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CONTENTS

PHOTO LINK: LONGWOOD GARDENS

Headlines.....	3
Culture	7
Food & Dining	11
Government	14
Education.....	18
Sports	23
Stay Connected	29



Will Dru Tevis Take the \$25,000 Prize?



Teachers Union: "Action Now"



**Boys' Soccer Champs:
Salesianum and Caravel**

PHOTO LINK: LONGWOOD GARDENS



HEADLINES

**DELAWARE
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BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

Republicans did not fare well in Delaware's Nov. 8 election. Democrats widened their majority in the state Senate, maintained the balance of power in the House, and won every election for statewide elected offices.

In the wake of the Republican [wallop](#), some party leaders are hoping the party will begin to move in a more productive direction—one that appeals to the center, defined by a clearly communicated, positive vision for the First State. Without change, some insiders fear Republicans will lose influence with each passing election.

"I believe we are not good at messaging and making sure people know what we do on a daily basis to serve our constituencies," said Rep. Mike Ramone, R-Pike Creek South. He was [elected](#) House minority leader after a two-hour caucus meeting Tuesday.

"We enable ourselves to be branded by whatever polarizing national topic exists at any given moment," he said.

Ramone's ascension to leadership marks a departure from the Delaware Republican Party's strategy up to this point. Rep. Danny Short, R-Seaford, served as minority leader for nearly 10 years before caucus members decided the time was right for a change.

"If there's a message that I hope resonates within our party, it's that we don't all need to think exactly alike on every single item, but at this point, our state needs help economically, we need help in the education environment, and the people in our state are getting taxed to death," Ramone said. "We need to change that."

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HOUSE REPUBLICANS PICK NEW MINORITY LEADER, WHIP

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

Delaware House Republicans will be led by a new pair of officers when the General Assembly reconvenes in January, and they're both promising to move the caucus in a less divisive and more welcoming direction.

The caucus on Tuesday elected Rep. Mike Ramone of Hockessin as minority leader and Rep. Lyndon Yearick of Camden as minority whip.

"This is an opportunity for us to build a Republican Party and message that is more inclusive and more reflective of our state," Ramone told Delaware LIVE News.

"I will do my best to not disappoint people and not let people down," he said. "As a leader, you lead from the front, you take the bullets for the team, but you support from the back and make sure everybody's got what they

need to guarantee them success in their districts and in the state. So that's my new job and I'll do my best."

The minority leader is the floor leader of the Republican caucus. In this role, he is the principal speaker for the minority party during debates on the House floor and works to coordinate the party's legislative agenda.

The minority whip effectively serves as an assistant leader. Theoretically, the whip is responsible for enforcing party discipline on votes deemed crucial by party leadership, helping to ensure that members vote in accordance with the caucus's legislative agenda.

Ramone, 61, replaces Rep. Danny Short, 61, of Seaford. Short has served as minority leader since 2013.

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CAPE HENOPEN

PROPOSED CAPE HENOPEN EATERY SPAWNS PROTESTS, PUBLIC FORUM

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

The agency that runs [Cape Henlopen State Park](#) is asking for the public's feedback on a proposal to build a restaurant in the main beach parking lot.

The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control will hold a public meeting to discuss the proposal Monday, Dec. 5 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the Cape Henlopen High School auditorium. With hundreds of residents organized to oppose the change, the meeting isn't likely to be without controversy.

The restaurant was proposed after DNREC requested bids to manage the park's main beach area concessions, which include chair and umbrella rentals and the snack shop in the bathhouse. According to the agency, the request for proposals was made after visitors indicated on surveys that they'd like to see a higher level of food service and improvements for visitor amenities.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

[La Vida Hospitality LLC](#)—the company behind Crooked Hammock Brewery, Taco Reho, Big Chill Surf Club and Big Chill Cantina—was awarded the contract to manage the main concessions for one year with exclusive rights to negotiate with DNREC for an extension of up to 24 years.

According to the [Cape Gazette](#), a grassroots group called the [Preserve Our Park Coalition](#) has formed to protest the project. The group has launched a letter-writing campaign and held a protest march on Nov. 13 near the park entrance.

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CULTURE



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PHOTO LINK: FIRST STATE HERITAGE PARK





STORMIN' NORMAN GIVES AWAY 1,400 TURKEYS, PASSES BATON

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

After giving away 250,000 Thanksgiving turkeys over 40 years, **Stormin' Norman Oliver** is passing the baton to **DETV** president and founder Ivan Thomas.

