



Examiner Sports

2020 Boys' SOCCER
Preview Edition



Class A Soccer Scene Loaded with Legit Contenders

Ossining, White Plains to Challenge in AA; Pleasantville, Briarcliff to Continue Class B Rivalry

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As one of the only shows in town this fall, Section 1 soccer players and coaches are set to take flight on September 29th: For now! Folks in Section 1 are cautiously awaiting a September 29 start date for low-risk sports like soccer, field hockey, cross country and tennis to commence this fall after the original Sept. 21 start date to re-open practice fields on campuses across the counties of Westchester, Putnam, Rockland and Dutchess was pushed back by Section 1, which cited the need to focus on reopening schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. American football, volleyball and cheerleading were deemed high risk and, as of press time, can practice but not play games this fall.

Student athletes are preparing in earnest for a late September kickoff, according to Lakeland boys' soccer Coach Tim Hourahan.

"I cannot wait to get going," Hourahan exclaimed! "It has been such a long haul for our athletes since the middle of March, so you better buckle up because once these games get going there will be some high-level soccer being played."

Conference II is stacked, according to Hourahan, who admitted that as many as 10-12 of the 32-team field can challenge for the Section 1 Class A crown once the league races have concluded.

"Class A soccer is loaded, seriously loaded top to bottom," the coach said. "I can think of 10-12 teams off the top of my head with a legitimate chance to win that coveted sectional title."

As for game day, it's going to look a lot different but players will gladly accept a handful of COVID-19 precautions in a heartbeat for the chance to play. It appears that only two parents per player will be in the stands for any game. No student sections are permitted and parents must wear



RAY GALLAGHER PHOTOS (OTHERS SUBMITTED)

Somers junior Bennett Leitner will be one of the driving forces behind the Tuskers' success this season.



Somers M Derek Marques could tap into a monster season for Class A runner-up Tuskers.

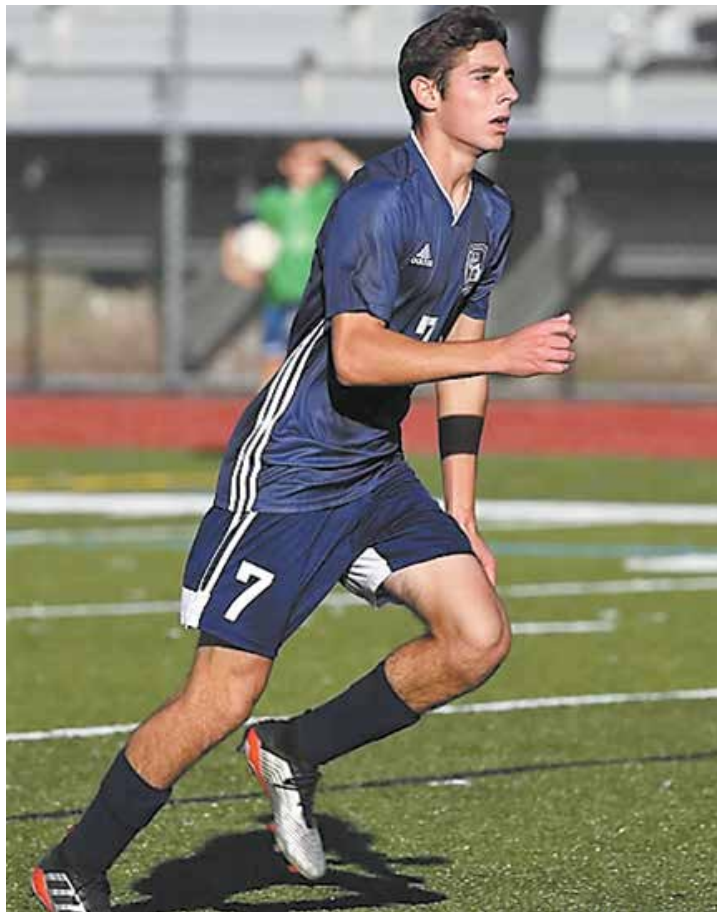
a mask and sit six feet apart from others. Suffolk County recently put out a statement saying it will not be having any fans at games this fall, so Section 1 remains hopeful to allow parents to come watch. Also, all soccer players may have to wear a mask to play, which is anything but ideal.

"We'll do what we have to in order to take the field and play soccer," Hourahan said. "It's not ideal but we'll take it."

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Byram Hills will look to returning All-Section M Bailey Goldstein for big-time production and two-way play.



Junior F Nicolas Bisgaier returns as Byram Hills' leading scorer in 2019.

