

Boys Wrap-Up

Another incredible season

West Islip repeats as state champ; SWR, Chaminade win titles as well

By JOSEPH STASZEWSKI

June 13, 2007

A season that began with hopes of consecutive state titles in all three classifications ended with just West Islip pulling of the feat.

Long Island would still win two of three state titles. Shoreham-Wading River beat Cold Spring Harbor, the defending Class C champion, in the Long Island championship game en route to its second state title and first since 2002.

Two-time defending Class B state champion Huntington had its 63-game winning streak stopped in an 11-10 double overtime loss to John Jay in a game that will long be remember not only for its outcome but by the high quality of play. Chaminade won its third consecutive CHSAA AA title.

Both Shoreham-Wading River and West Islip, which took home its second straight state crown, won their respective state title games in convincing fashion.

In an eventual 9-4 win over West Genesee, West Islip's offense, led by Brian Caufield and Nicky Galasso, used a 5-0 second quarter run to take a 6-2 lead. Watching the Lions pass was like seeing a pinball bounce with precision and speed from bumper to bumper. They were that crisp and that quick. West Islip (22-1) saw its physical defense, led by Ryan Flanagan and goalie Drew DiCioccio, frustrate West Genesee all game.

And the more you watched Shoreham-Wading River, the more you had to be impressed. In the Long Island championship, its offense worked to get point-blank shots past Cold Spring Harbor goalie Adam Ghitelman and saw its defense control the Seahawks' offense.

The defense, led by Matt Vernam and Ryan Mahoney, helped Shoreham-Wading River (18-3) to a 4-2 win over Rye in the state semifinal. It then saw the offense and John Austin come alive. Austin had a career-high six goals and Joe Lustgarden had five assists in a 14-10 win over Section IV's Corning East in the state final.

The surprise and story of the year may still be Huntington. Leading John Jay 10-7 with 5:37 left in the fourth, the Blue Devils appeared to be well on their way to the state final. John Jay responded with three goals to tie the game and send it to overtime. Huntington (20-1) had its chances to win as Shamel Bratton's shots hit the pipe and the opposing goalie's helmet before Brian Douglass' 10-yard bounce shot gave John Jay the win.

Still, the Huntington team the last three seasons will go down as one of the best of all-time, with Rhamel Bratton, Shamel Bratton, Zach Howell and Sean Brady forming one of the most talented core groups ever.

Sixth-seeded Kings Park (13-7) was the story of the playoffs. It trailed Half Hollow Hills West by seven goals entering the fourth quarter in the quarterfinals, only to score to come back to tie the score at 10. Matt Boylan scored his third goal off an assist from Joe Trezza with two minutes left in overtime for an 11-10 win. It then upset Comsewogue by the same score to reach its first county final.

Syosset winning its first Nassau Conference I and Class A county title was one of the year's best stories. The Braves used a powerful offense led by Jeff Cohen, Matt Davie and Jared Laverne and a solid defense to power their way to a 17-3 record. Syosset's lone conference loss was a 6-5 defeat to Hicksville.

Those who were there the night Syosset won the county title saw something special, but it was not just happening on the field. Throngs of Syosset supporters came out from the packed stands at Hofstra to savor the win and embrace their team in victory.

Garden City (18-3) has not lost to a Nassau team in the last two seasons and won its second straight Nassau Class B county title. It got a serious scare from Carey in the county quarterfinals, but saw Dean Gibbons and Dillon Dwyer connect for the game winner in overtime for a 9-8 victory. Gibbons scored his 236th career goal during Garden City's second straight loss to Huntington, 14-6, in the Long Island Championship. The score tied Gibbons with Jericho's Max Motschwiller as Long Island's all-time leader.

Cold Spring Harbor played one of the great games of the year in its 7-6 comeback win over Manhasset in the Nassau Class C County final. The Seahawks (17-2) trailed 6-3 going to the fourth, but scored four goals in the period. Ghitelman was his spectacular self in goal in the second half and even scored a goal in the third. David Lau, who did a tremendous job taking on a large role after Corey Winkoff's injury, had two key ground balls in the fourth.

The CHSAA title again came down to Chaminade and St. Anthony's. The rivals split two, one-goal thrillers during the regular season. Chaminade (14-3) proved it was the better team by cruising to a 10-2 victory in the CHSAA title game, which was capped by James Lindsay's goal. Robert Walters had three goals, Max Trunz had two goals and an assist. The Flyers also handed West Islip its only loss.

The regular season saw few surprises, but plenty of great moments. Massapequa beat Long Beach 9-8 in five overtimes, Cold Spring Harbor slipped by Manhasset 8-7 when a Manhasset goal was disallowed as time expired, and Mount Sinai coach Joe Cuozzo won earned his 700th career win, just to name a few.