Oliver—a locally-famed civic leader affectionately dubbed Stormin' Norman—announced the 2022 Turkey Drive would be his last before distributing more than 1,400 turkeys to Wilmington residents Tuesday.

"God just moved me to do it," Oliver told Delaware LIVE. "I just like helping people and it's been a good ride."

For Oliver, it's important to know when to let someone else take the reins, he said. "I think that you know when it's time. After 40 years—just like a good boxer—you know when it's time to retire."

To carry the turkey giveaway into the future, Oliver personally selected Ivan Thomas, who founded and runs DETV, a news, community and entertainment broadcast network in Wilmington.

"I've known him since he was young," Oliver said. "I like his drive. I like his energy. By passing the torch on to someone who can carry on a legacy and grow it with his media empire, I thought it would be an easy fit."

Thomas said the turkey giveaway is all about supporting the community, which he hopes to continue doing even without Stormin' Norman by his side.

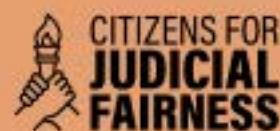
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BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Bowers Beach is uniting this year to ensure the continuation of a decades-long tradition of home-cooked holiday meals for the watermen who work out of the Kent County town of 250.

"Miss Jean's spirit is willing, but her body just isn't up to it this Thanksgiving," Mayor Ada Puzzo wrote in an email seeking culinary assistance for Jean Friend and her husband, Frank "Thumper" Eicherly IV. "Every Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas (and other times as well), they open up a house they own on Hubbard (Avenue) and have dinner together" with "the guys and girls that work on the commercial fishing boats here in Bowers," Puzzo wrote.

When Puzzo was given two turkeys and all the sides, with the request that they go to someone in need, she immediately thought of Miss Jean and Thumper. They accepted her offer to prepare the full holiday meal for 10 or so, with Friend planning to deliver it to a camper shared by several beneficiaries.

BOWERS BEACH UNITES TO OFFER WATERMEN'S THANKSGIVING DINNER

"I'm no baker," Puzzo wrote, so she asked for help with dessert. Offers poured in.

"This doesn't surprise me," she said. "That's how this town is. We saw that during the pandemic. Once I put out the need for anybody or anything, somebody offers to help."

In less than a day, she had more than a dozen offers—so many that she expected to freeze some desserts for Christmas. Friend and Eicherly plan to host a sit-down dinner in that Hubbard house. People interested in helping Friend and Eicherly can email Puzzo at mayor@bowersde.gov.

TESTIMONIAL TO THEIR SERVICE

"Miss Jean would really take care of the town's young people," said Matt Green, a Bowers Beach resident who calls them the only family he knows in town.

"Her door was always open," with pots of beans and pans of cornbread on their cookstoves, ready to be shared whoever needed it, he added. Or maybe sandwiches: "'You're looking a little thin,' she would say. 'I'll make you a sandwich. You working tomorrow? I'll make you two.'"

"They hand out pickles on Halloween," Green said, "because they want to give out something that's better than a candy bar." (Some kids might have gotten grilled cheese sandwiches, too.)

"They have left food on people's doorsteps. That's the kind of people they are."

"Their heart has always been open to anybody who needed help," he said of Friend and Eicherly. "Maybe people reading this article will decide that they can help their neighbors like this and create a Thanksgiving for someone else."

BOWERS BEACH GENEROSITY

Eicherly is also known as the captain and owner of the Maggie S. Meyers, an oyster schooner built in 1893 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983.

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FOOD & DINING

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WILL DELAWARE PASTRY CHIEF DRU TEVIS TAKE \$25,000 PRIZE?

BY PAM GEORGE

When we last left Delaware's "Dru-unicorn," he made it through the second episode of "[Holiday Baking Championship](#)" on the Food Network. But could Dru Tevis survive another round?

First State residents, friends, family and his [SoDel Concepts](#) colleagues tuned in Monday night to watch. Indeed, many gathered at [Thompson Island Brewing Co.](#) in Rehoboth to watch alongside the pastry chef—and taste the dish he prepared on the show.

So, how did he do? Warning: Spoilers ahead.

BUT FIRST, A RECAP

In case you've been watching other programs, here's the backstory.

Talent scouts recruited Tevis, who oversees the desserts for all SoDel Concepts' restaurants. The interview process was lengthy, and Tevis had only a few weeks to pack his bags and head to Tennessee for the taping.

