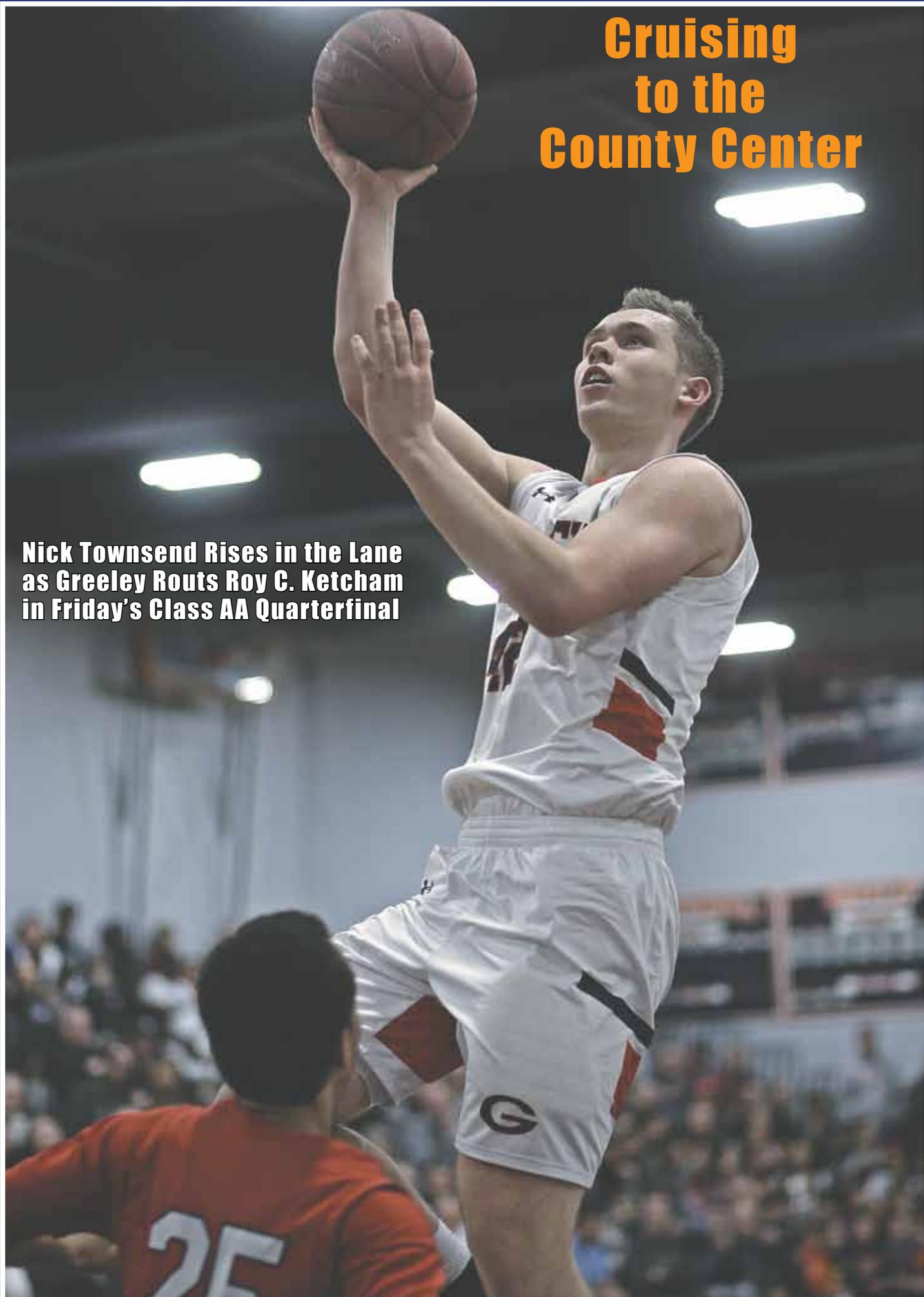


Cruising to the County Center

Nick Townsend Rises in the Lane as Greeley Routs Roy C. Ketcham in Friday's Class AA Quarterfinal



Local Wrestlers Impress at the State Championships

By Tony Pinciario

Alex Behar wanted another opportunity to compete at the New York State Public High School Athletic Association Wrestling Championships after 2019.

The Byram Hills senior earned a wild-card berth to the 2019 state championships, but felt he didn't wrestle up to his standards.

"Last year, I got nervous before my matches and when I walked out on the mat, I was still nervous," said Behar, who will attend New York University in September and continue with wrestling. "After having that experience of being on that grand stage, this year I just cleared everything away and it was just me and my opponent."

Behar overcame a loss in the quarterfinal round and registered four consecutive wins to finish third in the Division I (large school) 182-pound weight class.

In the third-place match, Behar decided Josh Leidig of Bellport (Section 11) 5-1. Behar concluded his career with a program-best 47-8 record and became the highest place-finisher in program history.

Behar was one of five state place-finishers in the Northern Westchester Examiner coverage area. Fox Lane's Quincy Downes was the Division I 170-pound state runner-up and teammate Jake Hoffman (120 pounds) was fifth. Pleasantville senior Len Balducci finished third (120) and Aidan Canfield (152) was sixth in Division II. It was Balducci's second third-place finish and fourth top-six place showing.

Once a wrestler is eliminated from winning a state championship, he goes to the wrestle-back round where he can finish as high as third. However, it is always tough on a wrestler to regain his focus once this happens, especially when the wrestler is a senior.

Behar faced this situation, but maintained his composure.

"I was focused on doing the best I could, and the best I could do after I lost was third," Behar said. "I was very down on myself, but it made it a little more urgent."

"I didn't lose my cool during my next matches. I wrestled smart, stuck to my game plan and beat kids who had pinned me before."

Byram Hills coach Joey Grippi praised Behar for his career and contributions to the program.

