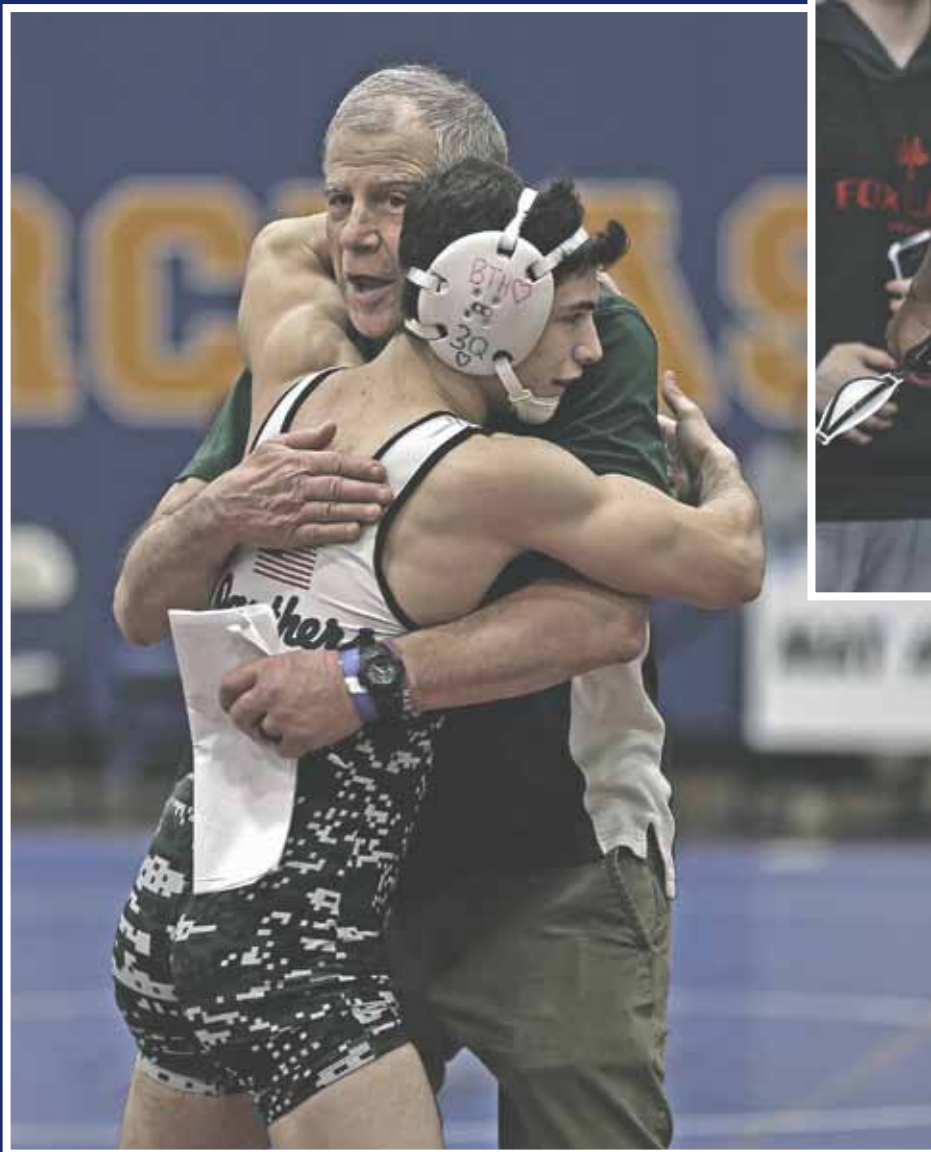
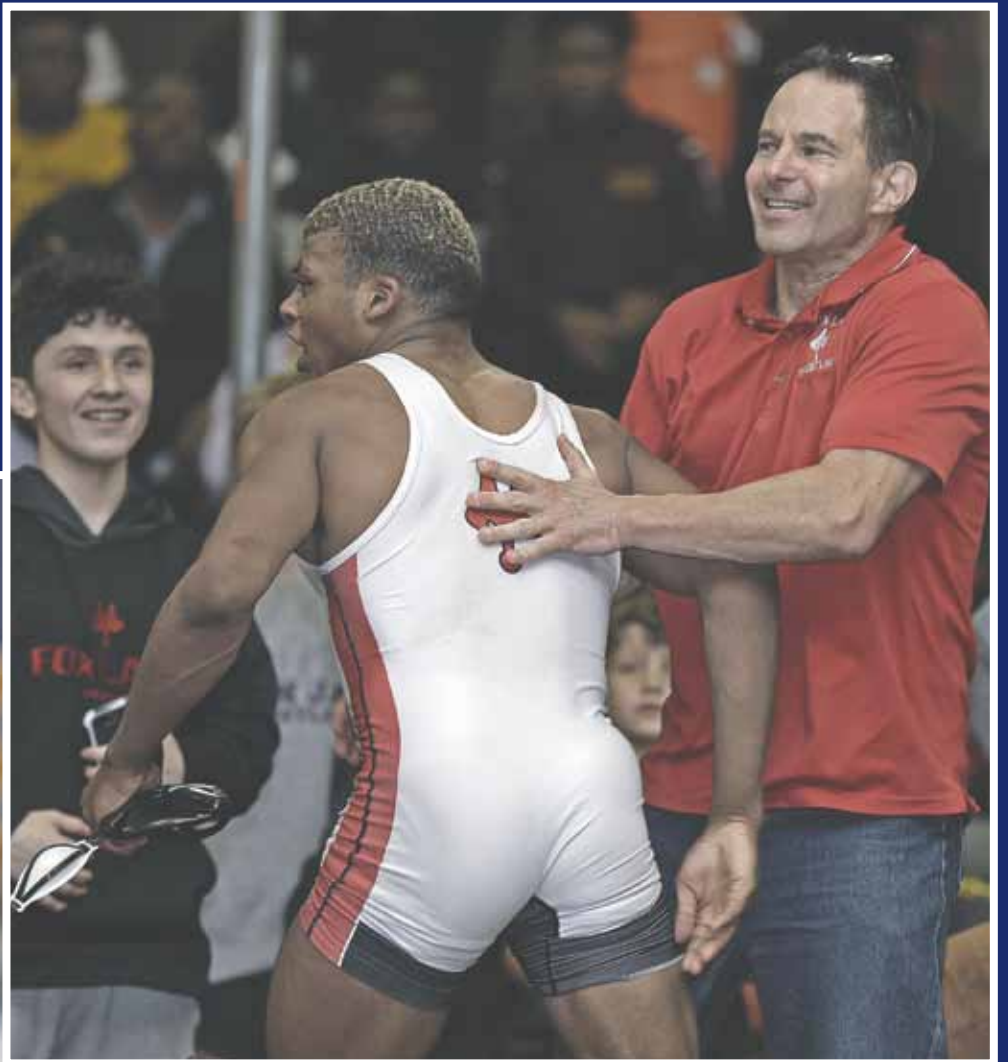


