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photo link: Longwood Gardens  
photo by Becca Mathias

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New Dover Fan Zone Events



Bloom Energy Moving Jobs



Sussex Central Rolls Early to State Dual Championship



photo link: Milford School District



# Headlines

**DELAWARE**  
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BY JAREK RUTZ

The largest number of Delaware school districts in 14 years are holding elections in 2024 to ask their residents to agree to raise taxes for education. State and education leaders cite inflation, population growth, state-mandate raises for education, changes in funding and the COVID-19 pandemic as among reasons why six of the state's 19 districts are making the case for more cash.

Appoquinimink, Brandywine, Cape Henlopen, Colonial, Red Clay Consolidated and Smyrna — all among the top 10 largest districts based on the number of students served — are going to the polls in the 2023-2024 school year.

The 2009-2010 academic year was the last time the First State had this many school referendums, when residents of the Appo, Capital, Christina, Indian River, Laurel and Seaford districts hit the polls, per the state [Department of Elections](#). Those votes coincided with the aftermath of the Great Recession of 2007-2009.

#### WHAT IS A REFERENDUM?

Districts ask for a referendum when they are trying to

# WHY DELAWARE IS HAVING THE MOST REFERENDUMS IN 14 YEARS

raise local tax money to support operational costs or to match state-funding for capital projects. Operating funding will help the district maintain its day-to-day operations. That can include transportation expenses, supporting extracurricular programs, updating technology, giving teachers raises, hiring constables and more.

A capital referendum typically is tied to state funding for building projects which requires matching funding from a district, usually about one-third. If, for example, a capital project costs \$100 million, the state would provide \$65 million while the district needs to pony up the remaining \$35 million. If a capital referendum fails, the district can try a second time. If it fails again, the district loses the state money and likely won't be able to complete the project.

But votes on construction aren't easy sells.

Jeff Menzer, superintendent of [Colonial School District](#), said operational referendums are much more likely to succeed than capital ones.

Case in point, Appoquinimink School District had a referendum with a capital component that failed in late 2023, while Brandywine's referendum, which was completely operational, passed by a large margin last week.

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 DELAWARE TECH

\*Students must meet eligibility requirements. Course fees and books are not covered by the SEED Scholarship.





# WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU'RE WAITLISTED FROM SCHOOL OF CHOICE?

BY JAREK RUTZ

After wading through the process of school choice, Erin Exelby found herself waking up in the middle of the night worrying what would happen if her children were waitlisted from their top selections.

School districts sent parents and children emails about a month ago saying whether they were accepted, denied or waitlisted for their preferred schools. Waitlisting essentially means that a student has to wait and see whether slots are left after students formally accept seats they are offered. Many do not. How many will, and where a student is on the waitlist can determine whether they actually can go to their desired school.

“It’s so stressful,” Exelby said. “As you’re even waiting after you fill out the application, you’re going through all these scenarios in your head even if they aren’t waitlisted.”

Her two daughters are heading into sixth grade and eighth grade next school year, while her fiancé’s son is

heading into second grade — all in the Red Clay Consolidated School District.

“You are thinking, well what if they get into the second option, but they’re number four on the waitlist at their number one choice,” Exelby said. “Are they going to have four slots open, and then in the meantime you’re thinking if they’re waitlisted at number four, you run the risk of losing your spot at the other school.”

The First State is one of 13 in the [country](#) in which families are free to apply to any public school, district or charter, they wish to send their children to rather than sending them to the neighborhood school associated with their addresses. Over the past month or so, districts have been presenting their school choice data for the 2024-2025 school year at their board meetings. Some are experiencing more applications, and some less.

[Indian River School District](#) had 545 applications with 238 invitations being extended for the current

school year. For the 2024-2025 school year, it had 378 applications. [Brandywine School District](#) saw a 34% increase in choice applications over the past four years, from 676 to 729 to 770 to 906 this year. [Colonial School District](#) has had 455 applications thus far, which is a slight decline from last year.