CONFERENCE II

Rye, which graduated a ton of players, returns as Section 1 champions for the first time since 1979 after the Garnets ousted

runner-up Somers in a wild, down-to-the-wire 3-2 victory over Coach Brian Lanzetta's Tuskers. Class A also welcomes back perennial power Horace Greeley to the mix

in what might provide an epic league battle between the Quakers and Byram Hills, among the finest programs in the state under Coach Matty Allen. Clarkstown North,

Ardsley and Edgemont are also newcomers this season while Clarkstown South jumps to Class AA. Beacon, Byram Hills, Clarkstown North, Eastchester, Greeley, Harrison, Lakeland, Pearl River, Somers and Yorktown are considered serious challengers by most coaches.

The Class A scouting reports tout the following: Beacon - Don't sleep on them. G AJ Lucas is on another level. Lakeland - No one puts in more effort than the Hornets, who are well coached.

Rye - perennial top club with great leadership in Captain Nic Logan and Coach Jared Small.

Somers and Pearl River - more wins than anyone past five years; always solid. Horace Greeley - athletic, large and athletically large. Yorktown -- More than a puncher's chance every year with solid athleticism. Byram Hills -- Never count them out, ever!

SOMERS (17-2)

The third-seeded Tuskers knocked off No.14 Lourdes, 3-1, and No.6 Yorktown, 7-1, in the first two rounds before reaching the finals behind a 4-2 semifinal win over No.2 Pearl River. What's scary for the rest of Class A is the fact that the 2020 unit is being favorably compared with the 2016 unit that went on to win the program's only state title. While there will be no state tournament this season due to COVID-19, the Tuskers appear to

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Byram Hills senior Max Bergman and co. will look to carry on the Bobcats' rich tradition.



Greeley Captain Owen Parsons should have a big year on tap, his third on varsity.

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be the team to beat in Section 1 Class A after making their third sectional title appearance in four years; a run that includes two Section 1 titles, two NYS finals and one NYS title.

Returning players include senior Derek Marques, who should have a breakout senior year at center back.

"I can argue Derek might be the best in section one," Lanzetta said of the four-year varsity player.

Junior Bennett Leitner had 20 goals as a sophomore and is as feisty as they come. If he remains healthy he could lead the team in scoring. F Daniel D'Ippolito had an amazing 2019 playoff run, scoring four key goals. Shutdown defender Mikey Micceri is a pit-bull, who Lanzetta can't wait to unleash.

"I'm looking very forward to watching him," said Lanzetta.

Somers seniors Zane Bramson and Oscar Szutkowski will take on major roles this year. The junior class will be a huge part of the varsity program, according to Lanzetta, who thinks his club has the skill set, moxie and swagger to win it all.

"They all play very high club level soccer and I think the section will enjoy watching them play," the coach said.

Sophomore goalie Anthony Tucci, who started as a freshman, should emerge into one of the top keepers in the section.

"Since his experience at a young age, I

think you will see this year him being a top goalie in section one," said Lanzetta, who is awaiting the arrival of his son, Lorenzo Michael Lanzetta, who the boys will be dedicating their season too. "The expectations this year are unsure, because we don't know what our season will be like, the plan, the schedule, etc. But one thing is certain; we will be ready to play."

For three decades now, that rings true at Somers.

BYRAM HILLS (16-3)

The fourth-seeded Bobcats made short work of No.20 Walter Panas in the opening round before taking out Nyack, 3-1, in the quarters. However, the Bobcats met their match in a 4-2 semifinal match with Rye. The goal at Byram Hills is constant when it comes to soccer, the Section 1 and state title, and that never fluctuates under Coach Matty Allen, among the most respected mentors in the state.

The Bobcats have become the model of consistency since Allen inherited the program 2001, going 286-68-24 in those 19 years. During that time, Byram Hills has snagged 13 League titles, six Sectional Titles, four NYS Regional crowns, which have led to four state Final 4 appearances (the last in 2014) that produced a pair of state final appearances and one state title in 2007.

Within Section 1 the dominance is self explanatory: Byram Hills has gone to the semifinals and/or sectional finals 13 of the last 14 years. The Bobcats are an astounding 6-1 in the sectional finals with their lone loss coming at the hands of Port Chester in 2012 when Stephen Gonzalez clanked a beautiful shot off the post in overtime. It is this type of consistency that Section 1 coaches have marveled at since the turn of the century.

"We return seven starters to the lineup this year," Allen said. "Hopefully, we'll get a shot at something."

Imagine that. The Bobcats are loaded once again and they'll have more than just a shot with the likes of Nico Bisgaier, a junior forward who provides an electric force, up top. Senior M Bailey Goldstein returns with All-Section accolades. All-Sec-

tion HM D senior Kalden Harp anchors a staunch defense in front of senior keeper Aidan Cogan, who takes his cues from Assistant Coach Stephen Skonieczny, the former star keeper for the Kingston Stockade of the National Premier Soccer League. Junior wing Ross Eagle hopes to fly high as the team's second leading scorer in 2019.

Byram Hills soccer is more than on-field exploits. The Bobcats are equally devoted off the field.

The Bobcats are dedicating the 2020 season to Christy Saltstein, the mother of a player who passed away suddenly at the age of 46.