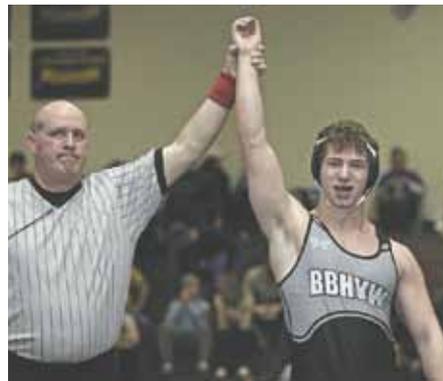
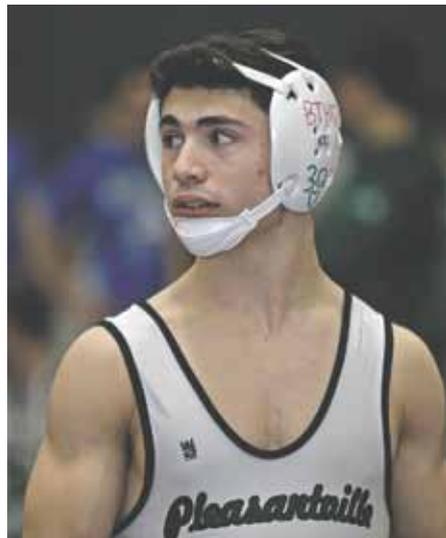
"Alex had a record-breaking season and career at Byram Hills," Grippi said. "He leads the school in career wins and just placed the highest in the state championships out of any Byram Hills wrestler."

"He's earned everything that has come his way. He's worked extremely hard and has been a tremendous leader for our program. We will miss him dearly next year."

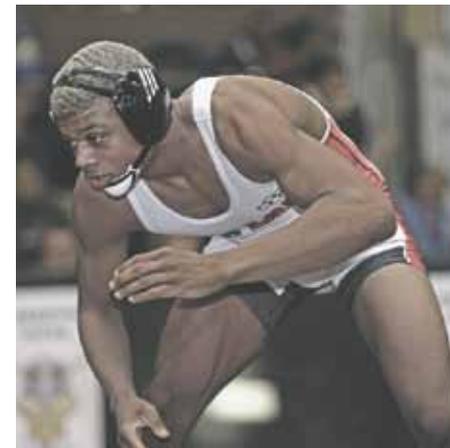
Behar leaves knowing his hard work and determination resulted in a milestone.

"With two seconds left in the third-place match, I started smiling," Behar said. "I've never been happier. I've been working hard for a very long time and not had a lot to show the past couple of years. Now I have something to show for it."

Pleasantville senior Len Balducci



Alex Behar
Byram Hills



Quincy Downes
Fox Lane

Len Balducci
Pleasantville

closed out his outstanding five-year career with a second third-place finish.

Balducci also owns a fourth- and fifth-place state finish to go along with his four sectional titles. Balducci finished with a 51-4 record and overall mark of 198-23.

The Balducci family, including his father, Lenny, and uncle, Chris, have seven sectional titles and six place-finishes, including Chris' state championship.

Aidan Canfield, in his second consecutive trip to the state championships, finished sixth in the 152-pound weight class.

Following a tough 7-5 loss to eventual state champion Anthony Noto of Honeoye Falls/Lima (Section 5) in a semifinal, Balducci was at a crossroad.

"After I lost, it was tough," Balducci said. "I was very emotional, but looking at it more like, 'How am I going to end my career?' I didn't want to go out and lose these two matches and end on that. I was just thinking that I wanted to win my last two matches that I will ever wrestle. That motivated me to push through."

That, and a conversation with his father and uncle.

"They said the same thing I was thinking,"

Balducci said. "They said, 'We know it's tough, but how do you want it to end? It's not over because you lost in the semis. Third place sounds better than sixth.'"

Along with going out as a four-time sectional champ and four-time state place-finisher, Balducci and fellow senior Canfield led the team to the Section 1 Division II team title and gave veteran coach Bob Bernarducci his 400th career win.

"It was awesome seeing him get that huge milestone," said Balducci, who plans on becoming a firefighter. "Knowing that we helped him get to that point is very special and the team feels the same way with two sectional titles. It's a great experience."

Bernarducci feels the same way about his team, and especially Canfield and Balducci.

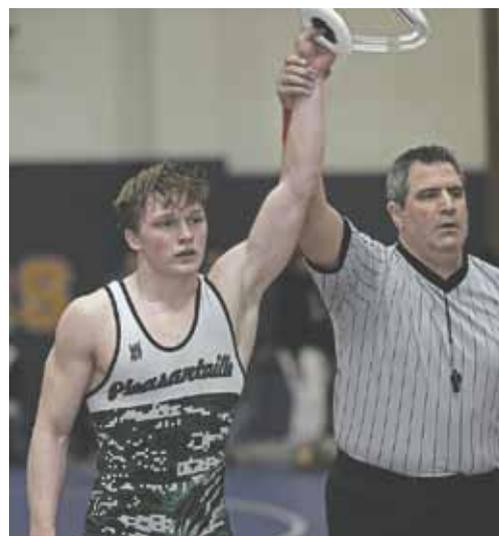
"Since Aidan has been part of our program, he has been a very consistent wrestler," Bernarducci said. "He is very well prepared for his matches and his strength has been on his feet where he has great counter attacks. He finished an excellent career with over 100 wins and a sixth-place finish."

"Len has always been an excellent and smart wrestler. Len is a team leader and his work ethic is beyond reproach. There is not a doubt in my mind that we would not have won a sectional championship this year without his team leadership. I can't express how much I will miss him."

Fox Lane and coach Anthony Rodrigues had three wrestlers at the state championships —Downes, Hoffman and Nino



Jake Hoffman
Fox Lane



Aidan Canfield
Pleasantville

Prisco.

Downes finished second in the 170-pound weight class and Hoffman took fifth at 120 pounds.

Downes, seeded eighth, defeated the top seed in the quarterfinals and fourth seed in the semifinals. He finished the season with a 52-6 record.

Hoffman lost in the quarterfinals to the eventual state champion and wrestled back to fifth, concluding his season with a 54-10 record.