WRESTLING 2020

Moments to Savor



Pleasantville's Len Balducci is hugged by coach Bob Bernarducci after winning his fourth straight sectional title on Saturday.



Fox Lane's Quincy Downes receives congratulations from coach Anthony Rodrigues after his dramatic win in the D I finals on Sunday.



Greeley senior Wyatt Yates swims to a second-place finish in the breaststroke.



Horace Greeley junior Raphael Coffino swims in the 100 yard backstroke at last week's championships.



Fox Lane sophomore Tom Morgan heads toward the finish in the 100 yard butterfly at the sectional championships.



Greeley freshman Hudson Chung competes in the 200 yard individual medley. He finished third.



James Pastore of BBPVW competes in the 100 backstroke. He wound up in second place.



John Laidlaw of Greeley swims to a second-place finish in the 100 yard butterfly at last Tuesday's Section One Championships.



Fox Lane's Liam Loveless was the winner in the 100 yard breaststroke.



Liam Naughton of BBPVW is on his way to a fourth-place finish in the 500 free at Felix Festa Middle School last week.



Horace Greeley senior John Laidlaw captured first place in the 500 yard free last Tuesday evening, helping the Quakers win the team title.



BBPVW's Andrew Hammond swims the 500 free at the Section One Championship Meet last Tuesday.



Hanlin Wang of BBPVW competes in the 100 yard breaststroke.



Nikita Sakharuk, a Horace Greeley sophomore, swims to a third-place finish in the 100 yard butterfly at the sectional championships last week.



Avery Skolnick of Fox Lane completes the butterfly portion of his 200 yard individual medley.