At this point, statewide data is incomplete. Some districts are still in the process of conducting the lottery to see who they will be inviting and then boards have to vote on the invitations sent. Indian River’s board will vote Monday to approve this year’s school choice invites, while Brandywine just recently conducted its lottery and needs to send out invitations.

The choice window for kindergarten — which closed in January for all other grades — stays open until the first day of the school year, so numbers sometimes spike on the back end.

“When a student is waitlisted, it means there are no current choice seats available at the requested school,” said Alison May, public information officer at the Delaware [Department of Education](#). As other students accept invitations to other schools, seats may become available at which point the school will notify the next student on the waitlist to offer a seat, May said.

“If your child is waitlisted for a higher priority school and invited to another school, you can accept the invitation of the other school,” she said. “Your child will remain on the waitlist for the higher priority school. The waitlist remains until the first day of the school year.”

Some schools have a much longer waitlist than others, said Kendall Massett, executive director of the [Delaware Charter Schools Network](#).

[READ MORE HERE](#)





photo link: Delaware Ballet

# Culture

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## DOVER FAN ZONE ADDS DOCKDOGS, MIRROR MEN AND ROBOCARS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Team mascots, diving dogs, bumper cars and a giant rubber duck will add to the merriment at the Dover Speedway's Fan Zone April 26-28. Best part: It's all free as the speedway hosts a NASCAR tripleheader weekend.

"It's not only the action on the track that makes a Dover NASCAR weekend a one-of-a-kind experience, but also all the entertainment outside the grandstands that truly makes the Monster Mile a must-see stop for all fans," said Gary Camp, Dover Motor Speedway's vice president of marketing and communications.

**The Fan Zone**, which opens at noon Friday, April 26, and 9 a.m. on Saturday, April 27, and Sunday, April 28, will have four new attractions this year:

**DOCKDOGS:** The world's premier canine aquatics

company will have multiple performances with leaping dogs.

**MIRROR MEN:** A performance with shimmering outfits and fancy moves, as well as comedic antics.

**ROBOCARS:** Transforming performers are cars one minute and life-sized action figures the next, with highly skilled operators bringing brightly colored, unique and innovative costumes to life, with amazing driving skills and crowd interaction.

**STROLLING PLANT:** The leafy favorite adapts humor and 'plant-related banter' for all ages and plays well with the whole family. He can be seen standing or sitting in his flowerpot or driving around, standing on a mini-segway to engage with guests.

Some of the previously **announced** attractions this year include a 60-foot-tall rubber duck, bumper cars, a fearless flores thrill show, micro-professional wrestling stilt walkers, and an appearance from MTV legend Riki Rachtman, who will be emceeding several events. There's also a large display of the country's finest military assets called the USO Military Village.

There will be an autograph signing session on Friday, April 26 and Saturday, April 27. Friday's starts at 2:15 p.m. and features the next generation of top drivers, while Saturday's starts at 9:45 a.m. and features the stars of the NASCAR Xfinity Series.

Mascots and cheer squads include:

- University of Delaware: **YoUDEe**, Baby Blue
- Wilmington Blue Rocks: Rocky Bluewinkle
- Towson University: Doc the Tiger
- West Chester University: Rammy
- Pocono Raceway: Tricky
- New Hampshire Motor Speedway: Milo the Moose

The full 2024 race schedule includes:

- Friday, April 26: General Tire 150 ARCA Menards Series race (5 p.m., broadcasted on FS1)
- Saturday, April 27: A-GAME 200 NASCAR Xfinity Series race (1:30 p.m., broadcasted on FS1, PRN, SiriusXM)
- Sunday, April 28: Würth 400 NASCAR Cup Series race (2 p.m., broadcasted on FS1, PRN, SiriusXM)

"The Dover Fan Zone has become known as the best on the circuit, and we take a lot of pride in delivering unexpected experiences and free fun all weekend long," Camp said.