"Quincy was a major reason for our team success the past three years," Rodrigues said. "His composure, work ethic and leadership has set the tone for our program. On and off the mat, Quincy set the perfect example of how to be a student-athlete."

"Quincy had a great season and super state tournament, beating the No. 1 seed, after being down 3-0, and beating a kid who previously pinned him."

"Jake has worked so hard and has become a complete wrestler. His only losses at states were to the first- and third-place wrestlers. Jake has set himself up to be a major player in the state."

While the boys were competing for state titles, Horace Greeley senior Isabella Garcia won the 106-pound New York State girls' championship.

Garcia, who finished one win shy of placing in the Section 1 Division I (large school) 106-pound weight class, also was the 106-pound runner-up in the Eastern States Classic first girls' tournament.

"Isabella is one of the hardest-working athletes I've ever coached," Horace Greeley coach and two-time Section 1 champion Anthony Tortora said. "She is extremely humble and kind, but, at the same time, very competitive and tough. So tough, that she wasn't pinned the last two seasons."

Garcia finished with a 30-12 record wrestling 90 percent boys, Tortora noted. Two of her wins came against all-section wrestlers. Garcia won the Pawling Tournament in December and also earned most outstanding wrestler honors.

"Isabella won two matches her first two years, then jumped to 30 this year," Tortora said. "She's also an A student, speaks multiple languages and is also a black belt in karate."

ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS

Quakers Crush Ketcham to Advance to the County Center

By Andy Jacobs

As they stepped off their bus Friday afternoon following a 75-minute ride south, the players on the Roy C. Ketcham basketball team probably had no idea what awaited them inside the gym at Horace Greeley High School — flashy digital scoreboards rarely even seen on college campuses, filled-beyond-capacity bleachers and, to top it off, an elite opponent intent on dominating at both ends of the floor.

It all added up to a game that was no contest, an overwhelming rout from start to finish. By the time it mercifully came to an end for the shell-shocked Indians, Greeley had thoroughly entertained what might have been the largest home crowd to witness a game in Chappaqua.

Led by Christoph Sauerborn's game-high 24 points and a combined 31 more from stars Chris Melis and Nick Townsend, the second-seeded Quakers cruised to a 75-37 demolition of their 10th-seeded opponent from Dutchess County in a Section 1, Class AA quarterfinal game that was all but decided after the first eight minutes. A 26-2 run bridging the first and second quarters gave the Quakers a 30-point advantage and assured them of their 16th consecutive victory.

"It's easy when we've got this kind of atmosphere, so props to all the students and the community for coming out," said Greeley head coach Matt Simone shortly after the Quakers had punched their ticket to the semifinals at the Westchester County Center. "I'm just happy the way the guys came out. You know, the atmosphere here, the student section, they were excited to play here and they showed that. They came out and played a great game."

In front of a packed house, with portable bleachers installed along one baseline allowing excitable Greeley students to get even closer to the action, the Quakers wasted little time convincing the Indians that their season was about to end. RCK's Phoenix Bowman connected on a jumper 50 seconds after the opening tip to put the

Indians in front, but then two straight baskets from Melis gave Greeley a lead it never lost and started a 9-0 spurt.

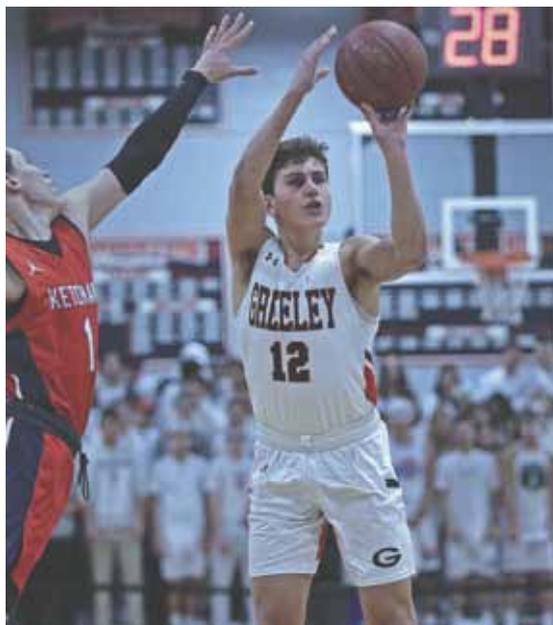
A 3-point shot from the right corner by Ketcham's Quentin Bowman cut the Greeley lead to 12-6 with 3:25 left in the first quarter. But the Quakers proceeded to close the period with 11 straight points, starting with a Melis top-of-the-key 3-pointer and ending with a Sauerborn runner from the right baseline.

"Our focus was how we came out," said Simone, who was hoping to avoid the slow start the Quakers had in their opening-round win over Ossining six days earlier. "We obviously played a great game against Ossining, but we didn't come out good. We played them pretty even the first quarter, so we talked about getting that start. That was definitely a focus of ours, and the guys responded to that."

The second quarter began with a Quaker turnover that led to a layup by Ketcham's Brendan Cassidy, but Greeley answered with the game's next 15 points. The run included put-back buckets from Townsend, Will Laforteza and, finally, Melis, whose follow of a rare Sauerborn miss with two minutes left in the half capped the spurt and gave Greeley a 38-8 lead.

When Townsend, who finished with 15 points and 11 rebounds playing little more than half the game, stepped out and drained a 3-pointer from the left corner to give the Quakers a 41-11 cushion with 1:18 to go before halftime, the Greeley students began serenading the Indians with chants of "start the buses, start the buses."

Townsend's trey was soon followed by another from the opposite corner by Carter Salore. The half ended with Melis following



Horace Greeley guard Christoph Sauerborn connects on one of his six 3-pointers in the 75-37 victory over visiting RCK in the Class A quarterfinals.



Nick Townsend tosses up a shot in the Quakers' playoff rout of Roy C. Ketcham.

up his own miss just before the buzzer, and the downtrodden Indians shuffled out of the gym at intermission facing a 46-14 deficit.

