

# The Line Up

A Publication of Section VI, NYSPHSAA, Inc. Spring 2016

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# State Champions

## Track & Field

### Tapestry - 4 x 100 Meter Team

The 4x100 Meter Relay of Esquisite Dunnigan, Taylor Hunter, Kim Bostic, and Nia Stevens continued their run of greatness winning the D2 state championship. That's back-to-back state championships for the Tapestry girl's 4x100 Meter Relay. The girls ran a personal best time of 49.30. The group consists of a freshman, two sophomores, and a junior and they can't wait to start training for next year!!!!

-Dan Tryon, Coach



### Nia Stevens, Tapestry - 200 Meter Dash

Tapestry Charter School made history again in 2016. This time, Freshman Nia Stevens became the first female to win an individual state championship, winning the 200m in a school record time of 25.07. She went into states ranked #1 in Division II and never let up once she got there. In the federation finals, she finished 6th overall running the same time of 25.07. Nia also competed in the 100m finishing 2nd overall in Division II coming within .11 of winning. All in all, Nia came home with 5 medals; Division II 200m state champion, 200m Federation finals 6th overall, Division II 4x100m state champion, Division II 100m 2nd overall, and Division II 4x400m relay 5th overall. As a freshman, Stevens has already competed in two state track championships and is a two-time state champion!! If Nia continues to work hard, the sky's the limit as to what she can accomplish.

-Dan Tryon, Coach



# State Champions

## Track & Field

### Samantha Spinella, Depew - Long Jump

Depew High School Junior Samantha Spinella traveled to the New York State Track and Field Championships at Cicero-North Syracuse as a qualifier in the Long Jump and the 4x100 Meter Relay. Samantha is now a 3-time state meet qualifier for track and field, having qualified for the 4x100 Meter Relay in the outdoor season in 2015 and 2016, and also qualified for the Long Jump in both the indoor and outdoor seasons. In 2015, Samantha was the anchor for the school record 4x100 Meter Relay team that took 8th place in Division II. At the 2016 Indoor Championships, Samantha earned a Federation medal by taking 8th place in the Long Jump. During the outdoor championship, she followed that up by anchoring the 4th place Division II 4x100 Meter Relay team to a new school record. Minutes later, Samantha was on the runway for the Long Jump where she was in 2nd place after preliminary jumps. During the finals, Samantha jumped 17 feet 9.75 inches to take the lead on her first jump. This jump held out throughout the rest of the competition to earn Samantha the Division II state title.



Samantha Spinella

Samantha is an honors student, class president, and volleyball team member. She holds 7 school records for the track and field program, and was the top point scorer for the team in dual meets and invitationals during her freshman, sophomore, and junior years. With Samantha having one more season, hopes are high for progress and a chance to repeat as state champion.

-Justin McElligott, Boys Head Coach

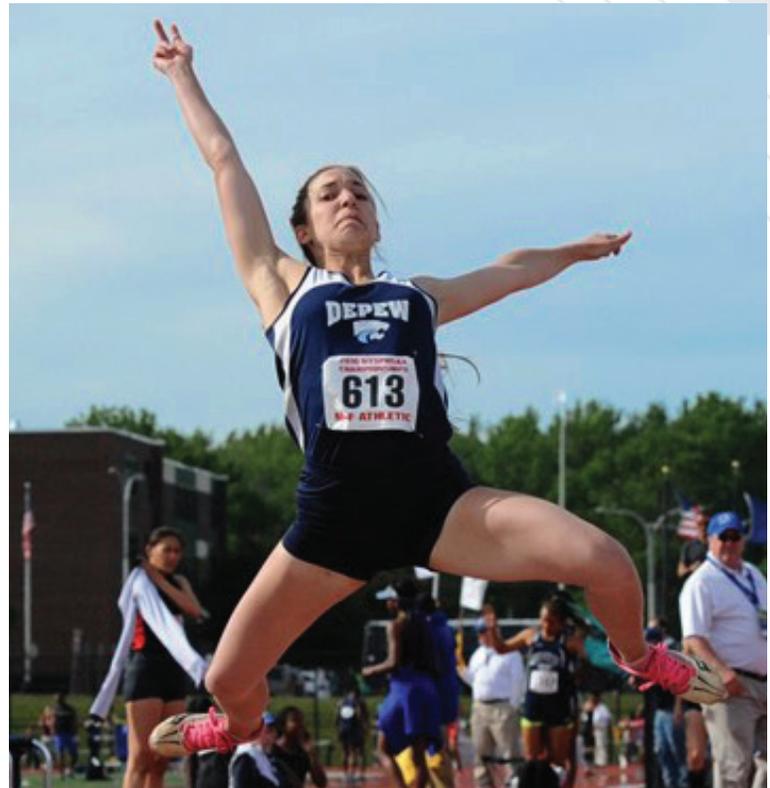
### Sam Wray, Starpoint - Discus

Sam Wray had an exceptional senior year. He backed up last year's state and federation titles by becoming a two-time state and federation champion. Sam started the season by taking home top American honors at the Penn Relays by placing second overall and had an undefeated high school season. He then finished the year by setting a new state meet record throwing 193' 8" in the Federation Championships and beating the record that had stood since 1985. Sam's personal record is 194' 4".



Sam Wray

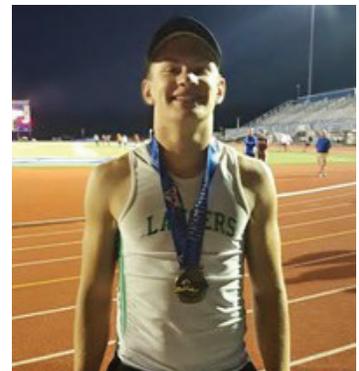
The coaches are extremely proud of what Sam has accomplished at Starpoint. Sam is a once in a generation type of student/athlete that will be missed by his peers and the program. Sam let his unique abilities do most of the talking, but he also demonstrated great leadership qualities through his hard work and dedication, which led him to becoming one of the best discus throwers New York State has ever seen. He will now make the transition to college where he will compete at the University at Buffalo.



Samantha Spinella

### Sean Foley, Lew-Port - Pole Vault

Lewiston-Porter Senior Sean Foley was the NYSPHSAA Champion in the Division II Pole Vault competition held at the State Track Meet at Cicero North Syracuse HS. Sean cleared 14'6" at the State Meet, which found him in a three-way tie with the other jumpers. He was declared the winner in the tie breaker. This is the first State Champion at Lewiston-Porter since Kyle Cerminara won the state wrestling championship at 185 pounds in 1996, and the first Boys Track state champion in Lew-Port's school history. Sean's jump of 14'6" at the State Meet tied the school record that he had set at the Niagara Frontier League Meet two weeks earlier. That school record had stood at Lew-Port since 1978. Sean will graduate with Honors from Lew-Port, and attend Alfred, where he will continue his track career as a member of their collegiate team.



Sean Foley



Sean Foley

# State Champions

## Track & Field

### Sophia Tasselmyer, East Aurora - 3000 Meter Run

Sophia Tasselmyer of East Aurora ended an outstanding high school running career by racing to the NY State Division II Championship in the 3000 Meter Run and set a new school and Section VI record in the process. Sophia's time of 9:41.80 bettered the previous record of 9:44 held by East Aurora's Catherine Phillips set in 2009.

Sophia also anchored East Aurora's 4x800 Meter Relay team, which placed second at the NY State Championships.

This past fall, Sophia helped her team win their second straight cross country state championship with her second straight individual state cross country title.

Sophia will attend Elon in North Carolina this fall where she hopes to continue her winning ways.