SWIMMING

Section One

Boys' Championships

Tuesday, February 11, 2020

Felix Festa Middle School

Pleasantville Earns a Big Win Over the Rival Bears

By Rob DiAntonio

By the way the Pleasantville girls' basketball team celebrated, you could tell it wasn't just an ordinary victory last Tuesday afternoon.

The Panthers registered a rare win over rival Briarcliff, defeating the visitors 44-39 in the regular season finale for both teams.

"It's like climbing the hurdle," said Pleasantville coach Dillon Clark, whose Panthers fell to the Bears 63-45 in their first meeting back in December. "They've been the standard in our league for a while. They have a bunch of girls who've been up on varsity for three or four years. We were very disappointed with how we played the first time, so we wanted to change the momentum."

The Panthers were clinging to a 40-39 lead after the Bears' Cat Carrafiello made one of two free throws with 23.2 seconds to go. Following a timeout, the Bears secured a steal and took a timeout of their own. On the inbounds pass, however, Pleasantville's Reilly Byrne stole the pass and was off for the races, finishing the layup and drawing a foul. She missed the free throw, giving Briarcliff some hope, but the Bears were

unable to find the equalizer.

"It wasn't drawn up like that," Clark said of the steal and fast-break bucket from Byrne. "Mary Grace (O'Neill) and Tina (Matica) are very active at the top of our zone. They were able to get some active hands and we were able to jump a pass."

The Panthers' Lila Donohue was fouled and made two free throws with 0.4 seconds left and bedlam ensued as the Panthers celebrated the monumental win.

Briarcliff led 18-17 at halftime and 32-27 after three quarters. Carrafiello nailed a corner 3-pointer with 35 seconds left in the third, but Matica answered with a three of her own with 13 ticks left to keep the Panthers within striking distance.

The Bears quickly went up 36-27 in the fourth quarter with baskets from Julia Dalessandro and Jordan Smith. But O'Neill answered with consecutive baskets, followed by two free throws from Julia O'Reilly midway through the quarter to trim the Bears' lead to 36-33. Donohue made one of two at the line and then Matica drained a huge three from the left wing to give the Panthers a 37-36 lead with three minutes to play.

"She wants the ball and she wants the moment," Clark said of Matica. "She's brash and has a little swagger to her. It can sometimes rub people the wrong way. But she's a phenomenal kid who stepped up at a big time for us."

Jenna McAllister (7 points) scored on



Pleasantville's Jenna McAllister fires a jumper over the Bears' Cat Carrafiello.



The Panthers' Lila Donohue drives baseline by Briarcliff's Jordan Smith.



Julia Dalessandro fires a shot in the paint for the Bears in last Tuesday's game.



Pleasantville celebrates a 44-39 home victory over rival Briarcliff in their regular season finale.

a feed from O'Neill to give the Panthers a three-point lead and cap off a 12-0 run with 2:26 to go.

"We have a lot of resilience," Clark said. "We were down vs. Valhalla and we came back. A lot of these girls were on the (state champion) soccer team and they're just winners. They compete till the end. It doesn't matter what the score is. That's why I'm confident taking them to battle every day."

O'Neill, a junior, and Matica, a sophomore, paced the Panthers with 14 and 12 points, respectively.

Smith led the Bears with 14 points. Briarcliff, however, tried to force the ball into Smith in the fourth quarter, leading to turnovers and fast-break points for the Panthers.

"We were really poor about how we wanted to enter the ball," Briarcliff coach Don Hamlin said. "We kept trying to enter the ball from the point and we were much more successful once we reversed it from the wing."

Clark was proud of how the Panthers defended despite an obvious size disadvantage.

"It's hard to guard 6-3 when you're five-whatever," Clark said of defending Smith. "We put some different slides in for where



Briarcliff's Caroline Barbalato shoots a foul-line jumper over the Panthers' Lila Donohue.



Tina Matica hit a big 3-pointer late in the fourth quarter to give the Panthers the lead.

she was located. We hunkered down at the end and it took a team defensive effort to make sure that she didn't beat us."

Carrafiello added 10 points for Briarcliff.

Briarcliff senior star Alana Lombardi was in a walking boot and with crutches at the game. Lombardi, who suffered an ankle injury on Jan. 24 against Croton-Harmon, was labeled "questionable" for sectionals by Hamlin.