A minute into the second half, Sauerborn gave Ketcham a hint the second half wouldn't be much more fun than the first, knocking in a 3-ball from the left corner. Soon after, Greeley went on a 90-second 8-0 spurt, getting two baskets from Townsend and then two on fast breaks by Sauerborn. His second one opened up a 41-point margin.

Sauerborn, the only starter still on the floor, connected for his sixth and final 3-pointer with five seconds left in the third quarter to give the Quakers a 64-25 lead. If the Indians had arrived thinking they would have to deal with Townsend and Melis around the basket, Sauerborn sure gave them something else to worry about.

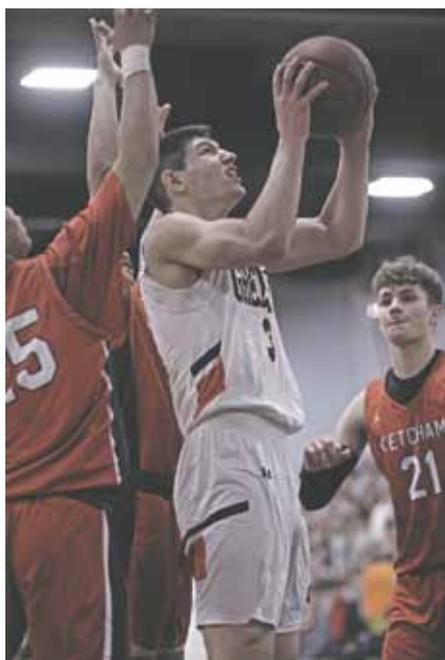
"Since the day Melis came back (from a preseason shoulder injury), the main benefit of that is Christoph," said Simone. "He had a lot of guys right up in his face and now it's kind of like if you're gonna have to guard him then it's gonna open things up in the middle. The addition of a healthy Chris

Melis definitely opens up the floor for him."

In the fourth quarter, with Simone giving his bench lots of playing time, the Quakers built their largest lead of the evening, 73-28, following five straight points from reserve guard Zach Eichenberg, who nailed a 3-pointer from left of the key and then tossed in a 15-foot leaver left of the lane. RCK then managed to tally nine straight points before Greeley's Sam Rosenberg closed the game's scoring with a pair of free throws.

Now the challenge for the Quakers should get much tougher. They face third-seeded New Rochelle in the first of Friday night's Class AA semifinals at the County Center, a place where the Quakers, playing without Melis and Townsend, dropped two games back in late December, one of them to the Huguenots.

"It's positive that we had the chance to play there," said Simone. "But obviously we're a different team than what we showed at the Slam Dunk Tournament. So our guys are pumped."



Greeley senior Chris Melis tries to score in traffic during the first half of Friday's Class AA playoff game.



The Quakers' Will Laforteza takes the ball to the basket in the first half of Friday evening's sectional playoff game against Ketcham.



Sean Dunleavy scans the court for an open teammate in Greeley's lopsided playoff victory against the RCK Indians.



Zach Eichenberg dribbles past the 3-point arc in the second half of Greeley's lopsided playoff win over the visiting Ketcham Indians.

ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS

Valhalla Holds Off the Bears in Class B Quarterfinals

By Rob DiAntonio

It was a matchup of contrasting styles, with the ferocious press and track-meet style of Valhalla meeting the slow-it-down and overwhelm-you-inside game plan of Briarcliff.

The teams played twice during the regular season and the Vikings won both games by lopsided scores of 51-31 and 66-41.

It's not easy, however, to beat a strong team three times in a season and the Bears proved that in the Section 1 Class B quarterfinals. No. 10-seeded Briarcliff gave second-seeded Valhalla everything it could handle, but was unable to pull off the comeback in a 60-57 loss to the Vikings on Monday, Feb. 24.

Briarcliff's A.J. Panarese, who keyed the Bears' comeback, scored consecutive baskets to cut the deficit to 54-51 with 1:50 remaining.

The Bears' Aidan Murnane nailed a corner 3-pointer to cut Valhalla's lead to just 56-55 with 12.9 seconds to go. Sebastian Pacheco, however, made two free throws to stretch Valhalla's lead back to three points.

Murnane was fouled and made one of two free throws for the Bears, but Valhalla's Drew Drayton-Bey grabbed the rebound on the miss and was fouled. He nailed both free throws with 5.4 seconds left to extend the lead to 60-56, sealing the Viking victory.

The Vikings, who led from start to



Marco Mazza goes up for the finger roll in the Vikings' quarterfinal win.



Briarcliff's Luke McCann takes a baseline jumper.

The Vikings' Marlin Wise goes up for two in the first quarter of their 60-57 quarterfinal win over Briarcliff.



Joe Murray and Nick Reish of Briarcliff box out Valhalla's James McAndrew.

finish, held an 18-11 margin after one quarter and were up 30-22 at halftime. They were paced by Pacheco, who tallied a game-high 21 points. He added five steals. Marlin Wise notched 12 points, while Drayton-Bey and Marco Mazza registered 10 points apiece.

The Bears, who concluded their season with a 12-10 record, were paced by Panarese and Luke McCann, who had 13 points each. Elliott Jones added 11 points in the loss.

The Vikings, 18-4 this season, advanced to the semifinals at the Westchester County Center, where they will face third-seeded Dobbs Ferry at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, March 4.



