Somers middie Melina Couzis shows the type of next-level ability that has the UConn-bound prospect poised for big doings in the fall of 2017 when the junior captain becomes D-I eligible. In the meantime, Couzis played this head ball and scored three times in the state-ranked (No.1) Tuskers’ 5-1 win over visiting Yorktown last Wednesday when the defending NYS Class A champion Tuskers ran their unbeaten streak to 37 games against the game but overmatched Huskers... see Soccer Notebook.
No.4 Brewster to Host No.5 Yorktown in Juicy Quarterfinal

No.9 Hen Hud Shocks Nyack, No.6 Somers Crushes No.11 Byram, Both Advance

By Ray Gallagher
Examiner Sports Editor
@Directrays

Quarterfinal Friday is upon us, and the matchups are both juicy and intriguing: starting with No.5 Yorktown and No.4 Brewster in what should be a shootout of epic proportion this Friday (7:00 p.m.). No. 9 Hen Hud will also visit No. 1 Rye this Friday (7:00 p.m.), while No. 6 Somers looks to avenge a 40-3 Week 3 loss at No. 3 Lourdes on Friday (7:00 p.m.).

The big question facing Yorktown is how the heck Coach Mike Riscigno’s Huskers (5-2) intend to stop the weaponry coming out of Brewster (6-1), which advanced to the quarterfinals after a 35-13 win over visiting No.13 Walter Panas last Saturday.

Yorktown, which advanced in blowout fashion – a convincing 42-0 shutout of visiting Beacon – has had momentary lapses on defense, which it can ill-afford against a Bears offense that can score in bunches, including FB Jeremy Meissner, HB Jack Guida, QB Matt Catalano and pass-catcher RB Kevin Blank… to name a few.

Guida tied the Panas game at 7-all midway through the second, at which point the Bears took over for good. Panas ran a 7-0 lead when QB Brandon Hodge found WR Erik Otero for a 48-yard score on the game’s opening drive, but the Brew Crew defended like their lives depended on it from that point forward.

Meissner (two rushing TDs) bulled in from 21 yards out on the next series and Guida tacked on another score from nine yards out just before the half for a 21-7 lead. Guida, a patient slithery runner who denies initial contact, added a third score early in the third quarter and the rout became official. Brewster Coach Ed Mulvihill heaped praise upon his offensive line -- Jake Hay, Evan Pfiel, Manny Costales, Connor Dignan, Jaden Milano and TE Nick Panucci -- for their continued improvement and stellar play in the trenches.

“Yeah, they got the job done,” Mulvihill said. “They have helped us average 8.5 yards per carry. They have been getting better every day. We will need them at their best if we want to play with Yorktown. We saw them on film and in person and they look great. Not sure how anyone beat them. We need a great week of practice.”

Yorktown will have its hands full with the 15-year-old Guida, a junior with a great deal of promise. Likewise, Brewster will have to deal with Husker HB Nick Santavicca, who continued his record-setting career by going for 220 yards and three touchdowns in the rout of the Bulldogs. Husker QB Jose Boyer poses a dual threat for the Bears after passing for 113 yards and rushing for 135. Boyer hit on 5 of 7 pass, including a TD pass to good looking sophomore WR Brett Makar, who finished with 73 yards on three grabs. Tyler Makar added a 28-yard catch for the Huskers, who, remember, were considered Class A pre-season favorites by anyone with a measuring stick. That has not changed in the minds of the Huskers.

In essence: what we have is two prolific offenses, going up against a pair of defenses that have been susceptible at times this season, which could lead us down a high-scoring road that would have both “The Crop” and “The Brew Crew” in full throat by Friday night.

“I think we will be able to just be us and do our thing,” Santavicca said. “We need to play fast, up-tempo offense and hard nose D. Brewster is a very good team, but I think we’ll be ready to go and well prepared. It should be a good game.”

The Bears, who haven’t been to the playoffs in three years, relish a crack at the 2014 runner-ups. “We can’t wait to play Yorktown this week,” Catalano admitted. “It’s been three years since Brewster has been to the playoffs and our team is ready. Our defense played stellar and it will continue into this week. Defense is going to be big this week because they have two quick offensive threats: Nick Santavicca and Jose Boyer. Our offense has been a machine of late and we’re starting with our offensive line. They have been amazing and it’ll continue into this week. Our backs, as usual, have been animals just running through defenses and they don’t plan on stopping. It’s going to be a very physical and interesting game and we can’t wait to get a chance to play them.”