Sophia Tasselmyer

### Zach Jones, Holland - 400 Meter Intermediate Hurdles

Zach Jones, a senior at Holland Junior Senior High School, won the Division II State Championship in the 400 Meter Intermediate Hurdles. He also took 4th overall in the championship race, running a school record time of 53.79. Zach qualified for states in the Long Jump and the 110 Meter High Hurdles as well. He took 7th place in the Division II Long Jump and opted out of the 110 meter hurdles. This allowed his Holland teammate, Anthony Perlino, to compete at states in the 110 Meter High Hurdles.



## 2016 New York State Track & Field Championship Results - Girls

### 100 Meter Dash

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Time
Jenna Crean	9	Orchard Park	Div. I	3rd 7th	NYSPHSAA Federation	11.85 12.50
Kyri Jackson	12	Niag-Wheat.	Div. I	5th	NYSPHSAA	12.22
Nia Stevens	9	Tapestry	Div. II	2nd	NYSPHSAA	12.28
Taylor Hunter	10	Tapestry	Div. II	5th	NYSPHSAA	12.62

### 200 Meter Dash

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Time
Jenna Crean	9	Orchard Park	Div. I	2nd	NYSPHSAA	24.45
Nia Stevens	9	Tapestry	Div. II	1st 6th	NYSPHSAA Federation	25.07 25.07
Lynda Brundige	12	Hutch Tech	Div. I	5th	NYSPHSAA	25.14
Miquela Hunter	10	Olmstead	Div. II	3rd	NYSPHSAA	25.30

### 400 Meter Dash

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Time
Jenna Crean	9	Orchard Park	Div. I	2nd	NYSPHSAA	56.37
Caroline Walter	11	Maple Grove	Div. II	3rd 7th	NYSPHSAA Federation	57.00 57.19
Isabelle Licata	10	Hamburg	Div. I	7th	NYSPHSAA	57.95
Miquela Hunter	10	Olmstead	Div. II	8th	NYSPHSAA	1:00.16

# Track & Field

## 2016 New York State

### Track & Field Championship Results - Girls

#### 800 Meter Run

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Time
Sam Peterman	11	Sweet Home	Div. I	5th 8th	NYSPTSAA Federation	2:12.27 2:12.27
Abby Gostomski	10	Catt/LV	Div. II	6th	NYSPTSAA	2:14.77
Molly McLaughlin	10	East Aurora	Div. II	7th	NYSPTSAA	2:14.81

#### 1500 Meter Run

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Time
Sam Peterman	11	Sweet Home	Div. I	4th 4th	NYSPTSAA Federation	4:28.19 4:28.19
Anna Rybczynski	9	W Seneca W	Div. I	15th	NYSPTSAA	4:55.44

#### 3000 Meter Run

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Time
Sophia Tasselmyer	12	East Aurora	Div. II	1st 7th	NYSPTSAA Federation	9:41.80 - Record 9:41.80
Katrina Patterson	11	Clarence	Div. I	9th	NYSPTSAA	9:53.60
Fiona Danieu	12	East Aurora	Div. II	10th	NYSPTSAA	10:31.39

#### 100 Meter High Hurdles

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Time
Alyssa Oviasogie	12	Will. South	Div. I	10th	NYSPTSAA	15.41
Savia Moreland	12	Dunkirk	Div. II	8th	NYSPTSAA	15.54
Aaliyah Blanks	10	Olmstead	Div. II	9th	NYSPTSAA	15.59
Christina Wende	10	Kenmore West	Div. I	14th	NYSPTSAA	16.05

#### 400 Meter Intermediate Hurdles

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Time
Lauren Swan	10	Southwestern	Div. II	4th	NYSPTSAA	1:06.91
Maddison Knapp	11	Westfield/Broc	Div. II	7th	NYSPTSAA	1:07.26
Ali Binga	12	Starpoint	Div. I	12th	NYSPTSAA	1:08.42

#### 2000 Meter Steeplechase

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Time
Abby Gostomski	10	Catt/LV	Div. II	2nd 6th	NYSPTSAA Federation	7:00.17 7:00.17
Megan Caltagirone	12	Holland	Div. II	6th	NYSPTSAA	7:13.61
Liz Rott	11	Clarence	Div. I	12th	NYSPTSAA	7:50.70

#### Long Jump

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Distance
Sarah Yensan	12	Lockport	Div. I	7th 7th	NYSPTSAA Federation	18' 3 1/2" 17' 7 1/2"
Samantha Spinella	11	Depew	Div. II	1st	NYSPTSAA	17' 9 3/4"
Chanyee Powell	11	Albion	Div. II	5th	NYSPTSAA	17' 4"
Jessica Dunlap	10	Lake Shore	Div. I	14th	NYSPTSAA	17' 1/2"

# Track & Field

## 2016 New York State

### Track & Field Championship Results - Girls

#### Triple Jump

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Distance
Chanyce Powell	11	Albion	Div. II	4th	NYSPHSAA	37' 7 ½"
Lynda Brundige	12	Hutch Tech	Div. I	5th	NYSPHSAA	37' 5 ¼"
Jamillyah Mallory	9	Amherst	Div. II	6th	NYSPHSAA	36' 8 ¾"
Alyssa Oviasogie	12	Will. South	Div. I	13th	NYSPHSAA	35' 11"

#### Shot Put

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Distance
Brittany Walek	12	Starpoint	Div. I	10th	NYSPHSAA	36' 8"
Dayvene Williams	12	Jamestown	Div. I	12th	NYSPHSAA	34' 5 ½"
Amber Morrison	11	Falconer	Div. II	7th	NYSPHSAA	36' 7 ¼"
Morgan Palmer	12	East Aurora	Div. II	11th	NYSPHSAA	34' 2 ¼"

#### Discus

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Distance
Brianna McKenzie	11	Lancaster	Div. I	3rd 3rd	NYSPHSAA Federation	124' 10" 130' 11"
Morgan Palmer	12	East Aurora	Div. II	8th	NYSPHSAA	109' 6"
Cassandra Rohrdanz	12	Lancaster	Div. I	10th	NYSPHSAA	106' 3"
Emily Zebrowski	12	Springville	Div. II	10th	NYSPHSAA	105' 7"

#### High Jump

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Height
Morgan Halt	8	Amherst	Div. II	2nd 5th	NYSPHSAA Federation	5' 6" 5' 6"
Oliva Gervan	10	Lancaster	Div. I	3rd 6th	NYSPHSAA Federatio	5' 4" 5' 4"
Le'Gary Jackson	9	Niag-Wheat	Div. I	7th	NYSPHSAA	5' 2"
Gwen Stokes	12	Fredonia	Div. II	5th	NYSPHSAA	5' 0"

#### Pole Vault

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Height
Gabrielle Gaygen	10	Will North	Div. I	4th 5th	NYSPHSAA Federation	11' 6" 11' 6"
Mallory Prelewicz	11	Clarence	Div. I	9th	NYSPHSAA	10' 6"
Aubrey Rockoff	11	Amherst	Div. II	5th	NYSPHSAA	10' 6"
Mushirah Sheppard	9	Salamanca	Div. II	8th	NYSPHSAA	10' 0"

#### Pentathlon

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Points
Tiana Luton	11	Sweet Home	Div. I	1st 1st	NYSPHSAA Federation	3541 pts. 3541 pts.
Haily Rospierski	12	Alden	Div. II	6th	NYSPHSAA	2650 pts.
Jayna Galley	9	Holland	Div. II	8th	NYSPHSAA	2580 pts.