BY BETSY PRICE

*Editor's Note: Tom Maloney died Feb. 18 after a devastating fall at his home at the age of 100. Funeral arrangements are pending. It's not hard to tell from this 2021 article what a character he was.*

Tom Maloney and his commanding officer were the first off their landing craft at Utah Beach during the 1944 D-Day invasion of Normandy. They dropped into 10 feet of water. Both were forced to ditch their packs and guns to reach the surface again. Able to climb back on the transport, Maloney's enraged captain grabbed a gun off one of his men and put it to the head of the sailor who had landed the boat.

"I'll blow your damn head off," the captain told the sailor. "You back this boat up. Next time she stops, she better be high and dry." She was and the troops raced across the sand amid bullets and bombs. The only thing

# MILFORD MAN'S SERVICE TOOK HIM AROUND WORLD

Maloney carried was a hunting knife his daddy had given him before he left for war. He didn't fret.

"You're always going to find somebody dead and he would have rations and stuff," the 98-year-old Milford resident said. "And I knew guns and stuff like that were plentiful."

Participating in D-Day is one of many dramatic memories that Thomas Andrew Maloney has of his three years overseas during World War II as a member of the 295 Combat Engineers. His crew built roads and bridges for troops to pass over. He can still reel off his serial number: "32. 75. 48. 48. You never forget that."

Maloney was 19 when he was drafted in 1942. Raised on a farm in Milford Neck, a few miles east of Milford, he had dropped out of high school in 11th grade and was working at a bomber factory in Baltimore, fitting ball turrets into planes on an assembly line.

The oldest of six boys, he was the first of five to go to war. His war would take him to Africa, Italy, the British Isles, Belgium, France and Germany. He'd help burn wool uniforms in Africa, suffer through the Battle of the Bulge without winter clothes, single-handedly shoot down a strafing German plane on Utah beach, blow up a bunny he thought was a Nazi, hunt deer for fresh meat with a Native American sergeant who called him "country boy," and sleep under trucks or in old buildings, but never in a tent, which he called "not much good."

Neither was a chicken coop he chose on the way to

Germany. He leaned a board up against a wall so he could sleep on it.

"Within about 15 minutes I had about 1,000 chicken lice on me," he said. "Man, I couldn't stand it."

Maloney's wife of 75 years, Gladys, and son Barry say Maloney didn't talk much about the war for decades. Then about 25 years ago, the child of a neighbor asked Maloney to come to his class at nearby Lula B. Ross Elementary for show-and-tell.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

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# DOJ SEEKS INFO ON SEAFORD CHILDREN'S PASTOR CHARGED WITH PORN

information the public may have about this case. Anyone with information should contact the task force at 302-739-2030.

“The evidence in this investigation is deeply disturbing,” said Attorney General Kathy Jennings. “Nothing is more important than protecting our kids and I’m grateful for the members of the ICAC Task Force who dedicate their lives to keeping our most vulnerable citizens safe.”

The task force’s investigation was spurred by multiple CyberTips generated by Microsoft warning that Dryden’s IP address had accessed and downloaded child sexual abuse material, a press release said. Upon receiving the CyberTips, detectives from the Delaware State Police and investigators from the Department of Justice contacted Dryden at his home and, following a forensic examination of his personal devices, discovered additional child sexual material.

Dryden was arraigned and committed to Sussex Correctional Institution on \$500,000 cash bail. The Department of Justice and the state police press released reminded the public that the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.



BY BETSY PRICE

The Delaware Department of Justice is seeking any information people may have in connection with a Seaford children’s pastor being charged with dealing in child pornography. James R. Dryden, 74, was arrested Feb. 15, following an investigation by the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force led by the Delaware State Police and the DOJ. He has been charged with 10 felony counts of dealing in child pornography.

Dryden has been a children’s pastor at **Stein Highway Church of God** for more than 20 years. He is not charged with contacting a child and investigators are not currently aware of any victims connected with the church.