"She was an amazing woman who co-founded the Stayin Alive Charity that has raised over \$200,000 for local police departments, fire departments and ambulance corps to buy equipment needed in times of distress," Coach Allen said. "I cannot begin to tell you how much of a loss she is to our team but also the community. She represented everything wonderful about life, motherhood and love."

On the field, Byram Hills has jumped to a new league, which includes John Jay CR,



Brewster junior G Louis Likens was under heavy fire last year and hope for better outcomes in 2020.

Edgemont and Horace Greeley.

"That should be fun and exciting," Allen said. "It's sad to leave behind our rivalries with Rye, Eastchester and Harrison, who we always had great battles with. We have so much respect for those guys and their coaching staffs, but we can't wait to get going."

Many in the know expect the Bobcats to reach the Final 4 or better, maybe even square off against Somers for the Class A title.

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Lakeland's Bryan Jaramillo will turn heads this fall as an explosive scorer for the 2020 Hornets.



Greeley's Zach Eichenberg and the Quakers hope to have a say in who is No.1 in Class A this season.

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YORKTOWN (13-5)

The sixth-seeded Huskers advanced to the quarters in fancy fashion, a 2-1 OT triumph of No.11 Tappan Zee, but arch-rival Somers ended their season in the quarters. If that wasn't bad enough, the final score is embedded within the returness. It shouldn't and won't sit well with the Huskers, who have a major hole to fill. Playmaker and finisher Timmy O'Callaghan (20G, 10A) is gone, so the Huskers lose the bulk of their attack. As is often the case, the caliber of athlete at Yorktown should help it prevail and continue to press on as one of the premier programs in the region.

"We like to stay under the radar," Yorktown Coach Ed Polchanski said in oxymoron fashion.

Staying under the radar is tough for a program as respected at Yorktown, especially when the Huskers return a lot of

game plan and lose focus, a team as skilled as Somers was able to put in three goals before we could blink."

The coaching staff was banking on each individual to stay sharp during the pandemic.

"As always, we are looking to compete every day and get better through high intensity practice and preparation," Huff said. "If and when we do play will be special because this off season was truly up to each individual player in terms of what kind of shape they wanted to get themselves into."

Schedules have yet to be released but the early rumors had Yorktown opening its season against Somers in what has become a fierce rivalry.

LAKELAND (8-7-1)

In a rare down year, the 12th-seeded Hornets were bounced in the opening round by No.5 Nyack, 2-0. After going to



Briarcliff's Tyler Cho will pose problems for opposing defenders this fall.

guys who were either starters or played major minutes last year. The defensive unit is stacked with returnees, including senior Marco Landicino, junior Mason Murphy, junior Jack Pryblyski and senior M/D Vasyli Oliinych.

The Huskers have a dynamic duo up top in juniors Peter Tinaj and George Popovic, who can turn a game on its head at any given moment with their flair and skill.

"We also have a fantastic core of underclassmen, who, like last year, will look to compete against those seniors/returning players for a starting spot," Husker Assistant Coach Justin Huff said. "The bar has been raised the last few years at the program, and we are no longer happy with just making sections. Last year ended on a very sour note, as we met a familiar opponent in Somers. That game was a perfect example of what happens when we don't stick to our

the section finals three times in six years (2006-2011) and then having one of the best teams in Section 1 in 2016, Lakeland has dropped a notch in recent seasons. "That year (2016), we beat Somers twice during the regular season and they went on to win a state title," Hourahan said. "We lost in the semifinals on a late goal to Pearl River, 4-3, that Fall, but I would have loved a trilogy match up with my man Lanzetta in the finals."

"We have been able to resume some training through club soccer, but there is nothing like getting all your boys from your varsity program back together every day after school," Hourahan said. "There's just nothing like it. It's a special thing and I am so happy for these kids to be able to play this fall. We here at Lakeland are really looking forward to getting after it this fall and have been working hard to get back to



Opposing defenders did everything they could last season to stop Ossining senior F Kevon Evans but it often failed.



White Plains M Ruben Collazos will make noise on both ends of field in 2020.

the top tier of Class A soccer."

Lakeland is hoping for another solid six-to-eight-year run with the current youth within the program. Last year, the Hornets started a slew of underclassmen, including junior Bryan Jaramilo, who led the unit with 10 goals as a soph.

"Bryan really turned heads in a hurry last year," Hourahan said.

Sophomores Sonny Karaqi and Jack Flannery are both poised to have big years, along with rising sophomore and Academy player Derek Jaramillo (Bryan's cousin) as well as Put Valley transfer Michael Rodriguez, who played varsity soccer as an 8th grader in 2018.

"On top of this tremendous sophomore class we have 12 returning seniors, including six starters," the coach said.

That senior class will be led by multi-sport athletes and co-Captains Reed Thompson (CB), Austin Bergen (MF) and Jason San Lucas (winger).