# Track & Field

## 2016 New York State

### Track & Field Championship Results - Girls

#### 4 x 100 Meter Relay

Names	School	Division	Place	Organization	Time
Nia Stevens, Taylor Hunter, Kim Bostic, Esquisite Dunnigan	Tapestry	Div. II	1st	NYSPPHSAA	49.30
	Niagara Wheatfield	Div. I	7th	NYSPPHSAA	49.20
	Depew	Div. II	4th	NYSPPHSAA	49.79

#### 4 x 400 Meter Relay

School	Division	Place	Organization	Time
Tapestry	Div. II	5th	NYSPPHSAA	4:04.68
Williamsville South	Div. I	14th	NYSPPHSAA	4:05.01

#### 4 x 800 Meter Relay

School	Division	Place	Organization	Time
East Aurora	Div. II	2nd	NYSPPHSAA	9:15.06
Williamsville South	Div. I	8th	NYSPPHSAA	9:17.27

### 2016 New York State Track & Field Championship Results - Boys

#### 100 meter Dash

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Time
Lavette Warren	12	Lockport	Div. I	9th	NYSPPHSAA	10.94
Rodney Corbin	11	Will North	Div. I	3rd	NYSPPHSAA	10.95
Jalin Cooper	10	Medina	Div. II	6th	NYSPPHSAA	11.13
Alex Dildy	11	Bennett	Div. II	10th	NYSPPHSAA	11.23

#### 200 Meter Dash

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Time
Nathaniel Davis	10	Sweet Home	Div. I	3rd 4th	NYSPPHSAA Federation	22.00 21.89
Christian Snell	10	Alden	Div. II	6th	NYSPPHSAA	22.71
Jalin Cooper	10	Medina	Div. II	14th	NYSPPHSAA	23.67

#### 400 Meter Dash

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Time
Tresten White	11	Lockport	Div. I	2nd 2nd	NYSPPHSAA Federation	48.55 48.32
Cody Sikora	12	N. Tonawanda	Div. I	12th	NYSPPHSAA	50.43
Alonzo Rodriguez-Spencer	12	Cheektowaga	Div. II	10th	NYSPPHSAA	50.94
Josh Peterson	12	Frewsburg	Div. II	11th	NYSPPHSAA	50.99

# Track & Field

## 2016 New York State

### Track & Field Championship Results - Boys

#### 800 Meter Run

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Time
Owen Barber	12	Alleg.-Limes.	Div. I	1st 4th	NYSPHSAA Federation	1:54.38 1:54.38
Matt McLaughlin	12	East Aurora	Div. II	2nd 6th	NYSPHSAA Federation	1:54.68 1:54.68
Connor Doran	11	Lockport	Div. I	8th	NYSPHSAA	1:57.63

#### 1600 Meter Run

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Time
Steve Neumaier	12	Lancaster	Div. I	1st 3rd	NYSPHSAA Federation	4:13.71 4:13.71
Frank Zuroski	12	Maple Grove	Div. II	10th	NYSPHSAA	4:32.34

#### 3200 Meter Run

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Time
Kenny Vasbinder	12	East Aurora	Div. II	6th	NYSPHSAA	9:19.24
Chris Nowak	11	Sweet Home	Div. I	10th	NYSPHSAA	9:38.22

#### 110 Meter High Hurdles

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Time
AJ Perlino	12	Holland	Div. II	10th	NYSPHSAA	16.24
Roshain Wallace	11	Niagara Falls	Div. I			DNF

#### 400 Meter Intermediate Hurdles

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Time
Zachary Jones	12	Holland	Div. II	1st 4th	NYSPHSAA Federation	55.04 53.79
Kellen Martin	11	Catt-LV	Div. II	6th	NYSPHSAA	57.30
Adam Perilli	11	Lockport	Div. I	12th	NYSPHSAA	58.15

#### 3000 Meter Steeplechase

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Time
Owen Barber	12	Clymer	Div. II	4th	NYSPHSAA	9:32.19
Matt Mercer	12	Orchard Park	Div. I	9th	NYSPHSAA	9:32.77
TJ Murray	12	East Aurora	Div. I	7th	NYSPHSAA	9:49.34

#### 3000 Meter Steeplechase

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Time
Owen Barber	12	Clymer	Div. II	4th	NYSPHSAA	9:32.19
Matt Mercer	12	Orchard Park	Div. I	9th	NYSPHSAA	9:32.77
TJ Murray	12	East Aurora	Div. I	7th	NYSPHSAA	9:49.34

# Track & Field

## 2016 New York State

### Track & Field Championship Results - Boys

#### Pentathlon

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Points
Mitch Sandburg	12	Maple Grove	Div. II	6th	NYSPHSAA	3104 pts.
Justin Svetz	11	CSP	Div. II	7th	NYSPHSAA	3068 pts.
TJ Kmitch	11	Lake Shore	Div. I	10th	NYSPHSAA	2905 pts.

#### Long Jump

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Distance
Peter Borzillieri	10	W. Seneca W.	Div. I	6th	NYSPHSAA	22' ½"
Zachary Jones	12	Holland	Div. II	7th	NYSPHSAA	21' 6 ¾"
Caleb Hibit	12	Catt-LV	Div. II	9th	NYSPHSAA	21' 5 ¼"

#### Triple Jump

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Distance
Caleb Hibit	12	Catt-LV	Div. II	11th	NYSPHSAA	42' 5 ½"
Brady Jensen	12	Orchard Park	Div. I			Foul

#### Shot Put

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Distance
Colin Blair	12	Lancaster	Div. I	1st 1st	NYSPHSAA Federation	62' 6 ¼" 62' 4 ¼"
Sam Wray	12	Starpoint	Div. I	3rd 8th	NYSPHSAA Federation	55' 3" 52' 4 ¾"
Leyton Miner	12	Alden	Div. II	8th	NYSPHSAA	48" 9 ½"

#### Discus

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Distance
Sam Wray	12	Starpoint	Div. I	1st 1st	NYSPHSAA Federation	181' 11" 193' 8" - Record
Colin Blair	11	Lancaster	Div. I	2nd 2nd	NYSPHSAA Federation	181' 1" 173' 8"
Jamie Belzile	12	Catt-LV	Div. II	3rd	NYSPHSAA	148' 1"
Grant Milne	12	Portville	Div. II	4th	NYSPHSAA	145' 8"

#### High Jump

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Height
Dom Farszmil	11	W. Seneca E.	Div. I	7th	NYSPHSAA	6' 2"
Tal James	11	Kenmore W.	Div. I	12th	NYSPHSAA	5' 10"
Elijah Ramadhan	12	Olean	Div. II			NH

#### Pole Vault

Name	Grade	School	Division	Place	Organization	Height
Sean Foley	12	Lew-Port	Div. II	1st 4th	NYSPHSAA Federation	14' 6" 14' 6"
Chris Beckley	12	Lake Shore	Div. I	5th	NYSPHSAA	13' 6"
Paul Dunbar	12	Newfane	Div. II	6th	NYSPHSAA	13' 6"

# Track & Field

## 2016 New York State

### Track & Field Championship Results - Boys

4 x 100 Meter Relay				
School	Division	Place	Organization	Time
Lockport	Div. I	2nd 3rd	NYSPHSAA Federation	42.34 41.87 - Section VI Record
Niagara Falls	Div. I	7th	NYSPHSAA	42.90
Bennett	Div. II	2nd	NYSPHSAA	43.43
Dunkirk	Div. II	5th	NYSPHSAA	44.10

4 x 400 Meter Relay				
School	Division	Place	Organization	Time
Sweet Home	Div. I	4th 6th	NYSPHSAA Federation	3:18.87 3:20.35
East Aurora	Div. II	6th	NYSPHSAA	3:28.15
Cheektowaga	Div. II	8th	NYSPHSAA	3:29.08

4 x 800 Meter Relay				
School	Division	Place	Organization	Time
Lockport	Div. I	8th	NYSPHSAA	7:56.62
East Aurora	Div. II	2nd	NYSPHSAA	7:57.26

### New Section VI Records

Name(s)	School	Event	Time/Distance	Meet
Sam Wray	Starpoint	Discus	194' 4"	Allegany-Limestone Last Chance Meet
James Khalil, Waren Lavette, Tom Wendt, Dante Mounte	Lockport	4 x 100 Relay	41.87	State Meet
Sophia Tasselmyer	East Aurora	3200 Meter Run	9:41.80	State Meet
Molly Scrapello, Ashley Grazen, Ava Gervan, Olivia Gervan	Lancaster	4 x 100 Relay	48.09	Section VI Meet

# Regional Champions

## Baseball

### Williamsville East, Class A



# Regional Champions

## Softball

### Depew - Class B

The Depew Wildcats finished the softball season making it to the state final four for the first time in school history. Depew finished the season with a 20-5 overall record. The Wildcats finished the season ranked #1 in the WNY small school poll, and also finished ranked 4th overall in the State Class B poll. It is the 6th consecutive season in which Depew has won the ECIC Division III Title, finishing this season 11-1 in the division. The team has also reached the sectional finals 7 consecutive years (winning sectional titles in 2011 and 2016).



