secured a second All-NYS nod in 2020.



Greeley senior M Natalie Laskowski (L) and Lakeland senior M Keirra Ettere were both named to the 2020 All-NYS team.

Quakers in history after being named All-NYS for a second time.

Stephanie Kasulka garnered an All-Section nod while Siena Jarin, Lucca Sonne and Grace Arrese (7G, 11A, 25P) were each awarded All-Section HM. Hannah Lane (7G, 3A, 17P) was an All-League honoree.

"I am so proud of my team this year," Greeley boss Sandhu said. "Despite all the challenges of playing with a mask, they had such an exceptional season. We had 16 seniors with six senior captains this year, all of whom will be missed dearly next year. Their leadership will echo through our younger players for a few seasons. I'm looking forward to my underclassmen stepping up to the plate and we will be working hard as always."

CARMEL (7-4-1) had one of its finest seasons in school history, reaching the Putnam-Northern Westchester large school regional finals before losing to Greeley, 2-0, giving the Quakers all they could handle before succumbing to the 2019 state runner-ups. The third-seeded Rams got where they got on the backs of the Rosenquest sisters, who were as skillful as any Carmel players before them. All-NYS senior M Kylie Rosenquest (10G, 6A, 26P) and All-Section sophomore M Laila Rosenquest (13G, 10A, 36P) were difference makers, the kind of pure field hockey players Carmel hasn't had in quite some time, if ever. Kylie will pass the torch to Laila as the Rams hope to build upon their recent success, which has produced two All-NYS

continued on next page

Sports

continued from previous page

Field Hockey Notebook



Carmel senior M Kylie Rosenquest became Rams' second All-NYS selection in at least a decade.

players the past two seasons (Caitlin Tully the other).

"Kylie and Laila work incredibly hard, as do all our girls," Carmel Coach Aislinn Breslin said. "They put in a ton of time in the off season to make sure they were at their best for this season. Watching them together has been a ton of fun and I only wish Kylie had more years ahead for us. All the girls overcame a lot of adversity and managed to make it an amazing season, one they'll never forget."

Kasey Lewis secured an All-Section HM nod while Nikki McGough (3G, 1A, 7P) was named All-League.

MAHOPAC finished a strong season by reaching the semifinals and when No.5 Somers met No.4 Mahopac in the quarterfinals of the Putnam-Northern Westchester large school tournament there was a ton on the line, most notably respect. Neither would have what it took to knock off Greeley down the road, but a Final 4 appearance would be on the line and Mahopac took full advantage in a 1-0 win over the Tuskers. Greeley would go on to eliminate the Indians in the semis. Mahopac enjoyed a resurgence this season behind the stellar two-way play of All-NYS senior Krista Dietz (10G, 9A, 29 P), who flexed all year and cemented her legacy as an all-time Indian great.

Junior M Gabby Gonzalez (3G, 3A, 9P),

an All-Section choice, will be asked to pick up much of the slack next season as the go-to scorer. Mahopac seniors D Carly Ravoli and F Tatiana Moran were named All-League while Emma Witt and KerryAnn King were named All-League HM.

The Indians (7-5-1) outscored their opponents 2-to-1 on the year and posted four shutouts.

"We had eight amazing senior girls, led by co-captains Krista Dietz and Carli Ravoli," Mahopac Coach Dona DiMaggio said. "We had a strong back field with Kerrienne King on the left and Emma Witt on the right. Katie Iarussi split goal time. Tatiana Moran and Annie Kasparian had a strong presence on the front line of attack. And Brenna Meaney used her speed at midfield."

"Carly and Krista were amazing leaders," the coach added. "Both possess incredible skill sets and also incredible leadership. Krista has committed to play at Pace next year."

And when she does, the Indians will look to reload.

"The team will have huge holes to fill next year with the loss of our seniors, especially our two captains," DiMaggio said. "But our upcoming juniors and sophomores have been extremely impressive. Returning attack players include Ava Jennings and Megan Gallagher. In the middle is All-Section



Greeley's Emma Terjesen earned an All-NYS honor after solid 2020 campaign.

player Gabby Gonzalez. In the backfield is Gabby Cazzari, Victoria Fusco and Avery Przymyski, and in goal is Stephanie Miller. The sophomores will return starter Marie Camastro, Emma Rooney, Grace Rush, Maya O'Keefe, and goalie Maddie Orsini, who was outstanding in postseason play this year, and numerous amazing sophomores will be moving up from this year's undefeated JV program."