"These three players have been starting since their sophomore year and will be the engine of this team," Hourahan said.

Antonio Gerbasi, Tyler Nocito, Stefan Minchalo, David Pinkowski, Bobby Hernandez, Jack Tuite, Dan Gonzalez all saw time last fall and will look to be very important players for the team in 2020.

"We feel really good about the make-up of our roster at Lakeland and the kids

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White Plains' D Eric Ramirez (No.5) is a dangerous two-way threat.



White Plains is banking on a big season from wing David Paramo.

have really bought into this nontraditional off-season program attending zoom meetings and logging fitness workouts since May," Hourahan said. "I know this varsity group looks to bring this program back toward the top of a very loaded Class A sectional tournament."

GREELEY (10-4-2)

Greeley is coming off a strong year that ended in a stunning first-round upset at the hands of Carmel in the AA playoffs. The 13th-seeded Rams' 3-2 overtime triumph of the No.4 Quakers was one of their biggest wins in more than a decade. The Quakers will look to wash the bitter taste out ASAP.

"We had a strong senior corps that will be missed," Greeley Coach Camp Shropshire said. "I am optimistic for this year's crew. We have a core of seniors who will be starting their third year with us, and several are third-year starters. In addition, we may be seeing one or two players returning from the Academy system."

The coach is banking on cap-

tains All-Section three-year starter Owen Parsons to carry the bulk of the load as he captains the club for a second year. All-Leaguer Zach "Ike" Eichenberg is a three-year starter and one of the leading goal scorers last year. All-Leaguer Justin Miller is the third captain and a returning starter.

"We are returning to Class A form AA, but that's no relief," Coach Shropshire said. "Byram Hills, Somers and Yorktown, right in our backyard, are perennial stud teams we look forward to playing against. The quality of their athletes and coaches are what makes Section 1 so great to be a part of. We have not had a league game against Byram Hill in several years."

Should be interesting as the neighboring Bobcats and Quakers have at it.

BREWSTER (2-14)

The Bears did not qualify for the playoffs last year.

Clearly, we have a new set of challenges given, the uncertainty around the virus and the impact on academics and sport," Brewster second-year Coach Jerry Frieri said. "We had a tough season last year (as

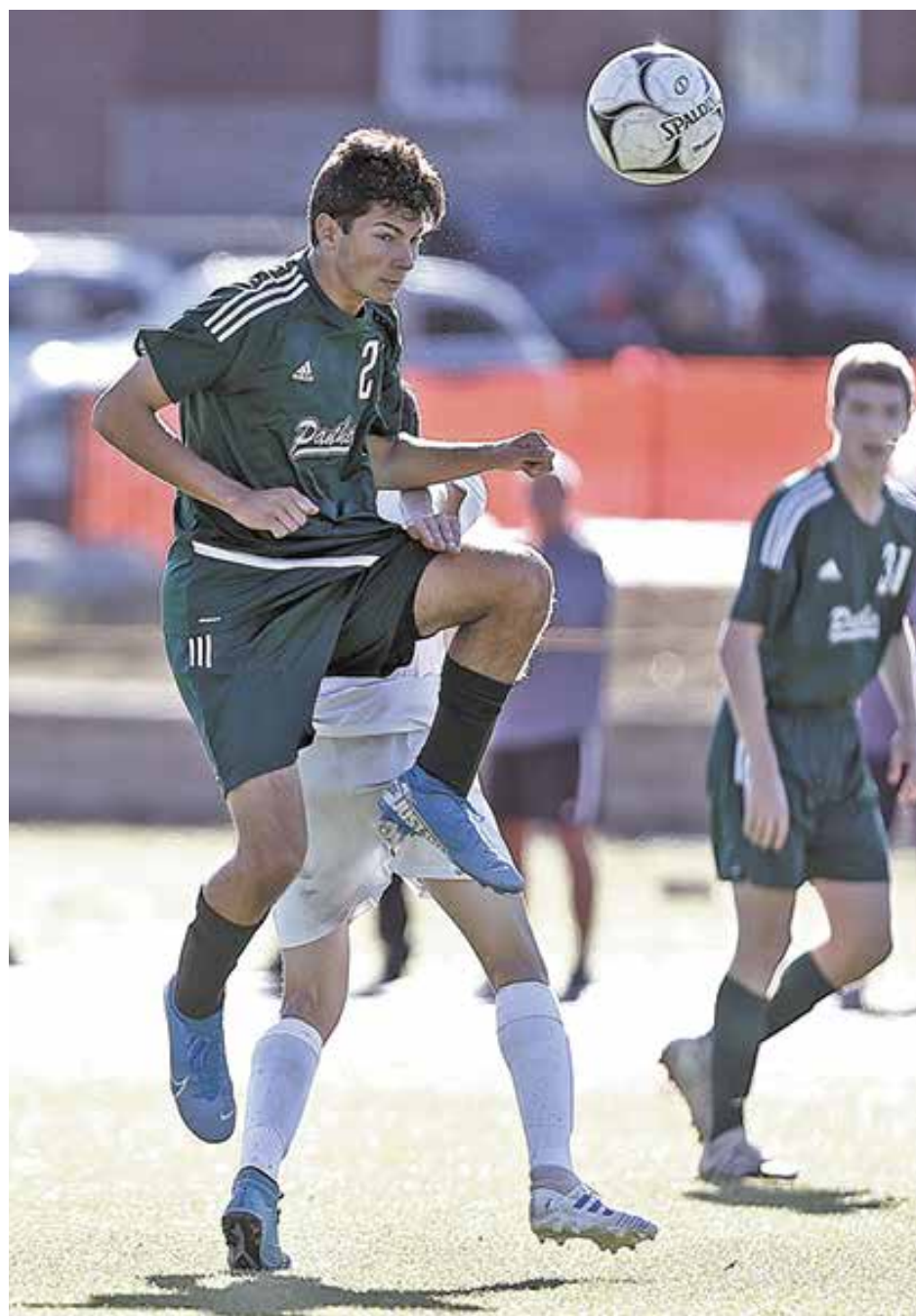
a result of replacing 10 graduating seniors in my first year as coach. This season, we are replacing four starters. Our main objectives for the season will be on improving our record and cutting down on goals against."