Oh, it’s on…!

SOMERS will be looking to pull off a major upset against a Lourdes team that truly had its number several weeks back; but that was when the Tuskers were feeling a tad sorry for themselves. Junior RB Messiah Horne, who lit up Byram Hills with three TDs and 120 yards, sat out with an injury, and the team was dealing with the loss of injured senior captain Tom Castelluccio for the year. Clearly, Somers was in a bad place that day and it showed. That was then, this is now, but Lourdes (5-2) has also improved and enters the clash as the more seasoned squad, complete with a No.24 NYS ranking.

After a 55-27 win over Byram Hills in the playoffs in round, Somers (4-3) is hitting on all cylinders offensively. Somers QB Kevin Olifiers hit on 3 of 3 passes for 96 yards and a score to AJ Butlien while FB James Lucadamo went for 80 yards rushing and a score, providing balance to Horne’s explosive burst.

The big question is whether or not the Somers defense can stand tall in the face of Warriors QB Dean Rotger, among the most prolific signal callers in the section. Sophomore DL Nick Garguilo and DE Aldo Kaczmarkiewicz will need to lead a critical charge up front to pressure Rotger if the Tuskers are going to stand a chance. Somers DL Erik Hagenah picked off a pass and rumbled 40 yards for a score just before the half. Tusker FB James Lucadamo rushed for 80 yards and a score while WR AJ Butlien slogged a 37-yard TD pass for the Tuskers, who are simply building a foundation for what should be two tremendous seasons in 2016-17.

HEN HUD’s 23-20 overtime triumph of Nyack was one of two things; either its biggest win since the 2005 Bowl win over Lakeland or the biggest win since its 1999 semifinal win over Rye, which produced its last Section 1 title appearance against a boy named Sammy Maldanado, arguably Section 1’s all-time running back.

“All I could really tell our guys in the post-game huddle was how proud I was of them,” Hen Hud Coach Mike Lynch said after the Sailors improved to 3-4. “There were so many times in that game where our guys could’ve lost hope and packed it in. Whether it was falling behind 13-0 in the first half or being down two scores in the fourth quarter, missing the go-ahead extra point late in the fourth quarter, or missing the game winning field goal as time expired, but they never, for one second, wavered. A ton of credit to our offensive line who didn’t allow a sack in the second half on 20 pass attempts.”

With time, Sailor junior QB Nick Cunningham (16 of 22 for 201 yards and 2 TDs) stepped up and took advantage of the opportunity he was given. Hen Hud’s receivers were the beneficiaries, including Jordan Arttope (6 receptions, 68 yards), Joe Pecchia (6 receptions, 50 yards), Marquan Anderson (3 receptions, 58 yards, 1 TD), Jack Attinelli (2 receptions, 26 yards, 1 TD) and Alan Jackson (2 receptions, 16 yards). Anderson also drilled the 31-yard game-winning field goal.

“Nick played extremely well, engineering a late scoring drive in the second quarter and throwing two TD passes in the fourth quarter to bring us all the way back,” Lynch said. “I can’t say enough about our senior captain Jordan Arttope. He showed he was more than just a runner with his six receptions five of the six going for pivotal first downs in the second half. I’m just so very proud of our guys for their ability to overcome all of the adversity.”
Mahopac senior QB and captain Dan Foley returned from injury last Friday night in the opening round of the Section 1 Class AA play-in game, but it wasn’t so much as what he did on the field as what he did for the morale and spirit of a Mahopac football team that sorely missed their leader.

Senior running back Christian Donahoe admitted the team’s psyche was lifted by Foley’s return and it was evident in Donahoe’s performance, which included three rushing touchdowns as the No. 6 Indians defeated No. 11 Horace Greeley, 28-6.

“Donahoe admitted the team’s psyche like that was huge. We’re very excited for this week.”

Mahopac (4-3) will be opposed by No. 3 Scarsdale in Saturday’s 2:00 p.m. quarterfinal tilt; the same Scarsdale club that ran roughshod over No. 5 CARMEL, which met its match in No. 12 Mamaroneck last Friday night in stunning fashion when the Rams (5-2) were eliminated, 42-28, by the previously winless Tigers (1-6).