*Andrea Taboni scores the game winning run vs Eden in the bottom of the 8th inning in the walk off win!*

This season was full of memorable games, which included four "walk off" wins. The first win, came against division rival Amherst Tigers. Depew was down 2-0 entering the bottom of the 7th inning. With two outs and the bases loaded, Andrea Taboni cleared the bases hitting a ball to the left field fence in the 3-2 win. The other three walk-off wins came in three consecutive playoff games, including the Class B1 semi-finals and finishing in the overall Class B finals over Eden. In the semi-finals, Depew walked off the field in the bottom of the 7th inning, beating Olean 1-0. Annie DiPirro's single with bases loaded sent Nicole Ross to the plate for the win. In the Class B1 finals, Alden and Depew were both held scoreless entering the bottom of the 10th inning. Abby Nicometi's double over the left fielder's head scored Alyssa Nichy for the game's only run. In the Class B crossover final, Depew entered the 5th inning trailing Eden 5-0. The team found a way to rally back to score five runs in the bottom of the 5th inning. Entering the bottom of the 8th, Abby Nicometi single plated Andrea Taboni who scored from first base on the play to beat Eden 7-6. In the regional final, Depew's bats erupted in the 3rd inning, scoring seven runs in the win over Bath Haverline. Nicole Ross started the scoring with a squeeze bunt plating Taboni. Abby Tomasik followed up with a two-run double. Later in the game, Nicometi capped off the win by hitting a ball over the left field fence in the 11-0 win.

Junior and Pitcher Karsen Cotton was a dominant force on the mound all season. During the playoff run, Karsen had 3 shut-outs and only allowed more than 3 hits in two games (Eden and Windsor). During the regular season, Karsen also threw a perfect game against Pioneer. Cotton was recognized as a 1st Team All-WNY Player for her third consecutive year, Pitcher of the Year for ECIC Division III, 1st Team All-Star, and named Pitcher of the Year on the All-Bee Coaches Team.

Abby Nicometi was recognized as a 1st Team All-WNY Player, 1st Team All-Bee Coaches Team, and named Player of the Year in Division III. Her post-season tear of clutch hits led the Wildcats to the State Final Four.

Although the team did not finish the season winning a state title, the team graduates four seniors and returns eleven players from this year's roster. The team expects to make another title run next season.

-Daniel Seelig, Coach



*Abby Nicometi hitting a home run in the regional final versus Bath.*



*Karsen Cotton is met by the team after the Regional final win.*

# Regional Champions

## Softball

### Orchard Park - Class AA



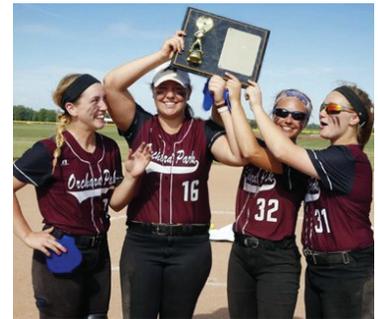
Orchard Park varsity team lined up in the sectional semi-final game against Williamsville North

Through a lot of determination and hard work, this young team made history for the second year in a row by winning the section, the region, and returning to the state championship tournament. The tone was set from the very first ball that I hit in tryouts, when Lauren Miller made a diving stop at third to make the play over at first. Even though it was early on, I could immediately tell the kind of team we would be fielding this season. The girls' work ethic and intensity during both practice and games was like no other. Whether it was taking extra reps after practice or fighting back from going four runs down early, these girls did not want to be underestimated by others.

We had two very inspirational seniors, who both verbally and physically led by example. Katie Luchowski made a dramatic diving catch in the Regional final to change the momentum of the game and then Lydia Petricca hit the go ahead RBI double in the bottom of the 6th inning. Their pregame motivational speeches further instilled the team's desire to go as far as last years did. The determination was also kept afloat with the various personalities on the team, which showed that they also knew another important component of sports, how to have fun. That sense of humor was omnipresent in our junior class. Penny Lenard, Peyton Hillis (Captain), Marissa Drees, Alex Sheehy, Sam Frappa, Lauren Smith, Alyssa Piniewski, and Amber Piniewski all played very different roles this season. Every one of them accepted their roles and did whatever they could, whether it was on or off the field, to help the team be more successful and excited about



Orchard Park team after winning the 2016 Section VI Championship against Niagara Falls



Orchard Park Captains holding up the Section VI championship plaque. From Left: Kayla Raymond, Peyton Hillis, Katie Luchowski, and Lydia Petricca

what was to come. The sophomores, always giving 110%, helped drive up the work ethic of the team. Lauren Miller (SS), Lilly Wosniak (2B), Madison Stewart (1B), Kayla Raymond (C and Captain) were the starting infield. Their optimal positioning and fielding were only trumped by their habitual effort to never let a ball pass them. With Maddie and Kayla bringing power to our lineup and Lauren and Lilly bringing speed and small ball, it was hard for teams to focus on an isolated attribute when pitching against us. Our lone freshman, Liz Lis, also played an essential role in this year's success, as she shared the pitching position with Sam Frappa. The two of them were a dynamic duo, splitting many games throughout the year and picking each other (and the entire team) up when needed.

Overall, I could not ask for anything more from these girls and we are extremely proud of their accomplishments. With many returning next year, we are hoping to progress from this seasons success.

- Brittany Schermerhorn and Josh Dannecker, Coaches

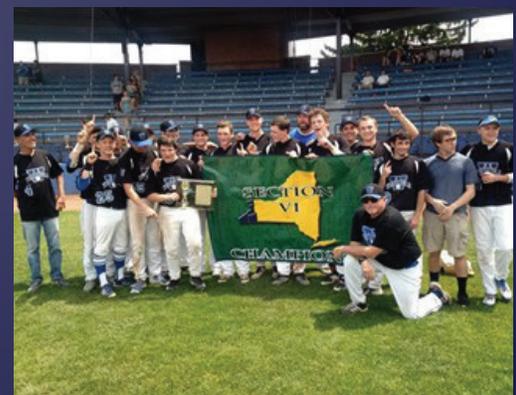
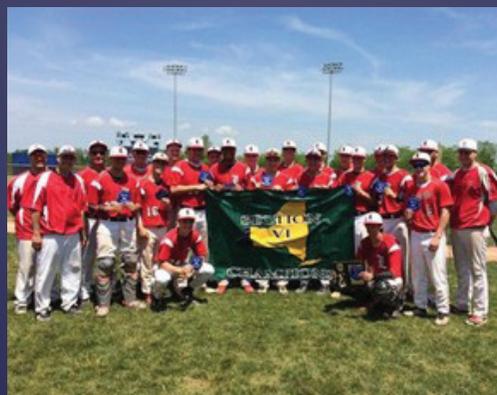
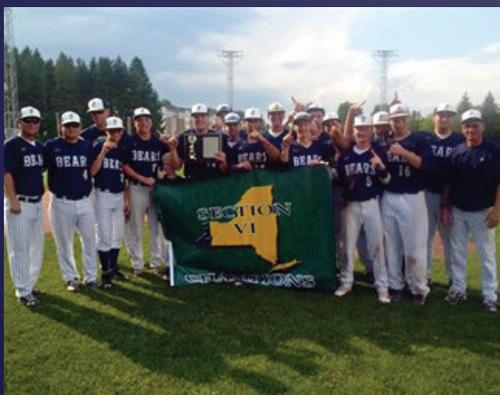
# Sectional Champions