The Bears, who endured their second straight loss after starting 18-0, still earned the top seed in the Class B sectionals. They'll host No. 16 Westlake at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 20.

"We've just got to kind of take a deep breath, step back and just get back to work," Hamlin said. "We had our opportunities at the end today, but we just didn't make any foul shots."

Pleasantville (13-7) received the No. 6 seed and welcomes No. 11 North Salem at 4:30 p.m. on the same day.

"We have a lot of momentum going," Clark said. "We're blessed to have a home game and we'll take it from there."



Pleasantville's Mary Grace O'Neill, who led the Panthers with 14 points, fires a corner jumper.

ROB DIANTONIO PHOTOS

Foxes and Panthers Win Big in Sectional Wrestling

By Tony Pinciario

Quincy Downes found himself in an uncharacteristic position in the third period of the 170-pound final of the Section 1 Division I (large school) Wrestling Championships late Sunday afternoon.

The Fox Lane senior was in a prone position against John Jay-East Fishkill's Tyler Albis. Despite Albis' Herculean effort to execute the pin, Downes remained composed.

Downes, seeded second, extricated himself from the position for a point to even the score. He then took down the top-seeded Albis and that was the difference in an 8-6 victory.

It was Downes' second consecutive sectional title. Teammates Jake Hoffman (120 pounds) and Nino Prisco (275) also won championships as the Foxes overwhelmed the field (by 83 points) to win their third consecutive Section 1 team title.

Fox Lane had seven finalists and 10 top-six place-finishers. Runner-up, Suffern, was next with eight.

Since New York adopted the large-school, small-school format for the 2003-04 season, Fox Lane owns a Section 1-leading eight team titles. The first five were under legendary coach Joe Amuso and the last three were guided by Anthony Rodrigues, who was Amuso's assistant.

Downes, Hoffman and Prisco qualified for the New York State Public High School Division I (large school) Wrestling Championships, Friday-Saturday, Feb. 28-29, at the Times-Union Center in Albany.

"I knew I was in trouble, but I wasn't going to have it get the best of me," said Downes, who was named the Champion of Champions by the other 14 sectional titlists. "Before the match, I knew he would go for the big moves, so I was mentally prepared for it and I knew I had to do whatever I needed to do."

Downes thanked Rodrigues for doing an excellent job of scouting Albis on film and preparing him.

Downes and Hoffman join a select group of Fox Lane wrestlers who have won two or



Christian Perlleshi of Pleasantville has reason to smile after winning the D II title at 99 pounds.

more sectional titles. This group includes current Pawling wrestling coach Joe Amuso, Jr., Joey Grippi, Sam Speno, Tommy Grippi, Matt Grippi and Steven Rodrigues.

"This one feels a lot better, especially how well Albis has been doing all season," said Downes, who is now 46-4 this season and 182-30 for his career.

While he enjoyed his sectional title, Downes was prouder of the team's three-peat.

"We put in a lot of hard work during the offseason and we continued this season, especially these last three weeks," Downes said. "It's great everything we've accomplished."

Sam Dixon (126 pounds), Robert Geirum (145), Thomas Prisco (152) and Griffin Zegras (195) were sectional finalists.

Younger brothers always have it more difficult when they participate in the same sports as their older brother.

Pleasantville freshman Christian Perlleshi watched older brother, Victor, win three Section 1 Division II (small school) titles

and finish second in the state last year.

However, Christian can now hold bragging rights over his older brother after winning the Section 1 Division II 99-pound title.

"It feels pretty good, especially since my brother didn't win it his freshman year," said Perlleshi with a laugh. "I finally beat him at something."

Perlleshi was joined by fellow champions, Len Balducci (120 pounds) and Aidan Canfield (152) as Pleasantville won its second Section 1 team title in four years.

Pleasantville had all 16 wrestlers place in the top six, to outdistance runner-up Edgemont. Balducci won his fourth sectional title and Canfield his second.

The 15 Division II sectional champions qualify for the New York State Public High School Athletic Association Division II (small school) Wrestling Championships, Friday-Saturday, Feb. 28-29, at the Times-Union Center in Albany.