Donahoe’s first score was a dash from 41 yards out, straight up the middle before a cut to the left early in the first quarter. Donahoe then popped a second-quarter 40-yard burst to the one, which he took to paydirt on the next play for a 14-0 halftime lead.

“Christian took the game over with a spectacular performance,” Foley said. “It felt great to be out there with my teammates again. In the second half, our offense got rolling and we put together two scoring drives to get a good lead on them.”

Donahoe’s last touchdown came in the third quarter when he dashed in from 23 yards out. Donahoe had over 120 yards rushing and averaged more than 10 yards every time he touched the ball. Mahopac’s final touchdown came in the middle of the fourth quarter when senior HB Joey Cavaciuti scored his eighth TD in four games from 14 yards out.

Mahopac’s goal this season was to reach the Class AA finals. Whether that happens or not remains to be seen, but with a healthy Foley in tow, the Indians are well prepared to reach the Final 4 for the first time since 2010.

CARMEL had no control over Mamaroneck’s return game, which resulted in a slew of short fields for the Tigers with which to work. The Rams, suspect at times this season on defense, could ill-afford that but failed to contain speedy Emerson Genovese, who also snagged 10 passes for 186 yards and a touchdown.

Despite that, the Rams were in position to score the go-ahead TD when the tide turned in the blink of a pick-six. Trailing 27-21, Carmel marched inside the Tiger 30 before QB Joey Rodriguez, who was forced to throw on account of the hole the Rams dug, was intercepted by Kieffer Barchetti, and Genovese added yet another game-changing pick-six on the Rams’ ensuing drive late in the fourth quarter.

Minus the three picks, Rodriguez finished with an otherwise glowing stat line, going 26 for 43 for 322 yards and three touchdown passes. He also rushed for another score, but the Tigers were expecting pass more often than not, which came back to bite the Rams. Carmel WR Ryan Sullivan caught 14 passes for 138 yards and a touchdown and fiery WR Quinn Willman had seven catches for 127 yards and a pair of scores.

Carmel’s leading rusher, HB Kasey Correa, played just one play before succumbing to a bothersome ankle injury. He hopes to play this week.

CLASS B

PUTNAM VALLEY defeated Croton 33-7 behind a dominant defensive effort, including DL Connie George, who wrought havoc on the Tigers all day.

“The junior dominated the trenches, according to PV Coach Matt Mello. “Connie lived in the Croton backfield,” he said. “He was incredible.”

PV senior RB Mike Dellabate rushed 23 times for 128 yards and a TD. WR Joe Spinola caught two passes for 32 yards and a touchdown. QB Zach Girvalo rushed seven times for 46 yards and a PV score. FB Kyle Anderson added a three-yard TD run for the fifth-seeded Tigers, who have reached the playoffs for the first time since 2007 and will visit No.4 Pleasantville this Friday (7:00 p.m.) in the Class B quarters.

The Tigers beat Pleasantville just two weeks ago in an 18-13 game in which the Panthers came on strong in the fourth quarter. The Tigers have never reach the Class B Final 4 in their history, so doing so would be a huge feather in the cap of the program and everybody associated with PV football.
Lakeland Rallies Together for Injured Troops in 3-0 Win

Somers Girls Top Yorktown, 5-1, Extends Winning Streak to 38

By Ray Gallagher
Examiner Sports Editor
@Directrays

The Lord tested the resolve of the Lakeland High soccer program last week, doing so in a way no coach, no player, no parent and no team ever wants to be tested. Three Lakeland players -- junior captains Nick Foci, Matias Prando and Jordan Fein -- were in a bad car accident last Friday night, forcing Lakeland Coach Tim Hourahan to take the pulse of his team while he came to grips with just how tight the Section 1 soccer community is.

“It has been an unbelievable 48 hours now,” Hourahan said Sunday afternoon from one of two hospitals players were recovering in, including one in the ICU unit. “That phone call you get from one of your players parents at 8:30 on a Friday night is one you don’t want to get. It was surreal. Then to arrive at hospital and realize that one of the three was put into the ICU unit at Valhalla really started to make things unnerving.”

The nerves have been subdued by the outpouring of support from those within Lakeland and the surrounding communities.

“The outpouring of concern from recent alumni is amazing,” Hourahan said. “It truly has been overwhelming and we look forward to eventually letting all three of them know how much they are loved by current and past players and parents.”