Brewster's top returning players are incoming junior G Louis Likens, incoming senior and center back Justin Sagastume, incoming senior and left back Clayton Harrison. The midfield is loaded with underclassmen, including Matteo Gulla (sophomore), Marco Gulla (junior), Brian Flores (junior), Darwin Ventura (junior) and Julio Casasola (junior). A key newcomer is forward Daniel Arevalo, a key goal scorer last year for the JV team, who will pair with forward Kevin Sagastume, a breakout candidate.

PANAS (7-11)

The 20th-seeded Panthers won an out-of-play game before getting knocked off by Byram Hills, 5-0, in the opening round. The Panthers made some noise last season due to the fact that All-Section senior

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Pleasantville's Ryan Scardina is an explosive scorer to watch for.

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Tristan Phillips scored 28 goals as a junior, setting him up for a record-breaking season. Panas officials were not certain if the 28 tallies were a school record but it is believed to be.

"Tristan is a speedy forward with great foot skills and a nose for the goal," Panther Coach Peter Pryscklak said. "He's a game changer. His passion for soccer and his team is world class. He would change position to help counteract another team's strengths.. He's got the potential to be a Division 1 soccer player for sure."

Kyle Rizzo (All Section HM), Kyle Arraiano (All League), Eddie Chicaiza (All League HM) and JC Merchan all return and expect to build upon what was a building-block campaign in 2019.

"Our goal is to compete and be the best Panas team out there," said Pryscklak. "Our league has some tough rivals, including Lakeland, Somers, Yorktown and Brewster."

HEN HUD (5-8-3)

No playoffs for the Sailors in 2019. In his 16th year as head coach, Chris Cassidy, along with three-year assistant Steven Pinski, returns the vast majority of his team, including seven starters. "We lost keeper Justin Cohen, and D Brian Ramirez, D Jay Luis from a team that, quite honestly, underperformed," Cassidy said.

All-League F Gio Cardona, MF Jeremy Rench, All-League MF Brandon Velasquez, MF Tyler Robinson, D Jakob Lentino, MF Luke O'Neil and All-League F Matt Torres are set up for big years. Additional veterans include GK Declan Couch, F John O'Connor, F Ioannis Schattman, D Brandon Rodriguez, F Alex Peske, D/MF David Hernandez and D Mateo Castro.

"We played off-site for a majority of the season because our home field was being finished, so we're excited to be at our new field this year," the coach said.

The Sailors just missed out on the playoffs last year. With 14 minutes left against Poughkeepsie, the blew a 3-2 lead and lost 4-3. Hen Hud was then defeated by Lourdes, knocking it out of the postseason. Along the way, the Sailors had three games of 0-0 ties.

"I believe we can make some noise in our league," Cassidy said. "Beacon has been the standard for a few years now. We hope to challenge them and anyone else for the title."

PEEKSKILL (7-8-2)

The 18th-seeded Red Devils won an out-bracket game but were eliminated in last year's opening round after a 4-0 setback to No.2 Pearl River.

CONFERENCE I OSSINING (19-3-1)

An historical season for the top-seeded Pride concluded in the NYS semis after Ossining took its first sectional title since 1978 behind a 2-1 win over No.2 Mamaroneck, which preceded a 2-1 win over No.5 Arlington, the cream of the Section 1 crop. In fact, the Pride took three 2-1 decisions en route to the title. But that was just the start. When Juan Pablo Estupinan nailed the kill shot in the Pride's 1-0 win

over Monroe-Woodbury (11-4-3) in the state quarterfinals, Ossining was in un-chartered territory. But, after capturing the hearts of the township, Ossining fell 1-0 to eventual NYS champ and nationally-ranked Brentwood in the state semis, thus capping the finest season in school history. The Pride, which reached the sectional finals in consecutive years, have had the finest two-year run in program history.