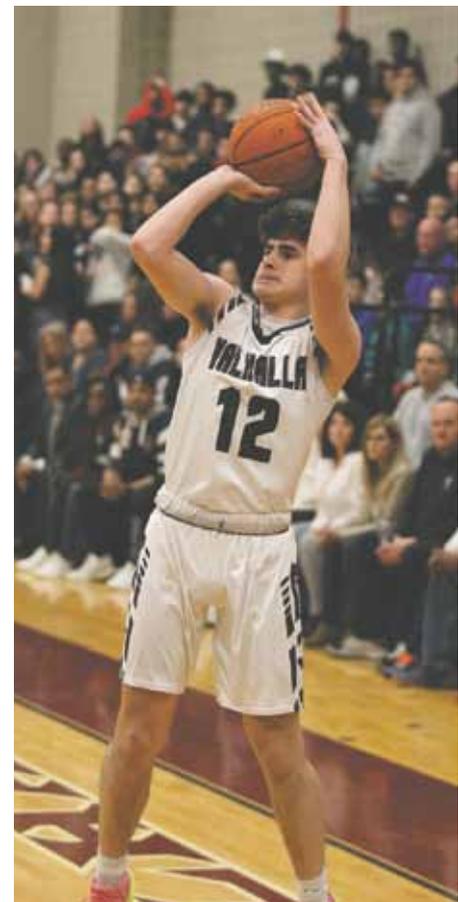
The Bears' Jayden Larregue takes a three from the right wing in the second quarter.



The Vikings' Rahsean Melvin goes up for a shot inside while the Bears' Aidan Murnane tries to block it from behind.



Valhalla's Sebastian Pacheco shoots a jumper over Briarcliff's Brett Lachtman.



Valhalla's Marco Mazza fires a three from the left wing.

ROB DIANTONIO PHOTOS

Wildcats Headed to County Center for First Time in Decades

By Rob DiAntonio

Westlake basketball coach Chad Charney hadn't even been born yet the last time the Wildcats made it to the semifinals at the Westchester County Center.

Now, forty-two years since Westlake's last appearance, Charney and the Wildcats are finally headed for the big stage following a thrilling quarterfinal victory.

In front of a standing-room-only crowd, fifth-seeded Westlake defeated No. 13 Pleasantville in a 49-47 nail-biter in the Section 1 Class B quarterfinals on Monday, Feb. 24.

"It's a program changer," Charney said of reaching the County Center. "I have seven guys on this team that have never been to a County Center game just to watch as a spectator. I asked them that the other day, The County Center is the best event every year. These guys, now that they're there, even next year and future groups are going to want it even more."

The Wildcats (16-6) will face top-seeded Hastings, the No. 1 ranked team in the state, at 4:45 p.m. on Wednesday, March 4, in the semifinals at the County Center.

"Making the County Center for the first time since 1978 felt extremely special, especially in front of such a large crowd," said Westlake junior Carter Falkenberg. "It

was the largest crowd I've ever played in front of, and to have the win come against Pleasantville (was special). The whole team is extremely excited to play at the County Center and we've been working so hard for it all season."

Falkenberg, who scored a game-high 24 points, hit two free throws to give the Wildcats a 45-42 lead with two minutes left in the game.

"We thrive in these tight games because all season long we've been playing in close games," Falkenberg said. "Every game we have won, with the exception of a few, has been close, which has greatly prepared us for these types of situations."

Aidan Lynch answered for the Panthers to make it a one-point game. The Panthers' Jonah Sreedhar nailed a corner 3-pointer to put them up 47-45 with 1:14 to go. Joe Ragusa, however, grabbed a big rebound and passed the ball out to Justin Silva, who nailed a corner three to regain the lead for the Wildcats at 48-47 with 40 seconds left.

"Honestly, he didn't play that much this game because they were beating us down low a little bit," Charney said of Silva. "Carter and Matt (Martin) are so good and Joey (Ragusa) was playing well on defense, so we didn't really go with the small lineup until the end. But Silva, to make that three as a sophomore coming off the bench in the fourth quarter, that's gigantic."

Lynch came up short on a foul-line jumper on the other end. A jump ball was then called and Westlake gained possession. Matt Martin was fouled and stepped to the line with 7.15 seconds left and made one of two shots. Pleasantville was unable to get a great look at a game-tying or winning basket and the Wildcats stormed the court in celebration.

"It's unbelievable," Martin said of making the County Center. "We've got a great group of guys here and we all work together really well. This is the first year that we really



Pleasantville's Christian DeJesus soars to the rim while Westlake's Joe Ragusa and Tommy Marto defend.



The Panthers' Aidan Lynch goes up for a shot in the paint over Westlake's Matt Martin.



Westlake's Matt Martin gets a shot off over the Panthers' Nick Doto and Willie Cahill.



Carter Falkenberg of the Wildcats and Nick Doto of the Panthers battle for a rebound.



The Wildcats' Joe Ragusa celebrates a three late in the fourth quarter in front of a capacity crowd at Westlake.

clicked on another level."

"We had a good look on the last play, but instead of shooting it we tried to pass it one more time not realizing the clock," Pleasantville coach Bob Jordon said. "As I said in the locker room, with 14- to 17-year-old kids we're going to make mistakes. But they fought so hard tonight."

Leadership and execution were keys for the Wildcats late in the fourth quarter.

"We practice tons of end-game situations," Charney said of why his team thrives down the stretch of close games. "I mean, Carter Falkenberg and Matt Martin, they make clutch plays. And they've done it almost all season. They're special players for sure."

Westlake built a 15-7 lead after one quarter, but struggled offensively in the second and third quarters. The Wildcats held a 23-21 lead at halftime. Late in the third quarter, the defensive-minded contest was tied at 25-25.

Ragusa added 10 points for Westlake, including a big three late in the fourth quarter. Martin added six points, Silva had five and Greg Cafaro chipped in with four. Falkenberg went 7 of 8 from the foul line in the fourth.

Lynch led the Panthers with 17 points. Nick Doto notched 14 points, while Sreedhar added 10 points.

It was an up and down season for Pleasantville (9-13), which opened the regular season 5-0 but went 3-12 the rest of the way. The Panthers, however, pulled off a resounding 62-42 upset of fourth-seeded Palisade Prep in the opening round on the road.

"The second half of the season was kind of rough, but most of these games

were three to five, maybe seven-point defeats," Jordon said. "We try to look at that as four possessions. Four possessions where we turn the ball over or didn't get a good look at the basket. So what we really tried to focus on going into the Palisade Prep game was to eliminate those and give us some more opportunities to win. It worked last week, but it just didn't pay off at the end today."