## Baseball

### Frewsburg, Class C

### Lancaster, Class AA

### Westfield, Class D



# Sectional Champions

## Softball

### Cleveland Hill - Class C

Congratulations to the 2016 Cleveland Hill Golden Eagles softball team on their second sectional title (2012). The Lady Eagles defeated Barker 2-0 in the Class C championship game held at Gowanda High School. Sophomore Taylor Betz pitched a one hit shutout to earn the victory. Both of Cleveland Hill's runs were driven in by Freshman Alison McIntosh in the bottom of the second inning. The exciting playoff run started with a 1-0 win over Salamanca and continued as the girls beat Maple Grove and then Allegany-Limestone. The regional game versus Section V representative Caledonia Mumford was held at Scio High School. Cleveland Hill jumped out to an early lead, but it was short lived as the Red Raiders offense responded. The Eagles continued to battle, but came up short, falling to Caledonia Mumford, 6-4. The Eagles completed the season with a 14 - 6 record with the following players earning individual recognition for their performances: Division IV 1st Team All-Stars were Taylor Betz, Anna Cervino, and Emily McIntosh; 2nd Team were Mohogany Barker and Kathryn Skorka, and Taylor Betz was named to the All-ECIC team.



Taylor Betz

### Franklinville - Class D



### West Seneca East - Class A



Led by six experienced seniors, the West Seneca East (WSE) softball team culminated the 2016 season by becoming Section VI Class A champions. The last time a WSE team had this success was in 2009. The girls finished the season as co-champions in ECIC Division II along with Williamsville East (10-2). At that point, the girls then completed their post-season in a workman-like fashion by defeating North Tonawanda, Williamsville South, Williamsville East and Lewiston Porter to reign as Section VI Class A champions. The six seniors who made major contributions to the team's success were Miranda Manquen (Daemen College), Rachel Funk (Niagara University), Brittany Nowatzki (St. John Fisher), Shannon Borowiak (ECC), Elyse Fuerst (Geneseo), and Madison Jaszcz (Cleveland State).

The team finished the season with an overall record of 20-5 with excellent pitching from Sophomore Anilese Kelly and Miranda Manquen. With only three juniors on the team (Kassie Vogle, Savannah Murray, and Hailey Maddex), the sophomores were given a greater workload to help the team be successful. These young ladies (Kassidy Aiken, Gabrielle Catlin, Samantha Kmiotek, Nicole Kumro, and Julia Slowik) responded to the challenge and decided, with the juniors, their goal is to repeat as divisional and sectional champions in 2017.



Left to Right: Coach Jeff Krause, Alison McIntosh, Devyn Stahl, Suzie Horton, Mohogany Barker, Taylor Betz, Ashley Pomarzynski, Anna Cervino, Megan McIntosh, Mora Sullivan, Kathryn Skorka, Emily McInotsh, Coach Justin Ditzel.

# Sectional Champions

## Boys Lacrosse

### Akron - Class C



The Akron Tigers boys' lacrosse team successfully defended their title as Class C Champions in Section VI following a 15 -14 nail-biter against the Gowanda/Silver Creek Black Panthers. Although the team was defeated by Section V's Penn Yan Mustangs again in the Far West Regional, ending their bid for a berth at the state championship, they earned many individual honors.

Senior, Attack stand-out Gates Abrams was the team's 2016 points leader with a 155 total (93 goals and 62 assists) for the season. Gates finishes his career with 435 points (269 goals and 166 assists). His career stats land him second on the all-time list in Akron school history. He earned US Lacrosse® New York - Buffalo area All-American honors for the first time. He was also selected to the 1st Team All-Section VI and 1st Team All-League Class C.

Owen Hill led the midfielders in all statistical categories. Hill scored 100 points (48 goals and 52 assists) and picked up 249 groundballs. He also won face-offs at a 78% rate. These stats were good enough to give Owen 1st Team All-Section VI and 1st Team All-League Class C recognition. Owen rounded out his year by making a verbal commitment to attend Albany with his brother, Chaunce.

Individual accolades for the team also include: Second Team All-Section VI honors for Freshmen Lee Abrams and Weylon Abrams. Lee Abrams and Weylon Abrams join Owen Hill and Gates Abrams for selection to the 1st Team All-League Class C. Jarrett Trzenski, Nelson Logan, and Symon Jonathan earned 2nd Team All-League Class C honors and Kingsley Jonathan, Frank Uebelhoer, and Chris Borchert were given Honorable Mention.

The team only lost one regular season game this year. Akron had several wins against bigger schools, including beating Class A Clarence and Class B Niagara Wheatfield in addition to the regular Class C contests.

Seniors Gates Abrams and Lee Abrams were chosen to play for the North Team of the Section VI Senior All-Star game.

-Bryan Bellis, Coach

### Hamburg - Class B



The 2016 Hamburg boys' lacrosse team accomplished something special with the first undefeated regular season in school history. Among these victories were Virginia state powers Westfield and Chantilly, Canandaigua Academy and Webster Thomas from Section V, as well as the other 12 Section VI Class B teams.

Leading the team were 14 seniors, 9 juniors, and 2 sophomores whose dedication and determination earned the program its 9th local title in 10 years.

The following senior captains lead the way:

Evan Hollfelder	2x HSAA, 2x PTPOTY, 4 year varsity starter going to Mercyhurst
William Agate	HMAA, 1st Team All-Section, 3 year starter going to Mercyhurst
Brendan Ryan	HMAA, 1st Team All-Section, 3 year starter going to West Point
James Wittmeyer	1st Team All-League, 2nd Team All-Section going to Mercyhurst
Jason Chiodo	Jr All-America, 1st Team All-Section, earned high honors as well.
John Collins	1st Team All-League, championed at the face-off position @ 66% efficiency and 95 ground balls.

The rest of the offensive power (over 15 gpg ave) came from Seniors Scott Ramaekers, Alex Pumm, Eric Kiel, and Eric Slemmer, as well as Junior Gage Schneider. The defense was stingy (less than 5 gpg allowed) and led by Seniors Seth Grabar in net, William Pritchard, Bob Slemmer, Jacob Smeader, and Anthony Diamico at defense. At defensive midfield were Starters William Agate (LSM), Brendan Ryan, and John Collins (SSDM).

Other than avenging previous losses with two victories on our Virginia trip, highlights of the year came at Thomas (16-13), Canandaigua (10-9 OT) and the Section final versus Niagara Wheatfield (15-7).

The Hamburg boys' lacrosse program was proud to represent Section VI as we work our way toward that ever elusive NYS title.

-Jerry Severino, Coach

*"The key is not the will to win. Everybody has that. It is the will to prepare to win that is important."*

*-Bobby Knight*

# Sectional Champions

## Girls Lacrosse

### Hamburg - Class B



The Hamburg girls' lacrosse team won their fifth consecutive Championship in the last six years. Claire Herrmann, scored 5 goals and added seven draw control wins on her way to becoming Hamburg's first ever two-time First Team All-American. Senior and Captain Rebecca Izzo also scored 4 goals for the Bulldogs in the 14-9 victory over West Seneca East.

-Katy Ryan, Coach

### Lancaster - Class A



The Lancaster girls' lacrosse team was crowned Section VI Class A Champions for the 5th year in a row. The team defeated Frontier, 8-6, on June 1st after being down 4-0 early in the 1st half. This is the 11th championship they have won in the past 12 years. The following 6 seniors will be playing Division I or II lacrosse next year; Anna Orlando (West Point), Jenna Hagen (Mercyhurst), Riley Lucarelli (Canisius), Olivia Potts (Edinboro), Hannah Nagowski (St. Bonaventure) and Anna Donnelly (Niagara).