Section 1 Player of the Year Nolan Lenaghan has graduated with several other key seniors, leaving senior Kevon Evans as the Pride's headliner. Evans is no stranger to the big spot, having delivered the GWG in Ossining's title win over Mamaroneck. Senior M Jeyson Padilla will need to fill the scoring void and junior Marianna Marra is a name to remember with a world of potential.

"As we all know, this season is going to be very different compared with previous seasons," Ossining boss Joe Scamarone said. "With the late start of the season, very little practices, small number of games, and endless Covid-19 guidelines for sure will be more friendly games than a true competition. Here in Ossining soccer has developed in great deal, thanks to the player development programs offered by Ossining AYSO and Munay Soccer Academy, with the great support of the Ossining School District. We usually have an average of 110-120 players trying out for the varsity and JV teams. However, I believe this year the numbers will be less due to COVID-19. Parents are concerned and will take any precaution to protect their children, even if it is to skip a season."

With 12 players returning from the 2019 roster, Ossining is stacked once again.

Speedy M Malcolm Phillips is very talented and among the fastest players in the section. John DeAngelis is also a young player with a great view of the game. Yohance Douglas is a winger with great skills and quickness. Hunter Caparelli is a strong defender with a solid work ethic. Alebdail Hernandez is a talented midfielder with a good attacking mentality.

Key newcomers include F Jason Osorio, F Robert Mora and M Kevin SanMartin. Truth be told, Ossining has somewhere between 6-8 players who can pick corners and decimate opposing defenders.

WHITE PLAINS (9-5-4)

The eighth-seeded Tigers knocked off No.9 Scarsdale in OT in the opening round before losing to eventual champion Ossining in a 2-1 quarterfinal OT loss. First-year Coach Mike Lambert will rely on senior D Eric Ramirez (4G last season) and MF Ruben Collazos (3G) to fill the nets while senior goalies Carlos Mendez and Thomas Pisapia return with a ton of experience between the pipes.

Lenny Balarezo (MF), Christopher Cardenas (D), Jonathan Calpeno (D), Victor Flores (D), Brian Guaman (MF), Edgar Lara (MF), Jorge Lopez (D), Mario Martinez-Jimenez (D), Alan Meneses (MF), Eldin Mrkulic (MF), David Paramo (MF) and Derek Verdin (D) all saw time as juniors last year. With 18 victories over the

last two years, the time is now for White Plains to take the next step.

"Even though we graduated 14 seniors from last year's team, we are returning 15 players, six of which are returning starters," Coach Lambert said.

Key returning players include All-Section HM D Ramirez, a solid senior defender.

"Eric was a dangerous threat from the outside back position," the coach said. "He netted four goals, two of which were game winners. He's a shutdown back who is a serious attacking threat."

All-Section HM Mendez started the 2019 season as the backup keeper but quickly earned an equal share of minutes in net, allowing just four goals on 50 shots faced, with four clean sheets.

"His biggest performance was in the section quarterfinals where he put up a wall against a high-powered Ossining offense before finally conceding a goal in OT.

Pisapia started for the Tigers in 2017 as a freshman in the section finals. After some time with Academy soccer he returned last season and split time with his close friend and teammate Mendez. "Thomas is a natural leader and is looking to lead his team of seniors moving forward," the coach said.

Collazos (3G, 6A), a senior mid and striker is poised for a breakout campaign and is among the most technical players in the section.

"Ruben competed in a talented midfield as a junior and came on strong at the end of the season," Lambert said. "Ruben carried the offensive attack in the sectional quarterfinal, assisting on the game tying goal. I expect huge things from Ruben this year to control possession and lead the Tigers attack."

White Plains has high aspirations going into the 2020 season, returning a strong group of players who plan on being a force within the section.

"Our technical ability paired with our depth at the attacking positions should keep us on everyone's radar," Lambert said. "We are a motivated team who is looking forward to displaying our talent against other top teams. The loss to league competitor Ossining in sectionals has not been forgotten. We are eager to get some revenge when we meet in league play and beyond."



Yorktown's David Dipolito has the kind of blazing speed to keep opposing defenders on their heels.

MAHOPAC (4-11-2)

The 15th-seeded Indians were bounced by No.2 Mamaroneck in a 7-0 Class AA playoff rout. First-year Coach Chris Mullholland takes over the reins of an Indian program that needs some consistency. Senior M/F Mario Bunjaj, F Nick Biagini, D Marco Chousa and D Joey Colatruglio are a few of the returning players that saw time last year. It's been a long time since Mahopac had the talent of an Arun Basuljevic or Joseph Iraola suit up, but the hope is to challenge in a very strong league, one of the toughest leagues in the state perennially.