The Hornets (9-4-1) took the field Saturday afternoon for a 3-0 win over visiting Our Lady of Lourdes, a game Hourahan had to be talked into playing.

“I just figured the right thing to do was for us to forfeit,” Hourahan said. “But I got a text from one of the moms of the injured players telling me to get the kids out there and play the game. ‘Go play and win the game for these boys’ is what she said.”

And that’s exactly what the Hornets did, getting two goals from Aidan Sabert and three assists from Kadri Haluci. Deven Girgenti also scored for the Hornets, who will dedicate their season to the three injured players, who will not play again this year but are all recovering. Foci, who was removed from ICU, was the lone player to remain in the hospital over the weekend but hopes to come home early this week. Whether the Hornets win another game or not this season, there’s still plenty to be thankful for.

“The love the community has shown for these three boys has been amazing, something we really needed, whether it was from the coaches at Valhalla, Byram Hills and Mamaroneck, who showed up at the hospital or at our game to speak to our kids, to the parents and former players. We can’t thank them enough,” Hourahan said.

Here, here! And if Coach Hourahan wonders about the devotion he gets from players and parents – both past and present – he need only look in the mirror...

**CORNER KICKS**

**PUTNAM VALLEY** (10-3-1) has posted its best regular season in history but Class B is loaded with contenders this season and the Tigers will have a rough go with a handful of battle-tested clubs, including Valhalla (13-1-1), Bronxville (13-2), Edgemont (11-2-1), Pleasantville (9-3-2), Hastings (10-2-2), Briarcliff (7-4-3), Rye Neck (8-5-2) and Blind Brook (8-5-1). Coach Craig Glenn’s Tigers would do well to win a game in the playoffs, what would be the second time in program history...

Class AA Yorktown (7-4-4), plus Class A Somers (9-4-2) and Lakeland look to be prime contenders to make hay in the playoffs, but getting to the Final 4 will be a difficult task for all three; winning a title would be miraculous, to say the least...

**SOMERS** has seen its girls’ team continue to produce victories at an alarming rate, including a 5-1 win over visiting Yorktown last Wednesday. Coach Paul Saia’s defending NYS champion Tuskers won their 38th consecutive game on account of UConn-bound junior Melina Couzis’ hat trick, part of an all-around terrific game against the Huskers. Couzis even unleashed a rare bicycle kick for a score off a dizzying head-ball assist from All-American Hannon Eberts, who put the state-ranked (No.1) Tuskers on the board first and added another in the
second half. The Couzis bicycle kick was picked up by ESPN. ESPN. http://espn. go.com/espnw/video/13898264/ acrobatic-bicycle-kick-goal.

“Hannon is not only an outstanding soccer player, but more importantly, she is a competitor, as is Melina,” Saia said. “They are unselfish and the ultimate team players.”

Eberts had two goals and an assist while Couzis had two goals and Jenna Menta had two assists in a 4-2 win over host Greeley Thursday as the Tuskers improved to 16-0 and locked up the No.1 seed in the Class A playoffs.

HALDANE remained No.5 in NYS Class C girls’ poll this week after a 4-0 win over visiting Putnam Valley last Friday. Blue Devil hotshot Marina Martin scored twice for the defending NYS champions, who saw Missy Lisikatos and Julia Rotando pad the lead, and Sara LaBriola made six saves for the shutout.

YORKTOWN recovered from its loss to Somers to post a 4-0 win over Lakeland last Friday. Husker striker Alyssa Francese had two goals and an assist to lead the way; this, after scoring a PK against Somers. Francese can play the game. Ivana Pjetri had a goal and an assist, Gillian Rosh had a goal for the Huskers, who also notched a 2-0 win over John Jay EF on Thursday. Francese scored twice in the win while Pjetri had an assist and Alexa LaPierre made eight saves.

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HELP WANTED
Improved Yorktown, Steady Lakeland Clicking for Playoffs

By Tony Pinciaro

Catherine Calidonna and her Yorktown varsity field hockey teammates faced uncertainty coming into the 2015 season. Yorktown was returning a deep, talented senior class, however, the Cornhuskers were welcoming in new coach, Bernadette Gannon. Now, the players and Gannon would have to acclimate themselves to each other in just two weeks before embarking on the season.