No.6 **FOX LANE** was eliminated at Carmel where the Rams were too fast and skilled for the reguiling Foxes and All-Section G Ally De Palma, who kept the Foxes in most games this season. Kelly Demore was named All-League.

No.7 **YORKTOWN** (2-7-2) was knocked off by No.2 John Jay-Cross River in the opening round of the regions, but All-Section G Adeline Araneo will go down as one of the program's top goalies.

"Addy was the backbone of the team," said Husker Coach Courtney Hyndman, who, in her first year at Yorktown, was supremely impressed by the Huskers, including the efforts of All-Leaguer Alexa Borges and All-League HM Kaitlin Regan and Kaylee Robustelli. "Everyone could rely on Addy and knew that she would do whatever it takes to stop that ball from going in the goal. We had a very tough season and schedule and in our short 11-game season she came up huge with 134 saves and 505 career saves. I look forward to seeing what Addy does at the next level. It is so hard to see this amazing group of girls end their time with Yorktown

field hockey, but I have been so fortunate to coach them. They are going to excel in college.

"We didn't score a lot and when we did it was a bunch of different scorers," Hyndman added. "Our seniors were outstanding. They came to play and all had a different role on our team. We had Natalie Muscolino down low as sweep. Her powerful hits and strength on defense will be missed next year. Maiya Munoz was our right defender. She was really good at marking up their cherry picker and getting the ball out of our defensive circle. Forward Kaylee Robustelli was a huge help this season. She had so many shining moments on the field and really improved in all aspects of the game. Goalie turned forward, captain Nicole Peters, was one of the most versatile players this year. She came up with huge saves in the few games she played in goal and scored a goal as well. Center midfielder Alexa Borges was the go-to-girl once the ball got out of the defensive zone. While losing six incredible seniors is going to certainly impact the team, there are insanely talented girls that will continue on in the years to come. We saw a lot of great things this season from so many of the Underclassmen. I think they will all step up next year in different ways. I am excited to see what the off-season brings and how well we can all continue to grow the team and program together."

HEN HUD, the No.4 seed in the Putnam-Northern Westchester small school regional advanced to the quarters via a 4-0 win over No.5 **PANAS** when Paige Johannsen scored twice and Logan Gougelmann and

continued on next page

Sports

Westchester Knick Works Toward Career as Counselor, Therapist

By Noah Perkins

Keith Wright stands 6 feet 8 inches tall, is approximately the weight of a large washing machine and makes his living exchanging elbows with men of similar proportions, in the pursuit of stuffing a ball through a carbon-steel hoop.

On paper, the Westchester Knicks power forward doesn't make the stereotypical marriage counselor or psychoanalyst. But, away from the basketball court, Wright has the same enthusiasm for a future career in psychology as he does for snagging errant jump shots.

"I love going out to a park or a coffee shop and people watching," Wright, 31, said. "I love people; I love figuring out what makes them tick and do the things that they do. It's just who I am."

For Wright, a 2012 Harvard graduate with a concentration in psychology, the last eight years of minor league basketball and pro hoops abroad have been invaluable in preparing him for what he hopes is a career in conflict resolution, interpersonal dynamics, mental health and wellness.

"The G League grind can be tough," Wright said. "It impacts your mental health when [NBA] teams are sending guys down. That impacts minutes and rhythm. Guys are trying to make it [to the NBA] and you start seeing players exhibit cancerous behaviors, where they are talking behind coaches' backs and slacking off."

It isn't just the up-and-down nature of the G League that creates emotional turbulence. The pay, travel and accommodations can all be draining.

"When I first signed in the G League [in 2014 with the Austin Spurs], my contract for the full season was \$13,000 before taxes," Wright recalled. "We practiced at a rec center and our locker room was a storage closet. The mental health level around the league was low."

Six years later, the grind remains the same, but the league has made strides in creating a healthier environment for its players.



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Keith Wright, a power forward for the Westchester Knicks, has taken the time off during the pandemic to pursue his dream of helping others through conflict resolution, interpersonal dynamics and promoting mental health and wellness.

"The money and the amenities have gotten better," Wright said. "I've noticed a huge change with the per diem you get. Now, everyone is making \$35,000. When I got traded to Westchester [in 2016,] we are in the same facility as the Knicks using the New York Liberty stuff. We have a hot tub, cold tub, steam room. Meals are prepared for you after practices, they box food up, so you can take stuff home and save money."