For the Wildcats, there's a nothing-to-lose attitude heading to the County Center.

"The mindset is getting to the section final and a section championship," Martin said. "We're not done yet."

Westlake also achieved a 16-win season for the first time since 1991.

"County Center, it's a great experience for us, but obviously we're going to try to win the game," Charney said. "They're very good (Hastings). They're super talented and big and they have a little bit of everything. But we have nothing to lose at this point."



Westlake's Carter Falkenberg drives by Pleasantville's Nick Doto in the Wildcats' 49-47 quarterfinal win.

ROB DIANTONIO PHOTOS

Fourth-Quarter Lead Disappears as Byram Hills Falls at Harrison

By Andy Jacobs

A 10-0 spurt to start the fourth quarter by the host Harrison Huskies turned out to be decisive in last Wednesday afternoon's Section 1, Class A quarterfinal game against Byram Hills.

The Bobcats' five-point lead after three quarters quickly turned into a five-point deficit that they were unable to overcome. Fourth-seeded Harrison emerged with a 54-50 victory over its fifth-seeded league rivals and earned a berth in this Thursday night's semifinals at the Westchester County Center.

"I think we hurt ourselves on our fast break," said Bobcats head coach Tara Ryan after the Bobcats' season ended one win shy of a trip to White Plains. "We had three or four consecutive turnovers and it allowed Harrison to get the ball, come back and have scoring opportunities. So it goes from a potential eight-plus lead to now it's even."

Byram Hills, which was led by Beth Corelli's 15 points and 10 apiece from Olivia Picca and Stefana Latella, went scoreless over the first four and a half minutes of the final quarter as a 42-37 lead became a 47-42 deficit. A 3-pointer by Picca cut the Harrison lead to two points before Ashley Stagg answered with another 3-ball at the other end to give the Huskies a 50-45 advantage with 3:15 remaining.

After back-to-back steals by Corelli and Picca helped the Bobcats move within 52-50 with 36.8 seconds left, it was Stagg who all but sealed the outcome by making a pair of free throws after being intentionally fouled with 10 seconds on the clock.

"We're so well matched up," said Ryan about her Bobcats and the Huskies, who split their two games in the regular season. "You know, you play basketball and it was in their favor tonight. I think that's the advantage of being the four seed and playing at home."

After falling behind by five points in the game's early minutes, Byram Hills rebounded to trail only 12-10 at the end of the opening quarter. The score was tied three different times over the first four minutes of



Byram Hills guard Jen Mui pushes the ball up the floor, flanked by teammate Beth Corelli, during Wednesday's playoff game.

the second period before a layup by Latella, on a dish from Corelli, gave the Bobcats a 20-18 lead that they never surrendered until the start of the final quarter.

Leading 27-25 at halftime, the Bobcats opened up the second half with baskets from Latella and Corelli. When Sophia Villani connected on a 3-pointer from the left corner, Byram built its largest edge of the day, 37-30, with just over five minutes left in the third quarter. In the final minute of the period, eighth-grader Grace Corelli made a steal and tossed the ball to her big sister for a lefty layup that enabled the Bobcats to take their five-point lead heading to the fourth quarter.

The final quarter started scoreless for nearly two minutes before the Huskies' Tori Fernandez canned a left-corner 3-pointer. After two free throws from Stagg tied the game for the final time, Gabby Marraccini gave Harrison the lead for good by banking in a 3-point shot from the left elbow. The 10-0 spurt was capped by Victoria Lendino's driving layup with 3:50 remaining.



In her last game for the Bobcats, senior Sophia Villani drives to the basket against the host Harrison Huskies.

Trailing by five points with just over a minute on the clock, the Bobcats made a late comeback bid as Beth Corelli stole the ball and went coast to coast for a layup. Another turnover caused by the Byram full-court pressure led to a Jen Mui free throw with 56.8 seconds left. With the Bobcats behind 52-50, Picca made another steal with 33.6 seconds to go.

Byram Hills came out of a timeout with a play designed to tie the score. But Picca's backdoor pass to the cutting Beth Corelli with 22 seconds left wound up out of bounds and soon Stagg was standing on the free-throw line delivering the two foul shots that put the Bobcats away.

"I'm glad we were able to keep ourselves together," said Ryan. "What's great about our team is we really don't quit. We know what we need to do to get back in the game and execute certain things. I'm glad we were able to do it tonight. A minute 24 left and down I think five or six or whatever it was,



The Bobcats' Beth Corelli sails in for a left-handed layup in the fourth quarter of Wednesday's quarterfinal vs. Harrison.

and what do you know we get two steals."

The Bobcats, who were 15-5 in the regular season before beating the John Jay Indians in the opening round of sectionals, had defeated the Huskies by nine points at home in January and lost by nine to them on the road in early February. So having to play at Harrison likely cost them a chance to face top-seeded Rye at the County Center this week.

"You know, it didn't work out for us tonight," said Ryan. "We were just very proud of not giving up. That's the strength of our team, that we're so gritty. You know, a big two steals and layups at the end, which really made it exciting tonight."



ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS

Olivia Picca lines up a 3-point shot in the second half of the Bobcats' Class A quarterfinal playoff game.



Byram Hills forward Stefana Latella goes up for two points during last week's 54-50 playoff loss to host Harrison.



Byram Hills head coach Tara Ryan directs her team in the second half at Harrison High School.



Byram Hills junior Gabby Ripka dribbles the ball up the left sideline in last Wednesday afternoon's Class A quarterfinal.

Byram Hills Ousted in Class A Quarterfinals by the Pirates

By Andy Jacobs

Who could have known when Byram Hills guard Matteo Sinon drained a 3-point shot a minute and 15 seconds into Wednesday night's Section 1, Class A quarterfinal playoff game that the Bobcats would never make another one the rest of the way and would proceed to miss 19 in a row?

And who could have predicted the Bobcats would get thoroughly dominated on the backboards by the visiting Pearl River Pirates, who took the lead for good with three and a half minutes left in the opening quarter and went on to a 62-53 victory, earning a trip to the Westchester County Center this Thursday for a sectional semifinal against Rye.