Perlleshi, who was also the Westchester County 99-pound champion, pinned Nanuet's Bobby Hardwick in the final, improving to 27-3 this season. Perlleshi spoke to Victor, a

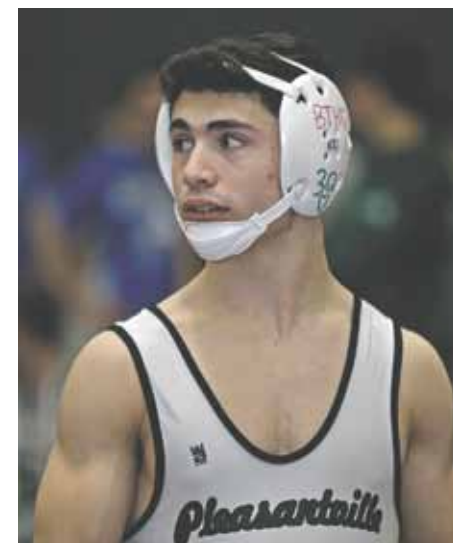


Pleasantville's Nick Paternostro advanced to the final at 120 pounds, but then had the misfortune of facing his teammate, Len Balducci, now a four-time champion.

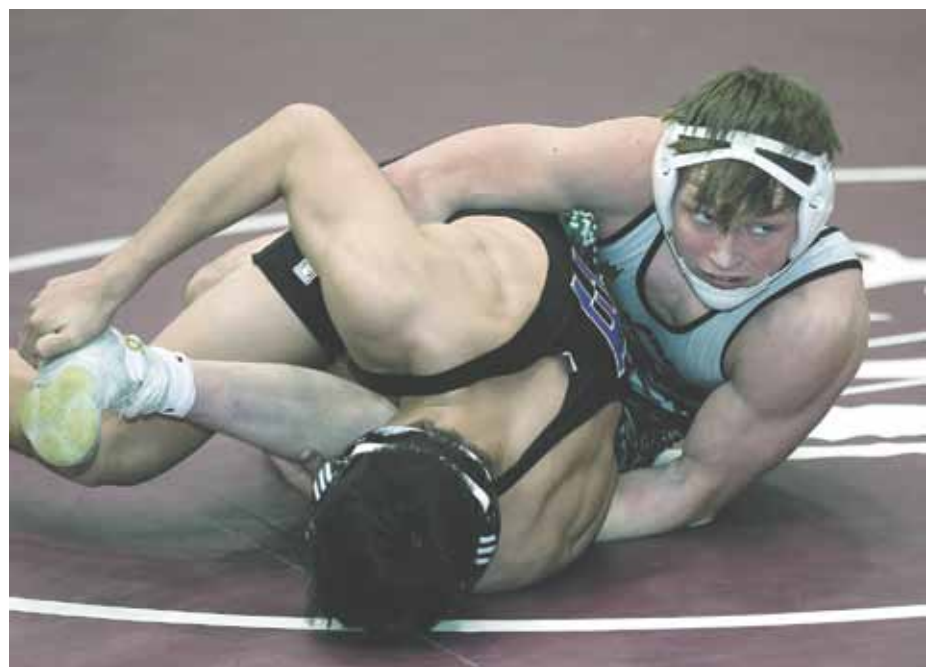
freshman and wrestler at Johnson and Wales, following his win. Perlleshi credits his older brother with pushing him to excel.

"Watching him win three titles inspired me to work as hard as I can to get a sectional title and hopefully a state title," Perlleshi said. "He told me, 'Great job.' I'm taking it

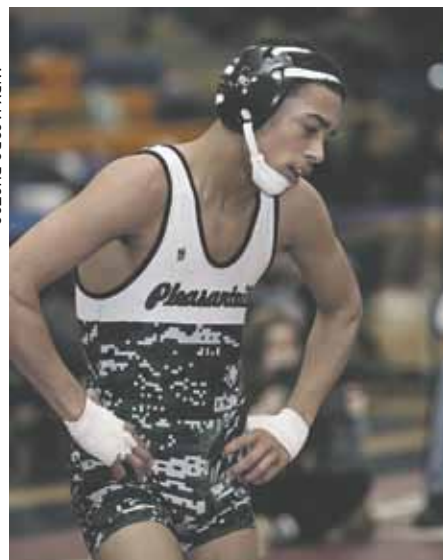
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Pleasantville's Len Balducci won a sectional championship for the fourth straight year on Saturday.