As difficult as the G League can be, playing abroad is often harder.

"It's even worse for guys overseas," Wright said. "G League guys have it easier because they are home, they can speak their own language, they have teammates they can talk to."

Soft-spoken and affable, for teammates, Wright is part inside-out big man, part Carl Jung.

"He's always uplifting," said Kyle Casey, a teammate of Wright's at Harvard. "His spirit resonates. He was always singing and dancing, giving out bear hugs."

"People tend to gravitate towards me when it comes to avoiding confrontation and dealing with difficult situations," Wright said. "When I get text messages saying 'We should get lunch this week,' I know what it means."

Wright cited his place as a relative outsider as why he is so good at drawing people in and getting them to open up. His parents separated when he was young, he went to four different high schools, and even now, as an Ivy League graduate in the jagged world of pro basketball, he is an outlier.

"Teams are always saying to my agent 'Why is he even playing basketball when he graduated from Harvard? Is he going to be motivated? He won't work hard; he doesn't need basketball.'" Wright said. "I am constantly battling that."

Of course, living as a large Black man in a culture full of preconceived ideas of what that means has played a significant role in shaping how he interacts with people.

"Growing up, I was always looking for

ways to appear less threatening, because I am how I am," Wright said. "Through a lot of self-reflection, I think 'Am I this way because I disarm myself or is it because it's really me?' I am soft-spoken. I smile a lot. I wear a lot of Harvard clothing. If I am wearing something else, I feel like people are more inclined to stereotype and prejudice and make assumptions about me because I am tall and Black."

Out of work for the past eight months, Wright was under contract with Westchester, when the pandemic shuttered the G League season in March.

"I'm trying to find a contract overseas right now," Wright said. "That's been a headache. Not playing, financially has been really tough."

On the possibility of contracting COVID-19 through playing a contact sport, Wright said, "It is a necessary risk. I need to make a living."

For Wright, mindfulness, meditation and spending time with his wife and mother in Atlanta have been helpful for him in navigating this new normal. The Westchester Knicks training staff has also provided support.

"For the first three months they were checking on us daily," Wright said.

The silver lining of being out of work has been Wright spending more time working toward his goal of becoming a counselor or therapist. He has been studying for the GRE and has taken steps toward a life coach certification. He's even been in contact with a private practice therapist in Atlanta who may offer him a job after he completes his training.

"At the end of the day it's what are you doing to impact the world in a positive way?" Wright said. "There is still a stigma about therapy. I envision a world where we are able to talk about our feelings. There is no right or wrong way to feel about anything. No one should be able to tell you that you are wrong for being sad. Why are you sad? I think we need to continue to move towards a more empathetic place."

Lakeland, Greeley Led Charge, Combine for 8 All-NYS Field Hockey

continued from previous page

All-League choice Emma Schembari added a goal. All-Section HM choice Taeghan Dapson added two assists to add to her team-leading totals. Emma Schebari was an All-League choice for the Sailors.

Gianna Salerno was an All-Section HM choice for the Panthers while Sophia Giglio and G Kate Astrab were named All-League.

BREWSTER did not compete in the playoffs due to COVID-19 but made significant strides this season, doing so behind senior Ashley Goodliffe (13G, 3A, 29P), who demonstrated her ability to get the ball in the net whether it was forwards, backwards, on the ground, or in the air, the All-Section senior figured it out for the Bears.

"With limited time to prepare for games, our varsity and JV teams came ready to work hard to improve their skills and build a bond with their teammates," Bears Coach Jennifer Hershman said. "All of our

field hockey players showed tremendous effort to play their best for themselves and their teammates. The Brewster girls demonstrated adaptability, teamwork, perseverance, and impressive field hockey skills. To be able to step on the field together, we were determined to ensure that each day had a purpose."

All-Section HM honors went to Nora Tuohy and Elizabeth Kulo while Kate Vaughan, Eva Cucinell and Emily Monaco were selected All-League, with Isabella Grana and Grace O'Gorman getting HM.

WHITE PLAINS, the No.4 seed in the Southern Westchester large school tournament, was eliminated by No.1 Mamaroneck, 2-0, after a strong regular season. Cornell-bound F Alexa Donahoe secured a second All-NYS honor for the Tigers, cementing one of the finest careers in school history. Tiger CM Sophia Emmert was named All-Section HM while F Julia Hricay and

G Meaghan Furry were named All-League for a Tiger outfit that improved immensely over the course of the season.