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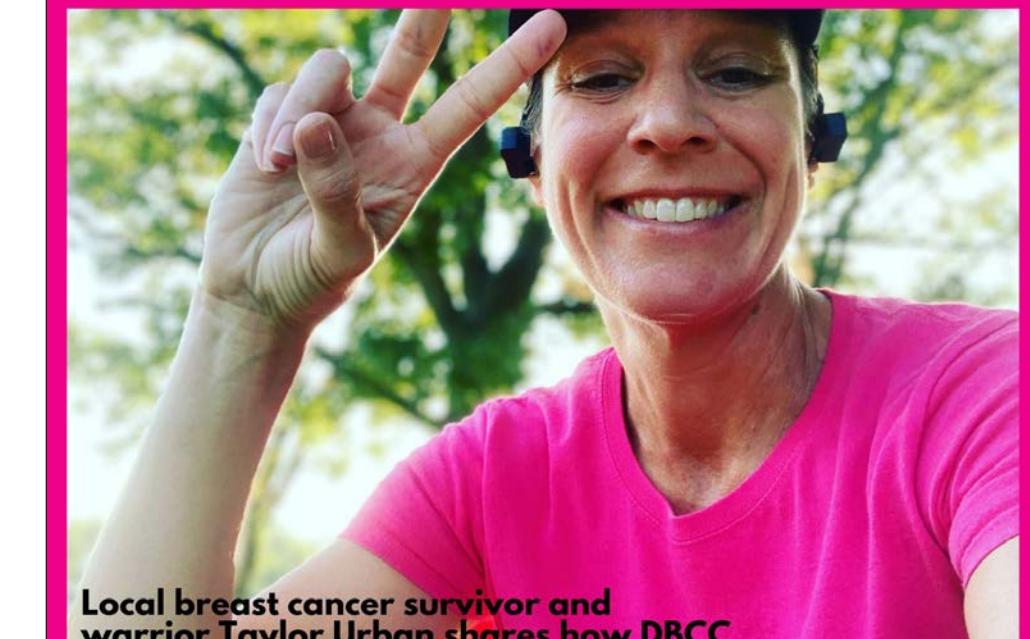
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Local breast cancer survivor and warrior Taylor Urban shares how DBCC has impacted her journey of healing.

db DELAWARE BREAST CANCER COALITION [Read More >](#)



BY PAM GEORGE

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas in these tasty Delaware spaces decorated for a festive holiday.

Klondike Kate's **Sleigh Bar** in Newark and **Blitzen** in Wilmington have returned to serve a cup of good cheer. To the south, **Above the Dunes** in Rehoboth debuted a Miracle Pop-Up on Nov. 21. **Schellville** in Rehoboth has expanded its food and beer offerings, and **Benvenuto** in Milford has become a lovely Italian village for Christmas.

SLEIGH BELLS RING

Once again, Klondike Kate's has morphed into the pop-up Sleigh Bar, which has a special menu in addition to Kate's regular offerings.

FIVE FESTIVE HOLIDAY PLACES TO DRINK, DINE

Holiday Hummus, for instance, is a mix of green pesto and roasted red pepper hummus, while the Atomic Yule Log is a crisp pile of mozzarella sticks with a "yuletide" marinara sauce. To sip, try Goose Island IPA, Breckenridge Christmas Ale and Breckinridge Vanilla Porter.

However, it's the venue's festive holiday décor, not the food, that will have you humming "Jingle Bells." Picture glittery tinsel Christmas balls, nutcrackers, giant candles and barstool backs wearing Santa hats. The showpiece is the sleigh—the site of countless selfies.

The promotion is the brainchild of special events director Nick Manerchia, who saw similar transformations in New York. Owner Gianmarco Martuscelli felt the concept would attract customers at a time when many students leave college for winter break.

The Sleigh Bar started in 2019. "We experimented that first year, and it was a huge hit," he recalled. "Every year, we add to it." The Sleigh Bar appeals to families, friends and moms who brunch—and then gather in the sleigh for a photo opp. "It's such a melting pot," Martuscelli said. "You see kids smiling when they come in. People just love Christmas."

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ELECTIONS DEPT. SAYS VOTING MACHINE ISSUES WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

The [Delaware Department of Elections](#) has taken steps to ensure polling places never run out of ballots again, officials said during a Board of Elections meeting Monday night.

The announcement came after several polling places in New Castle County ran out of ballot activation cards during the Nov. 8 general election. Activation cards refer to the blank pieces of paper voters insert into the voting machines, upon which their votes are printed before being deposited into a secure container on the back of the machine.