"That's it in a nutshell," said Bobcats coach Ted Repa, asked afterwards about the Bobcats' deficiency shooting from the perimeter and also pulling down rebounds. "We were one for 20 from three and they killed us on the glass. We knew they were a big, physical team. We knew they were gonna play really hard. And I think it got in our heads that we didn't see the ball go in the basket enough."

The second-seeded Bobcats, winners of their last 10 games of the regular season, trailed by nine points heading to the fourth quarter. But back-to-back baskets from Jon Trongone, who finished with a team-high 20 points, cut the Pearl River lead to 46-41 just 90 seconds into the final period. The seventh-seeded Pirates, who had dropped their final three games before the playoffs, then answered with consecutive 3-pointers and Byram never got closer than seven points again.

"One off the glass," said Repa, painfully recalling the first of the Pirates' 3-pointers, a shot not far from the left corner that caromed off the backboard right through the rim. "Back breakers. Back breakers. That was tough. But credit to them. I thought coach (Jerry) Houston did a great job. Those kids, they really fought."

The early 3-point basket by Matteo, following a game-opening bucket by the



Byram Hills' Sam Goldman finds his path to the basket cut off as he drives the right baseline in the first half of Wednesday's Class A playoff game.

Pirates, gave Byram Hills its only lead of the entire night. Trongone's turnaround jumper inside the foul line tied the game at 7-7 with 3:45 left in the first quarter, but just 14 seconds later an old-fashioned 3-point play from Matt Daly provided Pearl River with a lead it never lost.

Pearl River built a 21-15 advantage after the opening eight minutes and stretched its lead to 30-21 with 2:12 remaining in the half on a 3-pointer from the left corner by Jack Scanlon, who wound up with a game-high 22 points. A buzzer-beating 18-foot fall-away jumper from John Hayes, who scored all 14 of his points in the first two quarters, gave the Pirates a 32-24 halftime lead.



With the Byram Hills student cheering section looking on behind him, the Bobcats' Benji Hammond shoots the ball in the Section 1, Class A quarterfinals vs. Pearl River.



Byram Hills senior guard Nic Picca tries to drive past Pearl River's John Hayes during Wednesday night's Class A quarterfinal playoff game.



The Bobcats' Mike Parrotta goes up for two points in the fourth quarter of the sectional quarterfinal against visiting Pearl River.

"They shot well," said Repa, frustrated that the Pirates piled up 21 points in the opening quarter. "We knew they got out in transition. We were definitely worried about their inside game. But their guards really hurt us."

A put-back basket by Daly nearly a minute into the second half gave Pearl River its first double-digit lead of the contest. The Bobcats answered with a bucket from Benji Hammond and then a runner in the lane by Trongone to close within 34-28. But with just under two minutes left in the quarter, a short turnaround jumper by Scanlon left Byram trailing 43-32.

The fourth quarter began with the Pirates ahead 46-37, though the Bobcats soon gave their fans something to cheer about when Trongone managed to score consecutive baskets 30 seconds apart. With the lead trimmed to just five points, Pearl River answered with the two straight treys, the first a serendipitous shot by Jack Michaelson that banked in and then one by Scanlon from nearly the same location in the left corner.

With just 5:22 left on the clock, Pearl River's lead was suddenly back up to 11



Jon Trongone fires a corner jumper in Wednesday's quarterfinal playoff game.

points. Put-back baskets from Nick Massaro and Daly gave the Pirates their largest lead of the night, 56-43, with 3:32 remaining. The Bobcats made one final push, getting a left-baseline flip from Trongone and then two straight baskets by Mike Parrotta, who finished with 13 points.

But Daly scored on a layup with 1:08 to go and 13 seconds later Scanlon waltzed in for another easy bucket, all but assuring that the season was about to end for Byram Hills.

In the final minute, the Bobcats got baskets from Parrotta and Sinon, but they were too little and late.

"Really, really rough because this was a special group," said Repa. "It was one of my most enjoyable years coaching because of the kids in there and how close we became. I never would've thought we'd go 17 and 3 and get the two seed. We over-performed all year and we kind of fell short tonight. A lot of that has to do with Pearl River."



Junior guard Matteo Sinon takes the ball toward the basket as Pearl River's Jack Michaelson (left) and John Hayes defend in the second half of Wednesday's playoff game.



Horace Greeley freshman Jacob Rothman waits for the puck to drop during a faceoff last Thursday night at Brewster Ice Arena.



Greeley's Gabe Adams, who scored the Quakers' lone goal, moves the puck up the ice in last Thursday's 4-1 loss to John Jay in a Section 1, Division II semifinal playoff game.



The Quakers' Jake Potter tries to gain control of the puck in the corner during Thursday night's semifinal against the John Jay Indians.



Greeley's Ben Cohen controls the puck along the boards in the Division II semifinals.



Greeley junior defenseman Dylan Mutkoski blasts a shot toward the net in the third period of Thursday night's semifinal against John Jay of Cross River.

focus on **HOCKEY** **Horace Greeley vs. JJ** **Section 1, Division 2** **2020 Playoffs**



The Quakers' Evan Scott sends a shot on goal vs. host John Jay.



Horace Greeley goalie Arye Wolberg stays ready in between the pipes early in the third period at Brewster Ice Arena.



Greeley sophomore Charles Spar waits for a pass to come his way in the Quakers' season-ending semifinal playoff loss to John Jay last Thursday night.