However, the DOJ said, since Dryden’s job brought him into regular contact with children, it is seeking any



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photo link: [Bethany Beach Events & Entertainment](#)

# Business

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 Bloomenergy

## BLOOM ENERGY PLANS TO MOVE SOME DELAWARE JOBS TO MEXICO

BY KARL BAKER

**Bloom Energy**, the fuel cell producer that a decade ago promised to revitalize the state's manufacturing sector, announced last week that it will move a slice of its Newark operations to Mexico at the end of 2024. The decision is one part of the California company's plan to restructure amid increasing debt and continuous financial losses, according to its annual report to investors published last week.

Also in the investor report, Bloom stated that it lost more than \$300 million last year, even while bringing in record revenue of \$1.3 billion, primarily from the sale of its signature product — natural gas-powered fuel cells which are manufactured or assembled in factories in Newark, California and South Korea.

Bloom has not revealed the number of Delaware employees that could be impacted by the move to Mexico, but noted that they will come from the department that

repairs and refurbishes its fuel cells, which it calls Bloom Boxes. Neither officials from Bloom Energy nor from Gov. John Carney's office responded to requests to comment for this story.

Although the move to Mexico will likely impact only a small portion of its more than 750 Delaware workers, and none reportedly at its plant on the University of Delaware's STAR Campus, Bloom's announcement may prompt renewed skepticism from critics of a generous incentive package that state officials used to lure the company to Newark a decade ago. It included millions of dollars in direct grants and, more importantly, a guaranteed stream of customers in the form of Delaware electricity ratepayers, who to this day are mandated to purchase more expensive Bloom electricity.

Bloom's move may also elicit fears that it is following the offshoring playbook of past American manufactur-

ers. But the company's Delaware story is likely more complex said Pavel Molchanov, a research analyst at Raymond James & Associates, a Florida-based investment bank who researches Bloom Energy for investors. Molchanov said Bloom has routinely shuffled its operations in past years and, despite its larger restructuring, he expects the company's Delaware presence to grow.

When asked if the move to Mexico could be the first of many, Molchanov said Bloom needs highly skilled workers, which can be difficult to find outside of countries with long histories of complex manufacturing, such as the United States and South Korea.

"I think the presence in Delaware will ultimately expand, just not as quickly as would have been expected a couple of years ago," said Molchanov.