"We had 161 polling places throughout New Castle County, and we had approximately between 10 and 15 locations that ran very low (on ballots)," said New Castle County Director Tracy Dixon. "Some of them, unfortunately, ran out, but for a very short period of time."

Dixon said affected polling places contacted the Department of Elections and additional ballots were sent to those locations immediately. There were no reports of voters who were not able to vote due to the issue, she said.

"It was rectified very quickly—as quickly as we could," she said. "It was a learning lesson for us and we have taken the necessary steps to ensure that this issue will not be encountered in any subsequent election."

State Election Commissioner Anthony Albence said polling places should have supplies "over and above the total number of registered voters assigned to each location" to ensure a similar issue doesn't happen again.

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BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

The chair of the Delaware Republican Party is calling for two election officials to resign after an election she calls “flawed in ways Delaware has never experienced, and should never experience again.”

According to GOP leader Jane Brady, “ineffective and incompetent management” caused 10 or more polling locations to run out of ballots, stopping voting in some of those locations for an hour or more during peak voting hours during the Nov. 8 general election.

She’s asking for New Castle County Director Tracey Dixon and Deputy Director David Gilefski to step down.

“The problem occurred, it appears, exclusively in New Castle County,” Brady said in a news release. “This is unprecedented and unacceptable.”

Brady’s move comes days after Delaware LIVE News

REPUBLICAN CHAIR ASKS NCC ELECTION OFFICIALS TO RESIGN

published a story entitled “Elections Dept. says voting machine issues won’t happen again.” During a regularly scheduled Board of Elections meeting Monday night, Elections Commissioner Anthony Albence acknowledged the issue and said the department has already taken steps to ensure it won’t happen in future elections.

Albence directed polling places in future elections to have supplies “over and above the total number of registered voters assigned to each location.”

“We realize, of course, not 100% of voters turn out,” he said. “Certainly, voters take advantage of other means, whether it’s absentee or vote by mail. I’ve directed that that will be the case going forward.”

Dixon, who Brady is asking to resign, said during Monday’s board meeting that affected polling places contacted the Department of Elections and additional ballots were sent to those locations immediately. There were no reports of voters who were not able to cast ballots due to the issue, she said.

“It was rectified very quickly—as quickly as we could,” Dixon said. “It was a learning lesson for us and we have taken the necessary steps to ensure that this issue will not be encountered in any subsequent election.”

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DRUG SMUGGLER WITH SECRET BUNKER IN BEAR JAILED FOR 45 YEARS

BY STAFF WRITER

A Delaware man who made \$1 million from smuggling cocaine and built a secret bunker under his house in Bear, was sentenced this week in U.S. District Court to 45 years in prison. Omar Morales Colon, 45, had been convicted of conspiracy to commit money laundering, conspiracy to distribute cocaine, and various other drug and money laundering offenses.

Colon was described as “one of the biggest drug traffickers in the history of the state of Delaware” in a Department of Justice press release. It also said Colon “stood ready to use violence if necessary to protect his drug business.”

His wife, Shakira Martinez, 44, also was convicted of money laundering offenses in July. Her sentencing is scheduled for February 2023.

“Mr. Colon has received a serious sentence that properly reflects his decades of criminality,” said U.S. Attorney David C. Weitz. “Drug trafficking wreaks havoc on

the community and on families. Mr. Colon imported massive amounts of cocaine into Delaware for many years. Those who aspire to a criminal lifestyle should take note that the resulting punishment may be decades behind bars.”

Evidence at the trial said that between 2009 and 2017, Colon and Martinez laundered over a \$1 million in drug proceeds through the purchase of real estate properties in Delaware and Pennsylvania using their company, Zemi Property Management.

They deposited drug money into several different bank accounts—and asked their friends and family members to do the same—and then used those funds to buy cashier’s checks that funded the property purchases.

Colon was arrested on May 6, 2017, shortly after giving his cocaine supplier \$382,045 in cash in a hotel parking lot in Newark, DE.

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RED CLAY BOARD MEMBER QUESTIONS LEARNING COLLAB'S TRANSPARENCY

BY JAREK RUTZ

A Red Clay Consolidated School District board member is pressing the new Wilmington Learning Collaborative to advertise meetings.

Cathy Thompson, the former head of the board, asked Superintendent Dorrell Green to ensure that the newly-created board is as transparent as possible during their Nov. 16 meeting.

The Learning Collaborative's memorandum of understanding was signed Nov. 1 by members of the boards of Red Clay, Brandywine and Christina school districts.