Pleasantville senior Aidan Canfield checks the clock as he dominates against Edgemont's Vikram Ostrander in the 152-pound title match on Saturday afternoon.



With both of his hands bandaged, dejected Pleasantville senior Nayshawn Marks walks off the mat after narrowly losing in the 113-pound final.



Fox Lane's Jake Hoffman has his hand raised in triumph after winning the Division 1 championship at 120 pounds on Sunday afternoon.

ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS



Fox Lane junior Sam Dixon wrestles in the first period of his championship match at 126 pounds on Sunday at Clarkstown South High School.

continued from previous page

one day at a time. I'm not done yet. I'm going to keep pushing the pace and keep grinding to states."

Nayshawn Marks (113 pounds), Nicolas Paternostro (120) and Carl Herzner (160) were also finalists.

Veteran Pleasantville coach Bob Bernarducci recorded his 400th win last month and adds a second sectional title. Perlleshi and the team wanted it for their coach.

"It's really special because he does so much for the program," Perlleshi said. "We're all happy, especially after losing to Nanuet in the dual-meet championship. After that, everyone was grinding in the room and all of our hard work paid off."

Even though Alex Behar qualified for the 2019 New York State Division I (large school) Wrestling Championships as a wild card, the Byram Hills senior didn't want to sweat out a wild-card berth this year.

Behar stamped his automatic berth to the 2020 New York State Wrestling

Championships by winning the Division I 182-pound title.

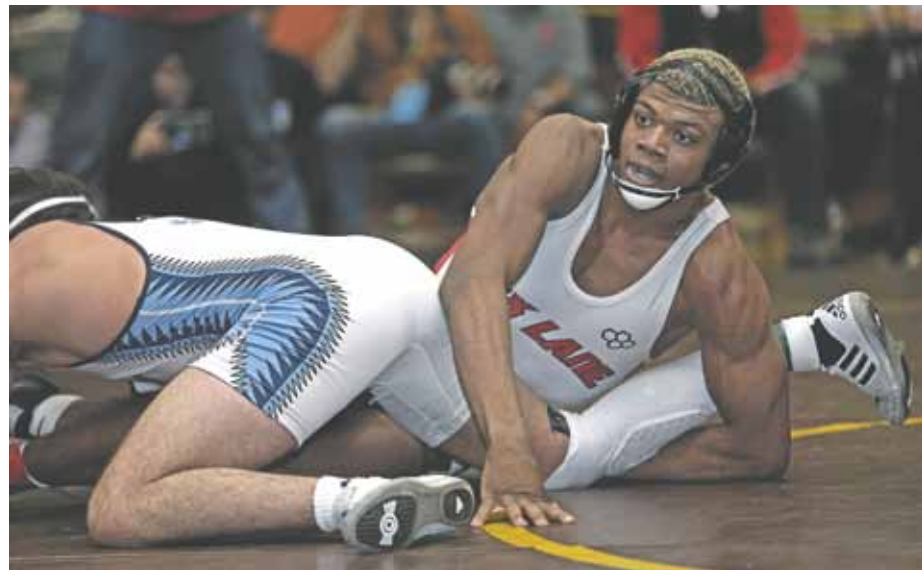
Since Byram Hills became a varsity program earlier this century, Behar joins Jon Errico (2017) as the only other Bobcat to become a sectional champion.

"I've been working all season for this," said Behar, who will attend New York University in September and wrestle. "I've been wanting this for a very long time and it feels great to finally have it."

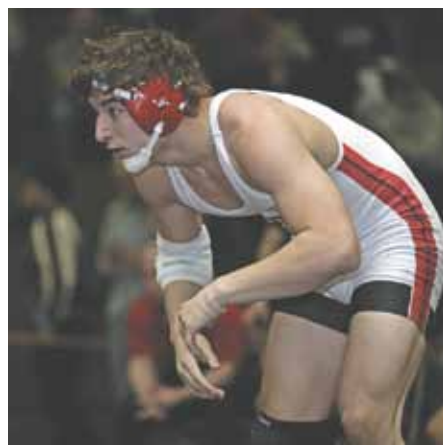
Teammates/brothers Justin Fortugno (113 pounds) and John Fortugno (106) finished second and third, respectively. John Fortugno closed out his career with a 37-6 record this season.

Behar was also happy for the Fortugnos and the program. He said his freshman year there were only four to five kids on the team. However coaches Joey and Peter Grippi have established a building program that won its first league title this season.