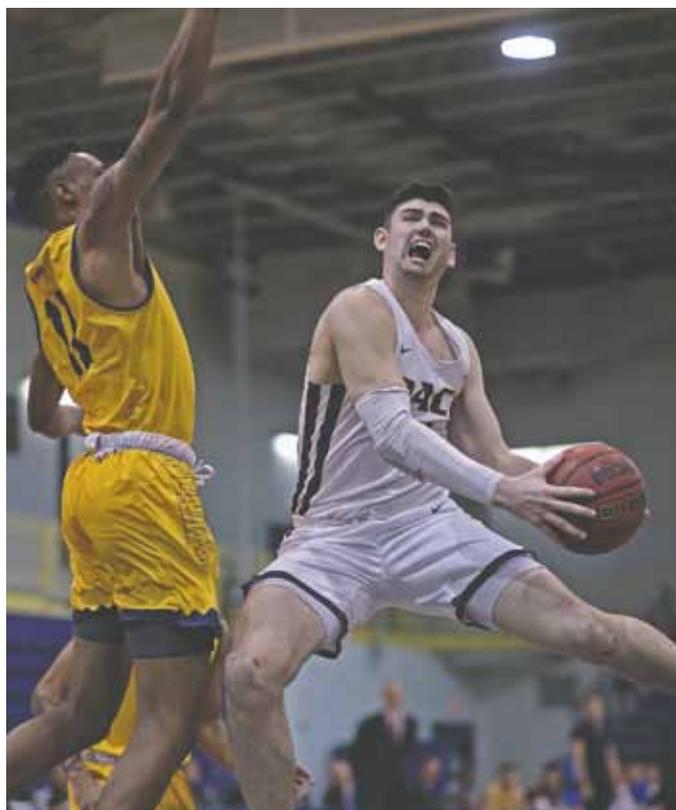
Greeley head coach Dan Perito looks on as the Quakers battle John Jay for a berth in the Division II championship game.



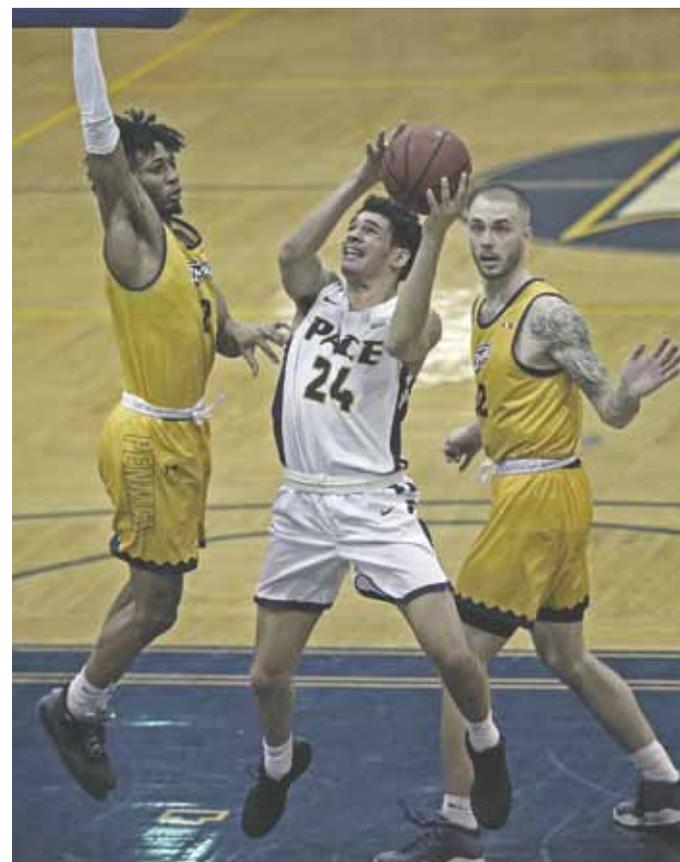
Jake Potter leads a Greeley rush up the ice in the Section 1, Division II hockey semifinals at Brewster Ice Arena.



The Setters' Peyton Wejnert tries to score inside during Friday night's 90-75 home playoff win.



Pace's Austin Gilbertson tries some midair improvisation as he's met near the rim by Corry Long of Southern New Hampshire during NE10 playoff action Friday night.



Pace University freshman forward Bryan Powell sends up a shot in the lane in the playoff win over Southern New Hampshire. He scored 24 points.



Pace University senior guard Ray Montilus drives to the basket vs. SNHU on Friday night at the Goldstein Fitness Center.

focus on **PACE** Men's Hoop



Tyrone Cohen Jr. scored 23 of his game-high 27 points in the second half Friday, helping the Setters defeat visiting Southern New Hampshire in the NE10 playoffs.



Pace freshman Christian Adams searches for an open teammate in Friday's playoff win. The Setters advanced to the NE10 quarterfinals, but lost to top-seeded Saint Anselm on Sunday afternoon.



Setter point guard Brandon Jacobs dribbles the ball near the midcourt line during the first half of the 90-75 win over Southern New Hampshire in the first round of the NE10 playoffs.

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING The Board of Trustees of the Village of Pleasantville will hold a Public Hearing on Monday March 23, 2020, 8:00pm, prevailing time, 80 Wheeler Avenue, Pleasantville, New York to hear comments as it pertains

to Introductory Local Law No. 2 of 2020 pursuant to subdivision 5 of General Municipal Law Section 3-c which expressly authorizes a local government's governing body to override the property tax cap for the coming fiscal year by the adoption of a local law approved by a vote of sixty percent of said governing body. Eric Morrissey Village Administrator/Clerk, Village of Pleasantville

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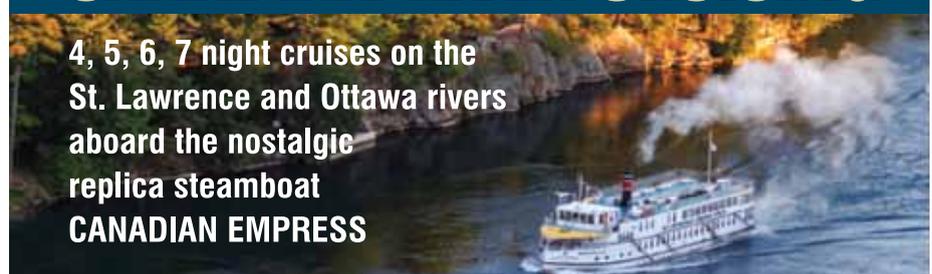
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