On Nov. 16, Thompson pointed out, the new public group indicated it will comply with the **Freedom of Information Act**, which requires posted meeting notices and for citizens to be able to access unreleased or uncirculated documents upon request.

"I'd like to know when their meetings are and where they're going to advertise the meetings, because that's going to be very important for community engagement and for everybody's engagement," Thompson said,

"because right now...it's hard to know how they're operating." Green said that concern should be on hold until the collaborative's governing council is formed, which the existing members of it are in the process of doing.

Efforts were unsuccessful to reach Thompson or Green for comment.

The 20-page **agreement** says each district superintendent and city school board member to be on the council. That means that six of the governing council's members are already set: superintendents Green, Lincoln Hohler of Brandywine and Dan Shelton of Christina and board members Shanika Perry of Brandywine, Alethea Smith-Tucker of Christina and Adriana Bohm of Red Clay.

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SCHOOL DISTRICT CLASS SIZE WAIVERS MOVING THROUGH

BY JAREK RUTZ

Schools up and down the First State are asking their school boards to allow them to put more than 22 students in elementary school classes. Boards have until Dec. 1 to submit waiver requests to the state **Department of Education**.

The waivers are required by Delaware **law** for kindergarten through third grade students in the core academic subjects of English/Language Arts, mathematics, science and social studies. Seaford, Appoquinimink and Colonial have approved waivers in recent weeks.

It's rare for boards to refuse waiver requests, and the state makes no judgment on their decisions. It simply keeps track of the data. In the last five years, the **data** shows that Delaware schools have made 87 requests.

Allowing schools to expand classes and having the state set what seems like arbitrary class size regulations perturbs some board members. Several believe districts ask for waivers to avoid hiring more teachers.

"I've never seen one rejected," said Donald Patton, a **Christina School District** board member who also served as an assistant principal. "If in fact there's a law on the books, you should be required to follow the law."

District superintendents, though, say they don't ask for waivers to avoid hiring. Schools naturally try to keep class sizes small, said **Colonial School District** Superintendent Jeff Menzer. Studies show that students learn better in smaller classes, partly because they're able to have more personal attention. Colonial last week approved two waivers for classes to have more than 22 students.

While the state's required ratio is 22 students to one instructor, teacher aides are counted as half a teacher. That means a class with a teacher and a teacher aide would be allowed 33 students in the room.

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UNION TO TEACHERS: PRESSURE COMPENSATION PANEL FOR 'ACTION NOW'

BY JAREK RUTZ

Delaware's teacher union is calling for educators and specialists to flood the Monday, Dec. 12, meeting of a teacher pay committee to pressure its members into giving raises to teachers this year instead of waiting for two years. The Public Education Compensation Committee voted last week to stick to a timeline that allows it to wait until Nov. 15, 2023, to make recommendations to Gov. John Carney for teacher pay hikes. That would put the first raises into the 2025 state budget, which takes effect July 1, 2024.

"You MUST make your voice heard!" said Stephanie Ingram, president of the Delaware State Education Association, in an email to teachers. "The lack of public comment from educators on this topic led committee members to believe you don't care about salary increases."

That meeting will be at 3:30 p.m. Stream it live [HERE](#).

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- URSULINE ACADEMY



STATE TO HONOR SCHOOL WORKERS WHO KEEP SYSTEMS RUNNING

BY JAREK RUTZ

The 20 individuals who have been named as Educational Support Professionals of the Year are the “glue that keeps our schools together.”

“Educating kids through teachers is the goal and the mission of schools,” said John Marinucci, executive director of the [Delaware School Board Association](#), “but the support folks handle all the things that have to take place around the education they receive.”

Those workers include custodians, paraprofessionals, secretaries, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, aides and information technology staff. Without them, Marinucci said, the school couldn’t function.

For the third year, the Delaware Department of Education will name one as the state honoree on Dec. 7 at the [Modern Maturity Center](#) in Dover.

“Their work often is behind the scenes and rarely gets the recognition it deserves,” said Education Secretary Mark Holodick.

The event to honor Delaware’s Educational Support Professional of the Year will be livestreamed on the education department’s YouTube and Facebook accounts after the dinner portion of the evening. It’s expected to be shortly after 7 p.m.

The winner will receive \$3,000 from the state and be given \$5,000 to benefit his/her students. Last year’s winner was David Thomas, computer lab/technology paraprofessional at Lake Forest East Elementary School at Lake Forest School.