CARMEL (9-8-1)

The 13th-seeded Rams busted up the Class AA bracket when they shocked No.4 Greeley in overtime, 3-2, before bowing out in a 4-0 quarterfinal loss to No.5 Arlington. Carmel hasn't won many playoff games over the years, so having done so in 2019 was a major step the Rams hope to build upon.

Having pulled off one of the biggest upsets in program history, the Rams lost Coach Tony Greco and will turn to first-year head coach Vasiliy Shevelchinsky, who will go about business without the services of All-Section F Dwyant Suazo and All-Section sniper Nick Fernandes.

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Pleasantville senior Mike Saldana hopes the Panthers can pick up where they left off last season.

The coach will turn to junior F Alberto Molino to pick things up in a very tough league that traditionally includes the likes of Arlington -- perhaps the finest program in the section -- John Jay EF, RCK and Mahopac.

"Out of our league no team can be slept on and all of the games are tough," the coach said. "Multiple teams in our league, Arlington, John Jay and Ketcham, have won

sectionals within the last few years. It will be a different season with new obstacles, but the players are ready for the challenges ahead and hungry to be back playing."

FOX LANE (2-14)

The Foxes failed to crack the field of 16 last year, so there's much to do in 2020. As juniors last year, Charles Della Penna (GK), Ben Belfiglio (MF), Nathaniel DiCarlo (D), Matthew Magidson (D), Dimas Agustin

(MF) and Suarlin Vasquez Max (MF) all saw time as did rookie Martin Nikprilaj (MF), now a junior. With Ossining and White Plains in the league, the Foxes have been overmatched in recent seasons.

CONFERENCE III

BRIARCLIFF (13-3-1)

The second-seeded Bears are still reeling from their quarterfinal loss to No.7 rival Pleasantville but are stoked for what should be a big 2020 campaign, but filling the void created by graduate Matt Sturman (18 G, 1A) won't be easy.

Junior Tyler Cho returns for what should be a monster campaign, but the Bears lost five key seniors who started every game since they were sophomores and played in two sectional finals along with regional and state finals. Reloading has never been an issue at Briarcliff and Coach Brandon Beck expects more of the same this fall from the likes of senior G Jacob Zednik and junior F Luca Vargish.

PLEASANTVILLE (11-5-3)

No.7 Pleasantville needed PKs to dispatch No.10 Blind Brook before eliminating rival Briarcliff in the quarters. The Panthers' season ended in a 2-1 semifinal loss to eventual champion Bronxville, but it was a wild ride that has Coach Beau Morki's program feeling good entering 2020. After posting eight shutouts last season, the Panthers are hoping to lean on their defense to provide a transitional tempo to take things a step further this season.

After capturing the coveted Mount Pleasant Cup with an overtime win over defending sectional champion and arch rival Briarcliff, the Panthers figured they were on to something big, but they will need to find a way to replace their top three point getters and an All-Section center back.

Many underclassmen saw significant minutes all season, including Patrick Panek, who never left the field in his role as a center mid. He scored two game-winning goals on free kicks from distance last year.

Connor Whynott and Mike Saldana started all year on the back four and will anchor a stingy defense. Saldana is a great on-ball defender and an offensive threat on overlaps and corner kicks. Whynott Started all year and was a solid contributor, but he will have a big challenge of taking control of the defense with the departure of All-Section D Luke Scopino.

The Panthers will be counting on filling their goal-scoring void with strong seasons from seniors Matt Moses, Billy Riccardi, Arjun Singh and Mike Collins. Moses played everywhere but in the goal last year and gave the Panthers quality minutes in every role. Collins is a fierce competitor and gifted athlete, poised to make a major impact as either an outside mid or forward. Singh was injured early in the year but came on strong down the stretch. P'Ville will need him to score all year along with Riccardi, who provides instant offense.

"Not having a summer workout season to evaluate newcomers will make the short pre-season very important," the

coach said.

Pleasantville expects major contributions from juniors Rainer Ducmanh and Ryang Kang who led a very successful JV squad last year.

"How quickly we can figure out the question marks in the roster will determine how we fare in a league that has no weak teams," Morki said.

G Connor Clancy was tapped to step into the goal several times last year and always rose to the occasion. The coaches have great confidence in him as a full time starter this fall.

"One of the issues is that we have not been able to be with our team all summer," Assistant Coach Jim Campbell said. "Many of the questions of roster spots and roles usually get worked out by the time we get to September. This year we are still looking at several question marks with regards to the roster, player positions and their role as starter or sub.

The boys are hopeful that the Mount Pleasant Cup can still be arranged," he added. "Our overtime win over Briarcliff kicked off our season in the right way and gave us the confidence we needed to beat them again in the regular season and then top them in the sectional quarterfinals."