PLEASANTVILLE the No.5 seed, was eliminated in a 1-0 loss to No.4 Hastings in the opening round of the Southern Westchester small school regional despite a great effort from All-League junior Panther G Izzy Baxter (15 saves), who finished with 106 saves in 12 games and had an 80% save percentage. The Panthers' top scorers were All-League junior F Ryan Sullivan (9G, 2A, 20P), and All-Section HM junior M Caitlin Rubsamem (5G, 3A, 13P) and junior F Maeve McCourtney (2G, 3A).

"Our seniors, Meaghan Ennis, Christina Skrzypczak, Maribel Seixas and Meghan Sullivan, were great leaders throughout the season and took a year like no other and made it fun," P'Ville Coach Kristen Coffey said. "Given the fact that we had a very short preseason and no scrimmages,

it took us some time to find the right formation and positions for everyone, but never once did anyone complain. The girls were just happy to be with one another and play the sport they love. I am very proud of all of them and what we accomplished in a short, demanding period of time."

No.6 **VALHALLA** was eliminated by No.3 Irvington in the opening round of playoffs, but saw Corinne Halbauer, Ava De Natale and Kathryn Wofthal all earn an All-League nod despite an opening-round loss to Irvington.

No.7 **BYRAM HILLS** was knocked off in the opening round of the playoffs, 9-0, by North Salem but All-Leaguers Zoe Banko and Irene Byrnes received postseason accolades.

No.3 **CROTON**'s Madison Archer, Izzy Poplizio and Lyndsey Delasho along with **BRIARCLIFF**'s Maeve Donoghue and Gianna Galiana were named All-League.

Sports

Local Communities Mourn Passing of Beloved Figures



By Ray Gallagher
Examiner Sports
Editor@Directrays

The hits just keep coming... one after another, after another, and they have been devastating on a local, national and global scale on account of this ceaseless coronavirus pandemic. This 2020 can't end quick enough; for student athletes, their parents, administrators, behind-the-scenes school clerks, teachers, monitors, bus drivers, restaurant/business owners, cashiers, front-liners, et al. Every single one of us have traversed through some form of hardship, including the Putnam Valley girls' basketball team and many other local athletes trained by Mark Bartelini of Challenge Your Limit Fitness in Mahopac.

These local athletes, who have been through hell since the COVID-19 virus struck last March, are now processing Bartelini's unexpected passing last Thursday when his mom happened upon his lifeless body in the kitchen of his Mahopac home. Like many of us, Mark Bartelini battled demons in his past, but he rose above them and lifted the lives of hundreds of student athletes from his self-inspired gym along Mahopac/Somers border. Bartelini, a tortured soul at times, had some history, which

he was very up front about. He openly cautioned his athletes about the pitfalls of life while traveling hundreds of miles a week to witness their grandeur in person. He recently drove some 400 miles to see the PV girls get after it in a summer AAU hoops tournament: No wonder they adored him.

A Hendrick Hudson High graduate and football player back in 2001, there was no road trip too long for Bartelini, no athlete too insignificant, no relationship too pointless to pursue. With energy through the roof, he poured his heart and soul into training his athletes and building lifelong bonds they'll never forget.

"I always felt comfortable talking to Mark no matter what it was about," Putnam Valley junior point guard Eva DeChent said through tears. "Mark made it actually enjoyable to work out. He always motivated me and pushed me to do better every day and always recognized my little accomplishments when nobody else would."

"He cared so much about every single person he trained, especially my basketball team," DeChent added. "We all had a special connection with him, way more than a trainer. He had a big impact on my life and basketball career and I'll never forget that. His passing will motivate all of us and we

will come back 10 times stronger this year all for him."

Bartelini plied his craft as a regular at the Premier Athletic Club in Montrose where he and his boys forged lifelong friendships that remain, if only in memory now. That gym, in fact, any gym where he could lift, or train others, kept him alive until last week. He had had a previous dalliance with death less than five years ago and was dealt another bad hand last winter when serious knee injuries to both legs steered him off course. It hardly slowed him down, though, as he limped his way to see PV girls' hoops team win its first sectional title in school history last March, just as this God-awful pandemic was putting its death grip upon us.