The 2023 honorees, who all receive \$2,000 from their district or charter school, are:

- Appoquinimink: *Claudine Strawbridge*, paraprofessional at Cantwell’s Bridge Middle School
- Brandywine: *Meg Brown*, senior secretary and registrar at Concord High School
- Caesar Rodney: *Josette Threatts*, service and instructional paraprofessional at George Welch

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Elementary School

- Cape Henlopen: Brittany Hoeller, paraprofessional at Lewes Elementary School
- Capital: David Hom, operations technician at the Office of Technology
- Charter Network: Eric Winston, nutrition coordinator, facilities manager and assistant athletic director at Early College School at Delaware State University
- Christina: Matthew Stearn, paraprofessional at Networks School for Employability Skills
- Colonial: Joseph Davis, custodian at John G. Leach School

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SPORTS



PHOTO BY BEN FULTON

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SOCER CHAMPS: SALLIES OVER CHARTER, CARAVEL BLANKS SAINT MARK'S

BY NICK HALLIDAY

The Salesianum Sals went on to win their second straight DIAA Division I boys' soccer state championship and 21st overall. Sallies defeated Wilmington Charter by a score of 4-1 at Dover High School.

The Sals scored two goals in each half of the game. In the first half, Jake Ross scored the first goal then assisted Gianluca Marroni for the second goal. In the second half, Brandon Ibarra-Sanchez netted the first goal while Paris Pappas scored the second on an assist from Zachary Bittner. Charter's goal was scored by Davin Lysik.

Caravel shut out Saint Mark's 4-0 in the DIAA boys' soccer Division II state championship. It is the Bucs second consecutive title and sixth overall.

The Bucs were led by Zayd Akhtar who scored two goals in the game. Miles Hood added a goal and an assist with Michael Cooke adding a goal and Finlay Lum adding an assist. Caravel goalie Alejandro Marte made nine saves to keep the Spartans off the scoreboard.



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DELMAR FIELD HOCKEY DOMINATES, SMYRNA UPSETS CAPE

BY NICK HALLIDAY

The Delmar Wildcats completely dominated the Division 2 DIAA field hockey state championship. They outshot Archmere Academy 50-1 and totaled 23 corners in the game en route to a 7-1 victory to capture their seventh straight state championship.

Macy Bradford led the Wildcats with two goals and three assists. Archmere's goal was scored by Bella Dell'Oso which was the only shot Archmere had in the game. Ava Hughes of Archmere had a phenomenal game making 39 saves as Delmar was just relentless on the offensive side of the game. She was aided by Rebecca Olsen and Kathleen Shaller who also made a few great saves themselves to hold Delmar to just seven goals.

Smyrna upset 12-time state champion Cape Henlopen who had won five straight in dramatic fashion. After

full-time was played with a 1-1 tie the game was forced into OT. With 10:57 to go in the first overtime, Kirsten Johnson made a miraculous goal as Dru Moffett sent a centering pass from the far right side she laid out fully extended to knock the ball in the back of the net to give Smyrna its first-ever field hockey state championship with a 2-1 score.

It was a pretty evenly played game as both teams totaled six shots each. Cape did lead in corners eight to Smyrna's three. Both goalies Halle Geiger of Smyrna and Morgan Newcomb of Cape had four saves apiece. Hannah Maney scored the goal for Cape on an assist from Alexis Tuitt. Reese Nacrelli scored the first goal for Smyrna in regular time on an assist from London Bebout.