The transition was smooth as Yorktown's experience and talent embraced Gannon and her system and it has led to a 9-7 record.

Yorktown closed out its regular season with a pair of victories – 5-1 over Nanuet and 2-0 over Somers.

"We've all been playing together since 9th grade," said Calidonna of her and classmates. "We all love it and we all play well together so we were all very hopeful." When Calidonna learned that Gannon was Yorktown's new coach, it out her mind at ease because the senior plays travel field hockey for Gannon.

"When we all found out we would have a new coach, we were all kind of nervous, not knowing what to expect," Calidonna said. "We knew that she was the Section 1 Coach of the Year when they beat Mamaroneck in the sectional final so we knew that she was definitely going to contribute to the continued improvement of Yorktown field hockey, as whole. We were very comfortable with her."

Closing out the regular season with the victories has Yorktown heading into sectional play riding a wave.

"I don't think wins and losses can define our team," Calidonna said. "We realize when sectionals start the intensity and importance of each game and we feel we have a lot of potential to go far."

Gannon knew Nanuet very well, having faced the Golden Knights when she was the Suffern and later Clarkstown North coach. Yorktown received goals by Caitlin and Allison O'Donnell, Stephanie Tucciaroni, Juliana Aversa and Calidonna. Stephanie Ragusa had two assists and Allison O'Donnell added an assist.

Stephanie Ragusa opened the scoring against Somers and Allison O'Donnell tallied her second goal of the week, assisted by Calidonna. Olivia Sanchez handled four shots for the shutout.

LAKELAND enters the Section 1 Class B Championship rolling after victories over Brewster (9-0) and Darien (6-0). The six-time reigning Section 1 and New York State Champion is 16-0 and assured of the first seed in Class B. All-American Dana Bozek had a hat trick, including her 90th varsity goal in the win over Darien. Brianna Muniz added two goals and two assists and Cali Cortese scored.

Bozek also had a hat trick, and added two assists, in the victory over Brewster. Meghan Fahey finished with three goals and Cortese and Fahey each had a goal and an assist. Kristina Davies also had a goal.

HEN HUD's defense had an excellent week, not allowing a goal in two games. However, Hen Hud came away with a victory Putnam Valley, 1-0, and played Ossining to a 0-0 game.

Following a scoreless first half against Putnam Valley, Stephanie Mendelkow broke through at 18:46, assisted by Sarina Abraham. Hen Hud's defense raised its level of play as the Sailors played the final two minutes one player down because of a yellow card.

Hen Hud coach Heather Gallagher credited her defense of Grace McMurrrin, Sara Kearny, Cecilia Kelly, Maddie Lee, Andrea Gaoncalves and goalie Carole Simicore for playing excellent.

PANAS continued its fine play this season with victories over Our Lady of Lourdes, 5-0, and Ossining, 3-2.

The Panthers are 7-4-4 this season and closed out the regular season with North Salem, Monday.

Danielle Merante continued giving opposing defenses fits with a hat trick against Lourdes. Julia Gale added two goals. Merante scored her 20th goal of the season in the win over Ossining. Taylor Reilly and Corrina Martinez also found the back of the cage.

PUTNAM VALLEY played well enough to win both of its games, but suffered tough losses. The Tigers lost 1-0 to Hen Hud, then Pawling stunned them on a goal as time expired, 4-3.

Caleigh Jacobs and Aurora Sopow-Allelye gave Putnam Valley a quick 2-0 lead before Pawling answered. Sopow-Allelye restored Putnam Valley's two-goal lead with her second of the game at 13:53 of the second half.

Pawling scored the next three, including the decisive goal on a penalty corner as time expired.

"We played a very exciting game against Pawling," Putnam Valley coach Rebecca Gherardi said. "A penalty corner was called for Pawling and even though time had expired, the corner had to be played out."
Yorktown senior RB Nick Santavicca crushed it last Friday night in the play-in round of the Section 1 Class A grid tournament, scoring three TDs, rushing 20 times for 220 yards and getting a monster lift from OL Steven Veteri (62) in the fifth-seeded Huskers’ 42-0 trouncing of No.12 Beacon. The Huskers will travel to No.4 Brewster this Friday in what should be a terrific quarterfinal showdown between two of Class A’s most prolific offenses and storied programs... see Class A Grid Notebook