Lancaster finished the season 15-4 overall and 10-0 in Division I.

-Julie Buccieri, Coach

# Sectional Champions

## Boys Tennis Doubles

### Dan Freilicher & Kyle Schmitt, Orchard Park



Sending a doubles pairing to the New York State Tennis Championships is a major accomplishment for a program. Sending two pairings seems like a crazy pipe dream. But that's exactly what Orchard Park will do this year. "It's very rare," Orchard Park Coach Terrence McMahon said. "We've had it before, but it's pretty unusual this year because they are so young." The top pairing of Dan Freilicher and Kyle Schmitt won both the ECIC and Sectional Titles, tearing through the competition with an impressive week. Meanwhile, Junior Alex Freilicher and eighth-grader Noah Sayoc finished fourth at ECIC Championships and third at Sectionals. Schmitt and the older Freilicher dominated throughout the week, not losing a single set. The duo never allowed more than three points in a single set. "They played well the whole time," McMahon said. "They were top-seeded. Dan Freilicher had been there before. He went to states last year." The Alex Freilicher and Sayoc pairing faced off against Schmitt and Dan Freilicher in the semi-finals at the ECIC Championships. The top pairing won, 6-3, 6-3. The second pairing lost again in the third-place match against Amherst's top pairing. The finish still allowed the duo to qualify for Sectional Championships where they fell in the semi-finals again, this time to Olean's top pairing. They were again matched up against Amherst in the third-place match, but this time claimed victorious, 7-5, 4-6, 6-4. The match lasted nearly three hours. McMahon gave his assistants credit for the success of the duo. "I think it was the skill of my assistants-Elizabeth Chleus and Stephen Sayoc," McMahon said. "This was a difficult match against very good players. I think they did a great job. They really pulled that out of a hat."

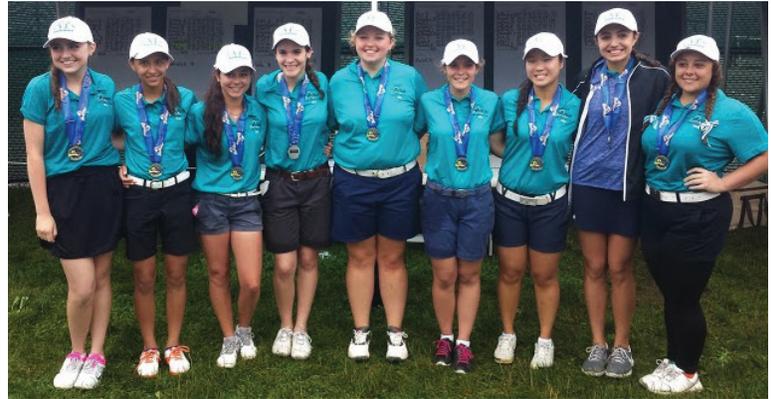
-by Taylor Nigrelli, *Courtesy of the Orchard Park Bee*

# Sectional Champions

## Girls Golf

### Girls Golf - State Team

The Section VI Girls Golf State Team claimed runner-up (2nd place) in the 2016 NYSPHSAA Girls Golf Championships held June 4-5, 2016 at Bethpage (yellow course) in Farmingdale, New York. The ladies shot a team score of 582 (7 of 9 golfers) on Saturday, finding themselves in 3rd place, eleven strokes behind Section XI. In Sunday's 2nd round, the girls were able to catch 12 strokes on Section XI and claim the runner-up medal by 1 stroke. The team was led by Marissa DelMonaco (T8) with scores of 78-75= 153 total for 36 holes. Followed by her were Alexis Kim 79-77=156 (T13); Sarah Godfrey 85-77= 162 (T20); Elena Lopez 82-80=162 (T20); Samantha Gaffney 82-85=167 (T30); Emily Isaacson 84-85=169 (32nd); Amanda Gaffney 92-91=183 (T53); Madison Forrest 108-104=212 (T74); and Jersey Phillips 117-99= 216 (78th). The five seniors on the team had all been to the NYS Championship multiple times, and this year led Section VI to its best finish ever in our brief history.



*Madison Forrest, Olean (12); Jersey Phillips, Depew (8); Emily Isaacson, Jamestown (12); Amanda Gaffney, Williamsville East (10); Marissa DelMonaco, Southwestern (12); Samantha Gaffney, Williamsville East (12); Alexis Kim, Clarence (11); Elena Lopez, Clarence (10), and Sarah Godfrey, Depew (12).*

# Sectional Champions

## Boys Golf

### 2016 Section VI State Team Individual Awards

#### State Team 3+ Year Veterans:

(Recognized during the June 5, 2016 players/coaches meeting)

**5th Year at States:** Nolan Ditcher, Randolph, 12

**4th Year at States:** Ben Reichert, Williamsville North, 12

### NYSPHSAA Sportsmanship Award (Section VI)

**Nolan Ditcher, Randolph, 12**



### Section VI Coaches' Award Connor Seeley, Wilson, 11



The Section VI Coaches' Award is presented by the Section VI State Team Coaching Staff to the player who exemplifies character values such as integrity, confidence, responsibility, trust, respect, courtesy, equity, accountability, perseverance, and dedication.

This award is presented in the spirit and tradition of all Section VI State Team Coaches past and present.

# Sectional Champions

## Boys Golf

2016 Section VI State Qualifier Results  
 May 16, 2016 - River Oaks Golf Club, Grand Island

Athlete	Grade	School	League	Front	Back	Total	Front	Total
Ben Reichert (ECIC Medalist, 2015 State Team)	12	Williamsville North	ECIC	37	37	74	38	112
Nolan Ditcher (CCAA II E Medalist, 2015 State Team)	12	Randolph	CCAA II E	37	37	74	43	117
Matt Pawlak (NFL Medalist)	11	Niagara Wheatfield	NFL	39	38	77	40	117
Mitchell Smith	11	Orchard Park	ECIC	37	40	77	42	119
Connor Seeley	11	Wilson	NO	40	40	80	39	119
Cary Ignaczak	11	Lake Shore	ECIC	42	40	82	37	119
Jack Devic	12	Orchard Park	ECIC	40	37	77	43	120
Cam Eddy	12	Ellicottville	CCAA II E	38	40	78	42	120
Alex Fisher	12	Ellicottville	CCAA II E	40	40	80	40	120



Pictured left to right: Nolan Ditcher (12, Randolph), Matt Pawlak (11, Niagara Wheatfield), Mitchell Smith (11, Orchard Park), Connor Seeley (11, Wilson), Ben Reichert (12, Williamsville North), Cary Ignaczak (11, Lake Shore), Jack Devic (12, Orchard Park), Cam Eddy (12, Ellicottville), and Alex Fisher (12, Ellicottville)  
 Photo Courtesy of Joey Conti Photography

Please follow us on Twitter @Section VI

# USA Football

On June 7th 2016, Section VI sponsored a "Heads Up Player Safety Coach" Football Clinic for all area high school football programs. The clinic was held at Buffalo State College.

The "Heads Up" program is a national program, which has been developed by USA Football in conjunction with the NFL, the American Football Coaches Association, the Korey Stringer Foundation, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The focus of the program is to create a safer game by further educating coaches in the areas of concussion awareness, heat & hydration, proper equipment fitting, and the "Heads Up" tackling / blocking techniques.

Local high school coaches volunteered their time to become trained as a Player Safety Coach for their school's program. Each coach attended the all-day clinic and will now have the capability to train all coaches, players, and parents in their respective schools in an effort to create a better and safer game for all.

This is the third year Section VI has hosted a Player Safety Coach Clinic.



## Hey Student-Athletes, Sports Officiating Opportunities Await You!

After graduation, one way to stay involved in athletics is through sports officiating.

Whether you are moving on to college or beginning a new venture in your life, please take the time to consider a job opportunity with one or more of our Section VI affiliated sports officiating organizations.