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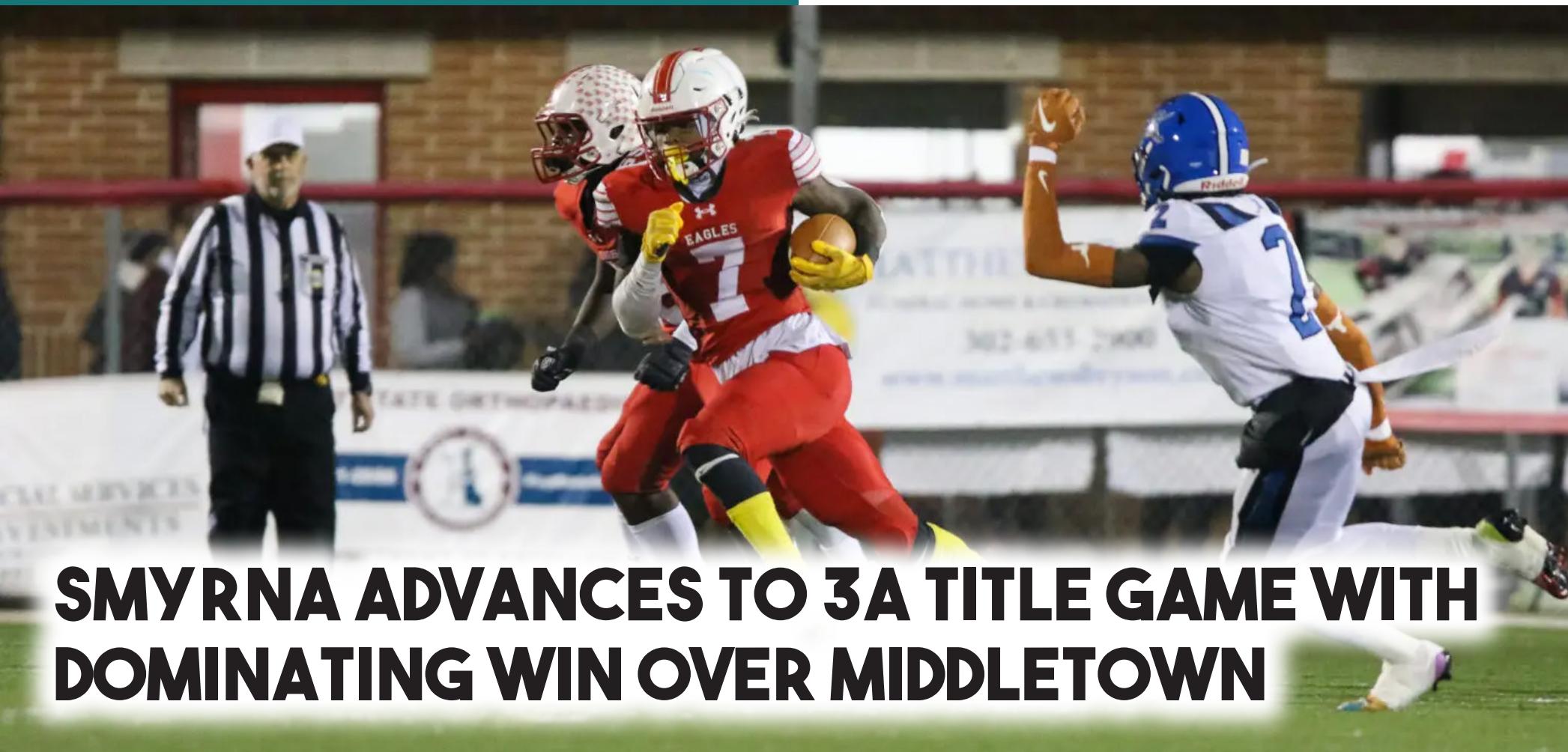
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SMYRNA ADVANCES TO 3A TITLE GAME WITH DOMINATING WIN OVER MIDDLETOWN

BY GLENN FRAZER

In the 3A quarterfinal round last week, three teams “flipped the script” avenging losses during the regular season. Smyrna did the same Friday night in the semis with a convincing 48-0 win over Middletown, a team the Eagles lost to 21-14 back in September.

Smyrna mixed up the offense using the “wildcat”, “earthquake”, and the spread with very little passing, thus keeping the Cavaliers off balance for much of the game. The Cavs had the first scoring opportunity when Austin Hamm attempted a 30-yard field goal. He had the distance, but the kick sailed left leaving the game scoreless. Late in the opening quarter, Smyrna put the first points on the board as Yamir Knight ran 19 yards

for a touchdown and he added the two-point conversion for an 8-0 lead. After a defensive stop, the Eagles added to their lead as Joshua Gueh passed to Nolan Fretz out of the wildcat formation for a 14-0 advantage. Smyrna would finish the half with two more scores, a 23-yard pass from Knight to Cole Moyer, and a safety when a high snap went over the punter’s head and out of the end zone.

The halftime score was 24-0 in favor of the No. 1-seed Eagles who outgained the Cavs 207-57 in total yards. Plus, Smyrna would receive the kickoff to start the third quarter.

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LAUREL PUNCHES TICKET TO THE "TUB"

BY BENNY MITCHELL

The Laurel Bulldogs are headed back to Tubby Raymond Field at the University of Delaware. Laurel scored four times in the fourth quarter to pull away from Tatnall for a 48-14 win. It will be the Bulldogs second straight trip to Newark where they won the DIAA Class A state title last year.

Laurel's offense amassed 355 yards of total offense while the defense forced three Tatnall turnovers, but two guys wearing No. 2 stole the show, as Tatnall's Rahshon LaMon and Laurel's Kylse Wilson combined for 331 yards and six touchdowns.