### BLOOM, HYDROGEN BOOM

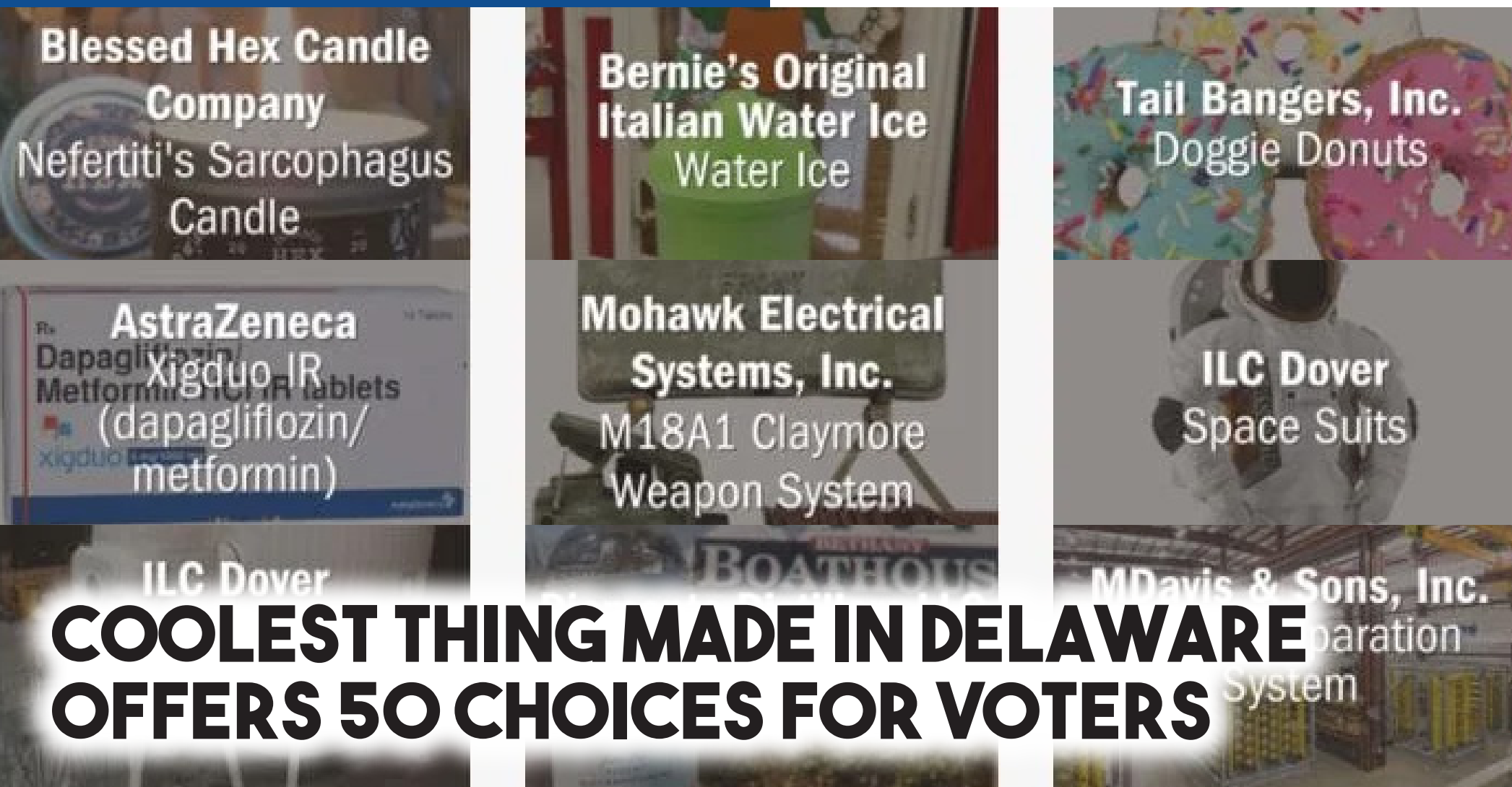
Though it lost hundreds of millions of dollars last year, Bloom Energy today appears primed to capitalize on President Joe Biden's plans to remake the Mid-Atlantic region into a hub for hydrogen production.

The Silicon Valley-based company is a key member of a regional consortium of politically powerful firms with large presences in Delaware, Pennsylvania and New Jersey, called the Mid-Atlantic Clean Hydrogen Hub, or simply MACH2. Last fall, Biden announced that the U.S. Department of Energy would award the consortium up to \$750 million to help it build hydrogen production and distribution facilities in the region.

MACH2 is one of seven regional organizations scattered across the country that will receive the federal hydrogen money that Congress approved when passing the Inflation Reduction Act in the summer of 2022.

[READ MORE HERE](#)





# COOLEST THING MADE IN DELAWARE OFFERS 50 CHOICES FOR VOTERS

**BY BETSY PRICE**

A contest meant to highlight the diversity of Delaware’s manufacturing — and raise the business sector’s profile — has opened its first round of voting. Fifty items including candles, Dogfish Head beer, doggie doughnuts, eco-plastic tables and an outer-space habitat, have been entered in [The Coolest Thing Made in Delaware](#) contest. It received more than 100 nominations.

“This contest provides an exciting window into Delaware’s manufacturing sector,” said Mike Quaranta, president of the [Delaware State Chamber of Commerce](#). “From space suits and treatments for type 2 diabetes

that push the boundaries of innovation, to consumer goods like personal care products and chicken wings, the sheer variety of entries showcases the depth and breadth of our state’s production capabilities.

“It’s a testament to the ingenuity and dedication of Delaware’s manufacturers and a reminder that ‘cool’ can come in all shapes, sizes and purposes.”