WESTLAKE (6-10)

The 13th-seeded Wildcats were eliminated by No.4 Edgemont, 3-0, in last year's opening round. The graduations of All-Section D Frank Shkreli and All-Section F Gerry Cicchillo will be a challenge to replace, but top returnees All-League junior M Isaiah Ortiz (8G, 4A) and All-League junior F Alex Guaman (8G, 5A) provides Coach Joe Callagy with a potent 1-2 scoring punch.

Key newcomers include sophomore M Luca Mulhare and junior D Owen Hegarty.

"Our goals are to advance to the Mount Pleasant Cup final and win a sectional play-off game," Coach Joe Callagy said.

CROTON (6-10)

The 14th-seeded Tigers were knocked off by No.3 Bronxville, 9-0, last year.

VALHALLA (8-7-1)

The ninth-seeded Viking were bound by No.8 Rye Neck, 3-1, in the opening round.

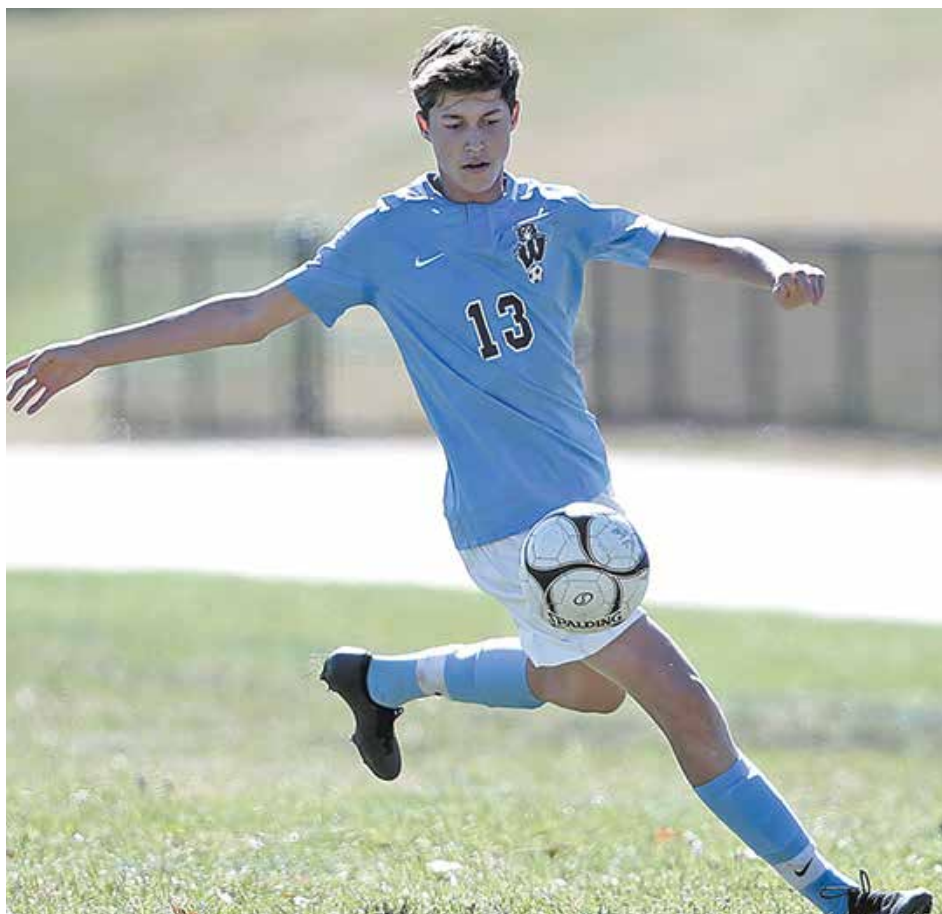
HALDANE (2-13-1)

The 4th-seeded Blue Devils were knocked out in the first round of the Class C playoffs after a sub-par stretch of soccer concluded in a 4-0 loss to eventual champion Hamilton.

PUTNAM VALLEY (3-13)

The Tigers did not qualify for the Class B playoffs last season and were still searching for a coach as of press time. Not a good look for a club in a total rebuild mode.

All Examiner-area soccer coaches were contacted via email for preview information and all are encouraged to connect with raygallaghersports@gmail.com with stats and weekly recaps by 4:00 p.m. every Sunday.



Westlake will count on big doings from Isaiah Ortiz.

Flex Appeal!

2020 Boys'
SOCCER
Preview Edition



RAY GALLAGHER PHOTO

Mighty Somers has Muscle, Brawn to Challenge for Class A Crown

Somers, the 2019 Section 1 Class A runner-up, expects the likes of senior Derek Marques (L), and juniors Bennett Leitner (R) and Daniel D'Ippolito (kneeling) to supply Coach Brian Lanzetta with some choice pieces to challenge for the 2020 title this fall when as many as a dozen Class A teams, including locals like Byram Hills, Yorktown, Lakeland and Horace Greeley, are in the mix. Somers, which has won two of the last four sectional titles, is said to be the team to beat... see Soccer Previews inside