"You can't simulate LaMons in practice. He's an incredible athlete and if you make a mistake he is gone and he proved that tonight," Laurel head coach Joey Jones said. "It is nice to be able to rebound after a big play and Kylse seemed to be the guy to do that tonight for us."

Laurel took the opening kickoff then chewed up nine minutes on its 68-yard scoring drive capped off by a two-yard touchdown run by Tate Walls. Mike Gonzalez-Perez added the point after kick giving Laurel a 7-0 lead. Gonzalez-Perez converted seven of seven PAT's.

"I know our guys like to score quick, but tonight they started the game taking nine minutes off the clock and punched one in and that's a good thing," Jones said.

On the Bulldogs' next possession Wilson scored the first of his four touchdowns with a six-yard run with 4:22 left to play in the first half.

The Hornets drove deep into Laurel territory late in the second quarter, the drive stalled at the seven-yard line. Kaden Shockley connected with Walls on an 84-yard pass play taking the ball down to the 10 yard line with just 10 seconds left to play in the half. Wilson caught Shockley's pass and was ruled down inside the one-yard line as time ran out in the first half.

Following an interception by Evan Collins near midfield in the third quarter, Ny'Aire Farlow made a spectacular catch as he tipped the ball to himself and raced into the end zone on a 42-yard pass from Shockley, giving Laurel a 21-0 lead.

Wilson and LaMons then took over the five minutes as the two traded touchdowns. LaMons scored on a five-yard run, but the conversion attempt was stopped as Tatnall cut into the Laurel lead 21-6.

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VIKINGS ADVANCE TO SECOND STRAIGHT STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

BY JASON WINCHELL

St. Elizabeth got nearly 500 yards and five touchdowns from its dynamic running back duo of Quasim Benson and Chris Caracter, as the Vikings outlasted Seaford, 46-35, in a DIAA Class 1A semifinal Saturday night at Abessinio Stadium.

The second-seeded Vikings will meet the top seed, Laurel, on Dec. 10 at Delaware Stadium. It is a rematch of last year's 1A title game, won by the Bulldogs, 28-14.

Benson did not play a whole lot last week against Indian River, but he and Caracter looked just fine against the Blue Jays. Caracter scored first, going 59 yards up the middle early in the first. After a Seaford field goal, Benson streaked 69 yards for the first of his four scores.

The defenses stepped up after that, with both teams forcing turnovers on downs or punts into the second quarter. But Caracter could not be stopped with about nine minutes remaining in the half. He carried the ball 47 yards to the end zone to make it 20-3, but in what would become a theme for the night, Seaford answered quickly. Three plays into their next drive, the Blue Jays watched quarterback Careen Bolden hit a wide-open Tre'von-Keith Paulson for a 58-yard TD.

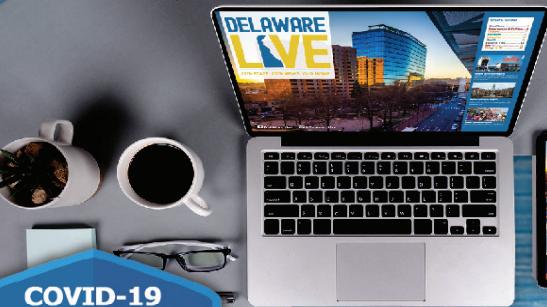
Each team would score once more in the first half. Benson covered 88 yards in two plays for the Vikings, only to see Bolden return the ensuing kickoff 70 yards for the score.

Seaford got as close as four points in the third when Jazonte Levan—who carried 24 times for 217 yards—ran 35 yards on the Blue Jays' first possession of the second half. But that was the beginning of the craziness. Benson scored to restore the double-digit lead, but Levan got that back.

The game's most fortuitous play came a bit later. Benson took a handoff and gave it to reversing Caracter. He ran the ball 59 yards to the Seaford 20, only to have it knocked loose by a defender. The Vikings' Gavin Andrews picked up the loose ball at the 14 and ran the rest of the way for a touchdown. It was 46-29 St. E's.

The Blue Jays got one more long touchdown pass, but they were unable to get the ball back from the Vikings. The Vikings improved to 11-1, while the Blue Jays finished 8-4.

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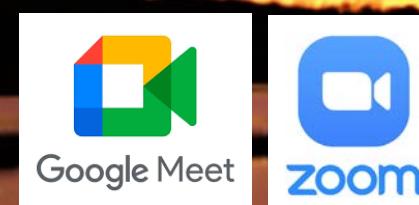


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