The chamber is cosponsoring the contest with the [Delaware Manufacturing Association](#). Tournament-style voting will help reduce the field until the final products go head-to-head in late March. The first-round

choices can be found [HERE](#), with voting ending Thursday, Feb. 29. Votes can be cast once a day.

Quaranta said at the chamber’s annual dinner that business leaders want to raise interest in manufacturing as a career path while increasing awareness of Delaware’s advantages for manufacturing.

Many experts think companies that once moved to China for less-expensive manufacturing will soon be seeking other locations because China’s population isn’t growing due to its one-child-per-family policy. While China has rescinded that rule, many young people aren’t interested in having a bigger family, reports say.

About 28,000 people now work in Delaware manufacturing businesses. Delaware is well positioned for transportation alone, among other qualities, Quaranta said, to compete for future manufacturing.

The 2024 Coolest Thing Made in Delaware will be revealed at the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce’s [Spring Manufacturing & Policy Conference](#) March 28 at Delaware Technical Community College in Dover.

## COOLEST VOTING SCHEDULE

- Feb. 22 – Feb. 29 Popular Vote Round
- March 7 Top 16 Announced
- March 7 – March 13 1st Round of Bracket Voting
- March 14 Top 8 Announced
- March 14 – March 20 2nd Round of Bracket Voting
- March 21 Top 4 Announced
- March 21 – March 28 – Final Round of Voting
- March 28 – Winner Announced at the Spring Manufacturing & Policy Conference





photo credit: Dan Gold / Unsplash



# Food & Dining

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## 2024 WILMINGTON BEER WEEK ADDS BREWS OUTSIDE CITY

BY PAM GEORGE

Move over Philly. The craft brew scene in New Castle County is turning the area into a regional destination for beer lovers.

“It’s very important to remind everyone how good the craft beer scene is within our state borders and urge them to enjoy more beers made locally,” said Daniel Sheridan, owner of [Stitch House Brewery](#) in downtown Wilmington. “We really do have some talented brewers around here.”

Find out for yourself during [Greater Wilmington Beer Week](#), which runs from Feb. 27 to March 3. The event features brewpubs, breweries and beer-centric restaurants throughout New Castle County. And if you visit just five, you might win \$200 in gift certificates.

### COVERING THE BEER BASES

The list of local breweries runs from large to small. For instance, [Iron Hill Brewery & Restaurant](#) started in Newark, but currently has 22 locations, including brewpubs in Georgia and South Carolina. Meanwhile, [Autumn Arch Beer Project](#) in Newark is a small-batch brewery known for experimental beers.

This year, organizer Julie Miro Wenger hopes people will venture beyond the familiar and try new places and homegrown products. Pick your town of choice.

For instance, [Wilmington Brew Works](#), Iron Hill and Stitch House are in the city, while [Hangman Brewing](#) is in Claymont. [Bellefonte Brewing](#)’s flagship location near Prices Corner and [Dew Point Brewing Co.](#)

are in the suburbs, and Autumn Arch, [Midnight Oil Brewery](#), [Twisted Irons Craft Brewing](#) and [1937 Brewing Co.](#) are in Newark. [JAKL Beer Works](#) and [Crooked Hammock Brewery](#) are in Middletown.

### SIP AND SAVOR

Some might find the inclusion of restaurants puzzling. But there’s a logic behind the decision.

“Not everyone visits breweries, but everyone goes out to eat,” noted Craig Wensell of Wilmington Brew Works.

“We love seeing our partnering restaurants featuring our colleagues’ products and it’s so much fun to take my production team around town, buy our own beer and chat with people who may just be trying our beer for the first time,” he continued.

The restaurants include [Chelsea Tavern](#) and [Dorcea](#) in the downtown district. Also in the area is [The Chancery Market Food Hall & Bar](#), which has eight restaurants. Trolley Square is well represented by [Kid Shelleen’s Charcoal House & Saloon](#), [Trolley Tap House](#), [Kelly’s Logan House](#) and [Grain Craft Bar + Kitchen](#). [Two Stones Pub](#) in north Wilmington is also participating.