Offers Flexible Schedules • Multiple Locations • Helps Develop Leadership Skills

\*Previous officiating experience is not necessary

Please visit the following site to learn more: [www.section6.e1b.org/Page/226](http://www.section6.e1b.org/Page/226)

# Section VI All-WNY Scholar Athletes Spring 2016

Section VI selected the winners of the All-WNY Scholar Athlete Award for the 2016 spring sports season. Of the 686 nominations; there are 18 three season winners, 37 two season winners, 128 winners, and 494 honorable mentions.

All winners are listed below. \* Indicates two-season winner \*\* Indicates three-season winner

<b>Akron</b>		<b>Depew</b>		<b>Iroquois</b>	
Softball	Emma Chubb**	Boys Track & Field	Jakob Grant	Girls Track & Field	Leah Krzemien*
Softball	Anna Pisano*			Boys Tennis	Drake Meaney*
Softball	Katherine Grant	<b>East Aurora</b>		Girls Track & Field	Sydney Slachetka*
Softball	Megan Kidder	Girls Track & Field	Fiona Danieu*	Boys Tennis	Matthew Dykes
Boys Tennis	Ryan Meek	Boys Track & Field	William Zink*	Boys Golf	Will Jenney
<b>Alden</b>		Boys Tennis	Jason Hochwald	Softball	Marissa Parker
Baseball	Colton Pyszczynski	<b>Eden</b>		Girls Lacrosse	Brisa Seibert
Girls Track & Field	Mallory Ronan	Girls Track & Field	Sarah Hooper	Boys Tennis	Clayton Terry
<b>Amherst</b>		<b>Falconer</b>		<b>Jamestown</b>	
Baseball & Boys Golf	Nathan Cole**	Boys Track & Field	Walker Black*	Boys Track & Field	Matt Elia**
Baseball	Ben Lackner**			Girls Golf	Emily Isaacson
Girls Lacrosse	Chloe Cottone*	<b>Forestville</b>		Girls Track & Field	Molly Morse
Boys Golf	Rory Walsh*	Boys Golf	Olivia Markham	Boys Track & Field	Jacob Samuelson
Boys Track & Field	John Coudriet	<b>Franklinville</b>		Girls Track & Field	Kate Tucker
Girls Track & Field	Alyssa Curtis	Softball	Paige Burrell	<b>JFK</b>	
Boys Tennis	Eric Niblock	<b>Frewsburg</b>		Boys Track & Field	Caleb Boyce-Wright
Girls Track & Field	Kristen Stohl	Softball	Megan Greene	Girls Track & Field	Catherine Parylo
Boys Tennis	Liam Sullivan	Boys Golf	Anthony Mole	<b>Lake Shore</b>	
<b>Barker</b>		<b>Frontier</b>		Boys Tennis	Jared Himes**
Girls Track & Field	Lindsey Williams**	Girls Track & Field	Nicole Burns	Softball	Emma Franco
Girls Track & Field	Emma Jenks*	Girls Track & Field	Ana Canale	<b>Lancaster</b>	
Girls Track & Field	Alaina Israel	Baseball	Peter DePalma	Softball	Jenna Neumaier**
Girls Track & Field	Caitlyn Mason	Boys Track & Field	Elliot Privateer	Boys Track & Field	Steven Neumaier**
<b>City Honors</b>		<b>Gowanda</b>		Boys Track & Field	Mitchell Carleton
Softball	Tatyiana Gordon*	Boys Track & Field	Trevor Greco*	Girls Lacrosse	Anna Donnelly
Softball	Julia Panepinto*	<b>Hamburg</b>		Girls Track & Field	Olivia Kucharski
Girls Golf	Misa Buscemi	Girls Track & Field	Erin Kane	Boys Lacrosse	Andrew Phibbs
<b>Clarence</b>		Girls Track & Field	Cassandra Taber	<b>Lewiston-Porter</b>	
Girls Track & Field	Madeline Hanford**	<b>Holland</b>		Boys Lacrosse	Seamus McGillion*
Boys Track & Field	Stephen Marzano**	Softball	Annastasia Marburger*	Boys Tennis	Keegan Miller*
Boys Lacrosse	Michael Adonnino	Boys Track & Field	Anthony Perlino*	Boys Tennis	Yash Maheshwari
Softball	Ashley Carney	Girls Track & Field	Alana Szweczyk*	Boys Tennis	Nathaniel Swanson
Girls Track & Field	Tori Hughes	Girls Track & Field			
Girls Track & Field	Julena Maurer	Girls Track & Field	Samantha Cammarata		
Baseball	Jon Snitzer				
Girls Lacrosse	Alexandra Wolfe				

# Section VI All-WNY Scholar Athletes

## Spring 2016

### Lockport

Boys Track & Field	Scott Anderson*
Girls Track & Field	Sage Donovan*
Softball	Leah VanDenBosch

### Maple Grove

Boys Track & Field	Frank Zuroski
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### McKinley

Boys Tennis	Be Lu*
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### Medina

Boys Track & Field	Zachary Harris*
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### Newfane

Boys Golf	Mitchell Dockery*
Baseball	Tyler Jurek

### Niagara Wheatfield

Girls Track & Field	Madeline Hardy
Boys Track & Field	Alec Otminski

### North Tonawanda

Softball	Rachel Krawczyk
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### Olean

Boys Tennis	Nicholas Sanders*
Boys Tennis	Luke Earl
Boys Golf	Nicholas Jodush
Baseball	Logan O'Connell
Boys Golf	Noah Patrick

### Orchard Park

Girls Lacrosse	Grace Ruh**
Boys Tennis	Daniel Freilicher*
Boys Lacrosse	Mike Eusanio
Boys Track & Field	Brady Jensen
Softball	Lydia Petricca
Girls Track & Field	Julia Pietromicca
Baseball	Jacob Woodrich

### Portville

Boys Track & Field	Grant Milne**
Boys Golf	Ryan Kent
Softball	Darienne Slocum

### Randolph

Girls Track & Field	Karlynn Studley
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### Roy-Hart

Boys Track & Field	Ben Bacon
Softball	Rachael Rausch

### Silver Creek

Boys Track & Field	Lucas Hallick**
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### Southwestern

Softball	Xiane Smith*
Girls Track & Field	Catherine Lawton
Boys Track & Field	Matthew Southwick

### Springville

Girls Track & Field	Emily Zebrowski*
Softball	Erin McNell

### Starpoint

Girls Track & Field	Ali Binga*
Boys Track & Field	Cameron Calandra

### Sweet Home

Boys Golf	Zachary Farkas*
Boys Track & Field	William Schultz*
Boys Track & Field	Yinan Hu
Girls Lacrosse	Kaitlyn Okun

### Tonawanda

Girls Track & Field	Leighann Kemp
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### West Seneca East

Boys Lacrosse	Giage Hoot
Boys Golf	Matthew Tomasulo
Boys Track & Field	Ryan Willett

### West Seneca West

Baseball	Adam Lampman**
Boys Track & Field	David Conrad*
Baseball	Dawson Broad
Boys Tennis	Michael Janak

### Williamsville East

Boys Track & Field	Brian Morreale**
Boys Track & Field	Matthew Chmiel*
Boys Track & Field	Ian Macdonald*
Girls Track & Field	Sarah Wie*
Boys Lacrosse	Suneil Goel
Girls Golf	Nina Pieri

### Williamsville North

Softball	Kristen Koral*
Boys Track & Field	Cameron Parrelly
Girls Track & Field	Adrianna Soucy
Baseball	Connor Thomas

### Williamsville South

Boys Track & Field	Andrew Shelton**
Boys Golf	Noah Block
Girls Lacrosse	Elizabeth Crawford
Girls Lacrosse	Katelyn Kardaman
Boys Lacrosse	Chad Zappia

### Wilson

Girls Track & Field	Zipporah Barrett**
Softball	Lauren Couturier**
Softball	Rachael Cobo*
Girls Track & Field	Leah Herman*
Boys Tennis	Marlowe Recht
Boys Track & Field	Jonah Trank

# Unified Sports

## Initiative Makes Everyone a Winner on the Basketball Court

Visiting players file into the Eden Central High School gym about game time, duffle bags in hand.