Behar returns to the state championships



Fox Lane's Quincy Downes and Tyler Albis of John Jay (East Fishkill) provided fans with the match of the day in the 170-pound final, which Downes captured with a late takedown.



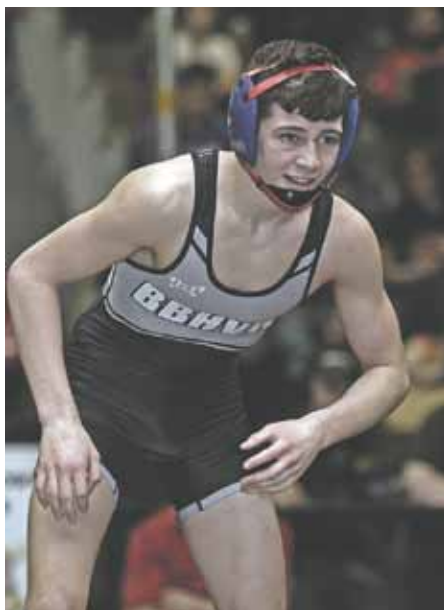
Griffin Zegras of Fox Lane looks for a takedown in his title match at 195 pounds vs. Tappan Zee's Desmond Kivlehan.



John Fortugno of BBHVW earned a third-place medal at 106 pounds, finishing the championship weekend with three wins in four matches.

an experienced and improved wrestler. In January, he finished fourth in the prestigious Eastern States Invitational.

"I'm going up there with more confidence and I'm going to do the best that I can," Behar said.



Justin Fortugno of the combo team from Byram Hills, Briarcliff, Valhalla and Westlake, competes in the title match at 113 pounds Sunday afternoon.



Alex Behar of Byram Hills was the winner over New Rochelle's Nicholas Thomas in the D I championship match at 182 pounds on Sunday.



Fox Lane's Nino Prisco celebrates after winning the title at 285 pounds over Ossining's Joe Nolan.



Aidan Murnane of the Bears drives past Pleasantville's Jonah Sreedhar.



The Panthers' Christian DeJesus drives around Briarcliff's A.J. Panarese.



Briarcliff's A.J. Panarese soars in for a shot over Jonah Sreedhar of the Panthers.



The Panthers' Christian DeJesus grabs a rebound in front of Briarcliff's Luke McCann.



Nick Doto of the Panthers fires a corner jumper.



Pleasantville's Willie Cahill boxes out Briarcliff's Elliot Jones.

SPORTS SCENE

ROB DIANTONIO PHOTOS



Briarcliff's Luke McCann goes up for a shot in the Bears' 46-39 win over the Panthers.



Byram Hills' Owen Fleischer scans the ice before starting to move the puck out of the Bobcats' defensive zone vs. Fox Lane.



Daniel Fontana of Byram Hills takes the puck up the ice in the Bobcats' home game against Fox Lane on Sunday.



The Bobcats' Austin Carlin gets set to pass the puck in Sunday's loss to Fox Lane.



Lucca Conigliaro of Byram Hills controls the puck in the second period of Sunday night's game at Brewster Ice Arena.

ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS



Fox Lane eighth-grader Henry Della Penna rushes the puck up the ice in Sunday's victory.



Mikey Toole of Fox Lane tries to skate away from Zach Berger of Byram Hills during the second period of Sunday night's game.



Fox Lane senior Adam Maiorano skates across the ice with the puck in Sunday's win over Byram Hills.



Fox Lane goalie Daniel Rojas guards the front of the cage in the Foxes' 7-0 win at Brewster Ice Arena on Sunday.



Valhalla's Sophie Sproul battles for possession of a rebound in the Vikings' home game this past weekend.



Alicia Eggleston of Valhalla eyes the basket on a Viking fast break against visiting Palisade Prep on Saturday.



Valhalla's Shelby Sekinski shoots the ball from the left corner in the Vikings' win over Palisade Prep.



Michael Gallery of Fox Lane looks up for an open teammate before passing the puck during the Foxes' 7-0 win over Byram Hills at Brewster Ice Arena.



Jordan Williams of Valhalla dribbles across midcourt in the second half of Saturday's 58-22 outbracket playoff win over visiting Palisade Prep.