"Every time I would come back from my substance abuse the gym saved me," Bartelini said in a recent interview. "I always said if I didn't like working out, I wouldn't be alive."

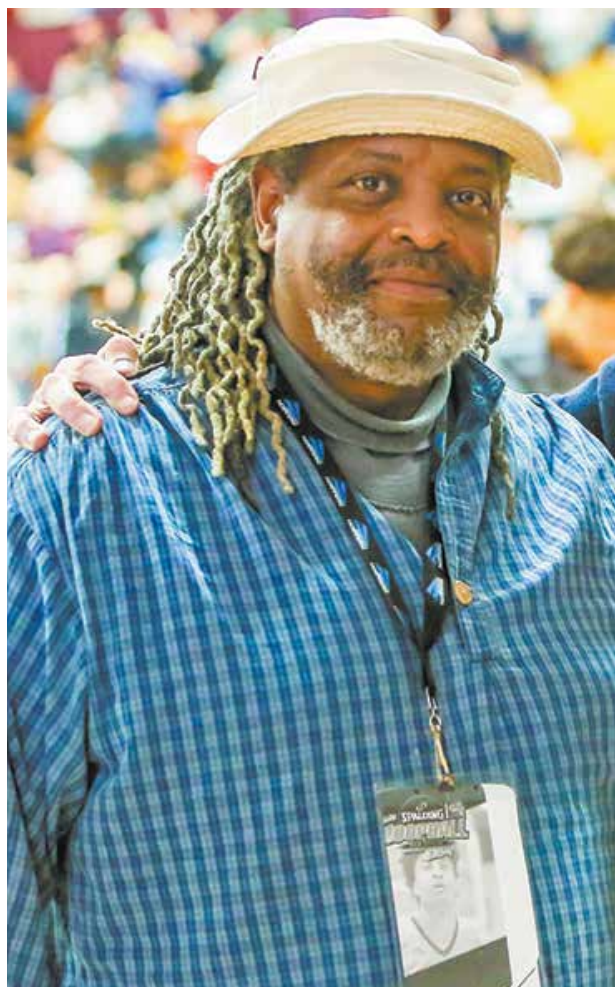
He often told his pupils something else, a little ditty we can only hope rings true within them as they cope with the loss of their beloved trainer: "I try to teach people that no matter what happens you've got to get back up. That's the biggest thing with my kids. I tell them never stay down for long, always get back up and fight for it."

Those athletes varied in range and ability, but they always got Mark's best effort. While he trained some topnotch athletes in the region, he also worked with special needs youths through the New York State-funded Self Direction program. "We work out. We hang out. It's kind of like a Big Brother thing," he said last January. "Everything I do with the kids is more than a workout. The biggest thing I do with kids is build their confidence. It's gone better than I could ever have imagined."

That vision, though blurred through teary eyes right now, will last a long time for those he touched... #RIP, big dog...

And then, the Section 1 basketball community rose Monday morning to learn of the gut-wrenching passing of down-county hoops legend Keith Yizar, a booming presence and fixture at the Westchester County Center Final 4's and a lover of all things Mamaroneck, White Plains, Rye Neck and Woodlands. Mr. Yizar, whether you knew him or not, stood out at the County Center because he pulled for every kid in the house, not just Mamaroneck where he was larger than life. Underneath that emblematic bucket hat was a heart of gold, a man the community looked up to. A smile, a handshake and a bro-hug... I'll miss that every time I pass his front-row, mid-court seat, which should remain open in his honor during championship week when we eventually get back to the Mecca. #RIP, my man.

Direct Rays



LONNIE WEBB PHOTO

The Section 1 hoops community lost a cherished giant with the passing of Keith Yizar over the weekend.



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Local trainer Mark Bartelini passed last week but not before he affected the lives of hundreds of local athletes on and off the field.

ALL TOGETHER NOW.



We've been hard at work reporting on the public health crisis that's disrupted everyone's lives. We're proud of our brand of reliable, timely, thorough local journalism.

Our advertising department is here to help promote your business. Hire us to assist you.

Our audience, in print and online, is deeply engaged with community. In short, Examiner readers are your potential customers.

**A trusted local news outlet is your best investment.
We're invested in your success.**

914-864-0878

advertising@theexaminernews.com

The
Examiner
news.com

Subscribe to our local news email blast for FREE today:
www.theexaminernews.com/eblast/