There's no trash talk, or sizing up the competition, and the home coach warmly greets them on this last regular game of the season.

"Hi guys, you made it!" Eden Coach Jennifer Carriero said. "You're going to sit over there, girls locker room is right there, and the boys locker room is right on the other side."

A few minutes of shooting practice, and it's time for the tipoff at center court between the Frontier Falcons and Eden Raiders.

It takes 1 minute, 50 seconds before the first basket of the game is made by Justin Thompson of Eden. He pumps his arms in the air as fans from both teams cheer.

They're not only the first points in the game, it is Justin's first basket of the season. He had been hoping for a three-pointer, but he's happy with two points, the first of his high school career.

The players on these teams haven't played basketball before this spring. Many have never been on an athletic team before.

Students from six area high schools, boys and girls, regardless of ability or disability, are playing basketball in the inaugural season of Unified Sports in Section VI. The inclusive sports program is the result of a partnership between the New York State Public High School Athletic Association and Special Olympics.

Each team has three athletes – students who are differently abled – and two partners on the floor at one time. The partners are allowed to be student athletes from other sports, except basketball.

They play regulation high school boys rules with four eight-minute quarters, but there is no shot clock, and traveling rules are liberal.

Everyone, from the players and coaches, to the referees and parents, leaves happy. "You will smile for four quarters," said Frontier Athletic Director Richard Gray. "After the first game my cheeks hurt."

Parents are excited over the chance to cheer for their kids, and it gives them a connection with other parents in the bleachers. It's also a welcome change from meetings with the Committee on Special Education to go over their children's Individual Education Plan, or IEP.

"I am so thrilled with this program. It's helped my son come out of his shell," said Darlene Thompson, Justin's mother. "He's smiling. He's interacting with children he would never have interacted with before, he's getting the experience that most special-needs children never get."

Carriero calls the games "controlled chaos," because none of the players have experience in playing basketball. While there's still the occasional drive to the wrong basket, the players have shown a lot of progress since the season started.

"Some kids didn't even want to play," she said. "They wouldn't talk to anybody. Now, they're making baskets, saying 'when's our game?'"

"I have kids who are afraid of the ball, I have kids who just want the ball," said Frontier Coach Don Heppner. "I have kids who tell the other team, 'Don't take the ball away from me.'"

He said there's a lot of transition basketball, and not too many set plays. But players are guarding more now, and standing by the basket to grab rebounds.

Coaches have seen a lot of growth in all of the players.

"What has been really neat is how well the students with disabilities and students without disabilities have really come together and become friends," Gray said.

Allison Winiecki, an Eden senior who is going to Germany next year on an exchange program, said in addition to improving her dribbling skills, she has met new friends.

"It's such a neat experience. Damien comes up and says 'Hi' to me every morning in the hallway, Kyle gives me a big smile, Justin even smiles at me.



*Frontier's Madison Fortuna, left, leads pregame stretching with teammate Kayle Filighera before the Falcons' recent game with Eden in Section VI Unified Sports, a collaboration between New York State Public High School Athletic Association and Special Olympics. Photos by Robert Kirkham/Buffalo News*

It's something that never happened before, and I can say, "Yeah, I know these kids, I was on a team with them," she said.

"It's another connection in the hallway I don't think they ever had, and I never had, so it's something really special."

Anmarie Engle has seen a lot of growth in her son, Noah, who makes a lot of three-point shots for Frontier, and who now plays hoops at home with a buddy from the team.

"I think they have more confidence, because they're given the opportunity to play a sport where previous experiences have been if you have a disability you could be, like, the assistant coach, but they wouldn't play you," she said. "Now they're able to play for the entire game, which is nice for them."

"I like being on the team, it's fun," Noah said. "It's a unified game and everybody who has a lot of disabilities is able to play."

The final tournament with all six teams is Thursday at Lockport High School.

Section VI Executive Director Timm Slade said more schools will join Frontier, Eden, Starpoint, Lockport, Akron and Newfane in offering the program next year. If there are enough schools, the section may have a northern and southern division in unified basketball. The state also is looking to add bowling, but he does not know when.

During the game there are struggles for the ball, but everyone stopped in place when Madison Fortuna of Frontier shot a basket.

"Go, Maddie," her mother called.

The ball bounced off the glass back at her, and she shot again. And again. And she moved closer and tried again. And she made it on the fifth try. And then the players started moving again, and parents in the stands cheered.

"We appreciate everything the districts have done to make it truly unified," said Sharon Fortuna, Madison's mother.

"Each student has learned so much. There's camaraderie between peers. They are truly, honestly, peers and friends, and that's what's so cool about it all," she said.

Darlene Thompson likes that teams keep score, and there's a winner and loser, because that's part of life.

Before he started playing basketball, her son, Justin, 18, was adamant that he did not want to return to school in the fall. Students can go to school until they are 21. But because of this program, he wants to come back next year.

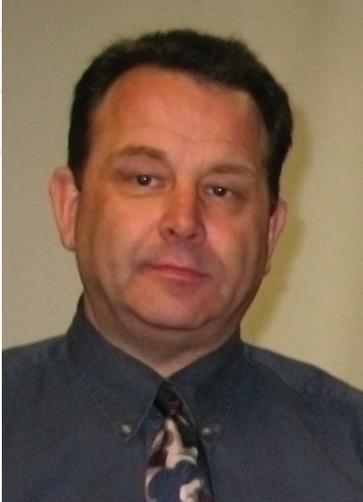
"He's got goals now that he didn't have before," she said. "They're not just kids with IEPs."

And about the score of the game, one team had more points than the other one, but no one cared which team it was.

By Barbara O'Brien, Courtesy of the Buffalo News

# A Special Thank You

Section VI would like to express a special "Thank You" to Brett Banker, Supervisor of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Athletics for Kenmore Town of Tonawanda UFSD, for his service as the Section VI President and to Mike Wendt, Ed.D., Superintendent at Wilson Central School District, for his service as the Section VI Superintendents' Representative. Section VI is appreciative of your hard work and grateful for your dedication and commitment to Section VI.



President, Brett Banker



Superintendents' Representative,  
Mike Wendt

*"Believe you can  
and you're halfway there."*

*-Theodore Roosevelt*

## Additional Champions 2016 Spring

### Section VI Executive Committee

**President** Brett Banker, Ken-Ton

**President-Elect** Al Gens, Dunkirk

**Superintendents Rep\*** Mike Wendt, Ed.D., Wilson

**Principals Rep\*** Jim Spanbauer, Niagara Falls

**Girls Sports Rep\*** Marisa Fallacaro, Eden

**Boys Sports Rep\*** Jim Graczyk, Pioneer

**Past President** Jeff Rabey, Ph.D., Depew

**Executive Director** Timm Slade

**Treasurer** Don Scholla

### Section VI Office Staff

**Administrative Assistant**

Pauline Turski

**Administrative Assistant**

Beth Fadeley

\*Central Committee Representatives to the State Association

### State Champions

Track & Field

Tiana Luton, Sweet Home  
Division I, Pentathlon

Owen Barber, Allegany-Limestone  
Division I, 800 Meter Run

Steve Neumaier, Lancaster  
Division I, 1600 Meter Run

Colin Blair, Lancaster  
Division I, Shot Put

### Regional Champions

Baseball

Fredonia, Class B

### Sectional Champions

Boys Lacrosse

Orchard Park, Class A

Girls Lacrosse

Lake Shore, Class C

Boys Tennis

Jack McClaren, East Aurora