Shauna Sproul gets inside for a shot during the second half of Valhalla's 58-22 rout of Palisade Prep.

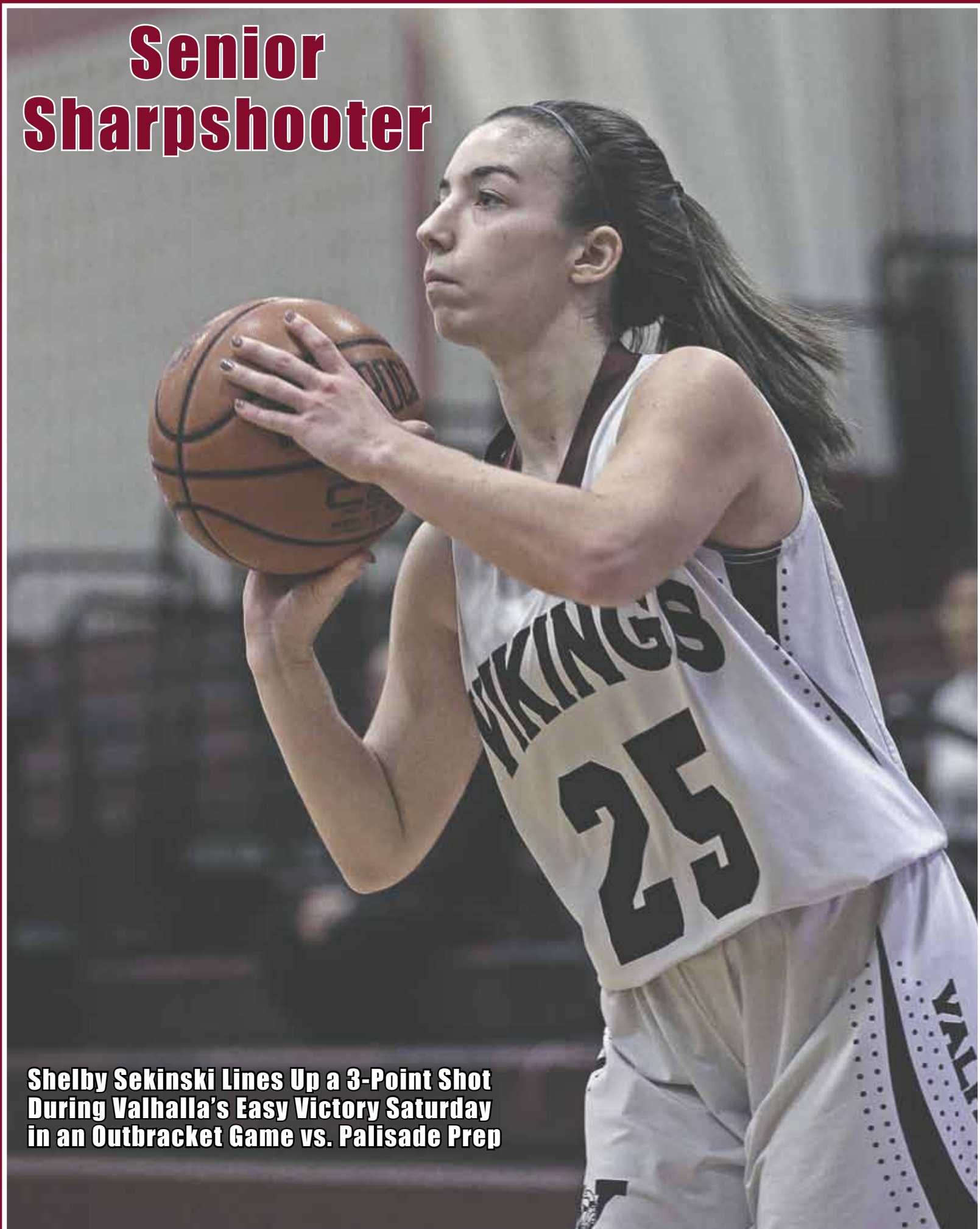


Valhalla junior Lauren Alley pushes the ball up the floor vs. visiting Palisade Prep.



The Vikings' Allison Langlois shoots the ball from the foul line in Saturday's outbracket win.

Senior Sharpshooter



**Shelby Sekinski Lines Up a 3-Point Shot
During Valhalla's Easy Victory Saturday
in an Outbracket Game vs. Palisade Prep**