“Brewers hope restaurants will feature their products, and, hopefully, they will create specials and events throughout the week showcasing the local beers and collaborative beers brewed in Greater Wilmington,” Wenger said.

For instance, Grain will feature Midnight Oil Brewery and Crooked Hammock Brewery products. Dorcea will have three local beers — Wilmington Brew Works, Midnight Oil and Twisted Irons — on tap for \$2 off.

[READ MORE HERE](#)





photo credit: Delaware State Police

# Government

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# MILFORD WILL CONTINUE WITH PARK AT CENTER OF EMINENT DOMAIN CASE

BY KATIE KAZIMIR

Milford plans to refine its comprehensive plan and continue to build the park at the center of this month's controversial eminent domain case, the city manager said Friday. Mark Whitfield said he's neither shocked nor surprised by the decision this week to terminate the eminent domain **action** on Annette Billings' land.

"I'm here to facilitate what they ask me to do. I'm here to do their work," he said.

"Ideally we want to connect hiking and biking trails," said Council member Michael Boyle of Ward 1, which is where the park will be. "I don't know how we will figure it out right now. There's no other plan."

Wednesday night's vote came during a special session of the City Council after weeks of dealing with upset residents enraged by the idea that the city would take private property. The city even released a long statement

Wednesday before the council meeting detailing how the case came to be. It pointed out that property it wanted was wetlands in a family trust, had been on the tax books as having no value and that no tax had been paid on the property. The statement said the city had tried to negotiate with Billings, but she did not respond to those efforts or show up for meetings.

The city's Feb. 15 court **response** to its suit over the land also accused Billings of leading a campaign that had led to city council members and city workers being verbally attacked and disparaged. The city cited the erection of a **billboard** calling the mayor and council thieves.

The 8.08 acre parcel outside Milford, considered to be in Sussex County just outside city limits, would have been used for a bike path. The city wanted the parcel to

better access the 19 acres it bought from Billings' brother for more than \$500,000. The city planned to pay Billings \$20,000 for her land, which is in a family trust.

The path would have connected the town and nearby housing developments to a proposed park on South Rehoboth Boulevard. Without the path, the park potentially would have only one access point for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians to share.

Whitfield said he doesn't think the lack of a bike path will affect usage. He pointed out that most people drive to Silicato Park near the Boys & Girls Club, and pedestrians will still have a walkway on South Rehoboth Boulevard.

## NO PARK IN WARD 1

Boyle said there are a limited number of parks in Milford and this park would be the first in Ward 1, which he represents. The park, which doesn't yet have a name, is still in the planning stages and will be primarily playing fields, he said.

"There is no timeline for the park," Boyle said. "This is long range."

He and fellow Ward 1 Council member Daniel Marabello were the only two members of the council Wednesday to not vote in favor of terminating the eminent domain action on Billings' land. "We have no objection, but slightly different views since it is in our ward," Boyle said.

He reported mixed opinions about the case from his ward's residents, but Boyle said he and Marabello had no plans to stop or try to interrupt the council's decision. "We're all fine with it," Boyle said. "What happened, happened."

[READ MORE HERE](#)





# RETIREES TO HEALTH INSURANCE COMMITTEE: THANK YOU

BY BETSY PRICE

A joint meeting of the House and Senate health committees only needed half the time it had allotted to listen to a proposal about changing state employee health care. Apparently mindful of the deluge of retirees who reacted angrily to news in 2022 that the state was moving retirees to a Medicare Advantage plan, the joint meeting planned to run from 2 to 5 p.m. Monday.

Only nine retirees asked to address the hearing and most of them thanked the Retiree Healthcare Benefits Advisory Subcommittee exploring insurance options for going above and beyond and seeking to find long-term solutions. All of them said thank you to the committee.

Garry Bodine, a school custodian, testified that he worked three jobs and stayed with the state even though he could have made more money elsewhere because he valued the benefits. Rebecca Scarborough, a member of

the retiree activist group [RISE Delaware](#), said she had something to confess to the health committees.

“When the committee was first formed and talked about, I wrote in opposition to it,” she said. “It was a way I felt to appease the more than 30,000 retirees. And I was wrong. Because the committee was fantastic.”

The retiree committee met throughout much of 2023 and in early January issued its recommendations. Number one: Never put Delaware state employees on a Medicare Advantage plan.

Lt. Gov. Bethany Hall-Long, a public health nurse who is running for governor, described the committee’s processes and its reasons for its recommendations, many of which have to be approved by the General Assembly. She didn’t want the study to just sit on a shelf, she said, and the committee would be holding several public meetings...

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# INCLUSIONARY ZONING COULD BOOST AFFORDABLE HOUSING

go,” Voynak said. Landlords are maximizing profits at the cost of tenants’ safety, health and well-being, Voynak maintained.

Affordable housing is a huge problem in Delaware and across the country and has repeatedly come up in government hearings — including a joint hearing for the state Senate and House housing committee. The problem affects lower-income people and families, whether you’re young and starting a new job, a single parent, a senior who rents or a family with lower-paying jobs. It’s considered one of the triggers for homelessness.

## INCLUSIONARY CODE REFORMS

The city of Newark’s **Planning Commission** believes zoning code reforms could increase affordable housing opportunities. “We’ve done a lot of research for years on this,” said Newark Senior Planner Michael Fortner.

About 50% of Delaware renters and 20% of homeowners are living with housing challenges including cost burden, overcrowding and/or inadequate conditions. That’s in addition to 8% of Delawareans living in their cars, couch surfing or temporarily living with friends. That equates to nearly half of the state’s population facing challenges due to a lack of affordable housing.

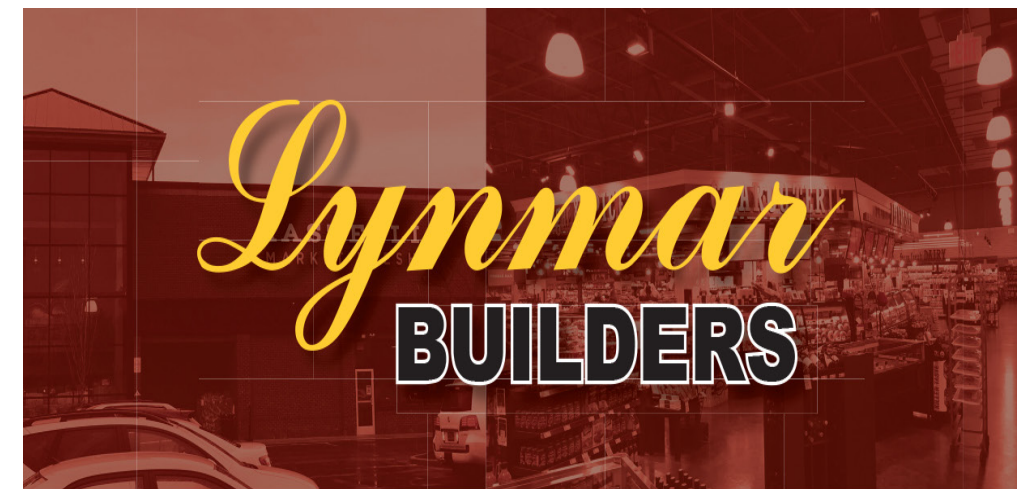
[READ MORE HERE](#)

BY KATIE KAZIMIR

Johanna Voynak knows from first-hand experience the pitfalls faced because of a lack of affordable housing. She has been in temporary housing since last September after a flood caused a sewage backup in her Newark rental apartment. The sewage backup was due to the property not being properly maintained by the owner, and resulting mold from the flood was not taken care of, Voynak said.

She and other tenants of the apartment building were faced with health issues from the mold as well as finding new residences, Voynak told Newark city planners during a virtual public workshop on housing issues last week. This has proven to be difficult. Voynak already struggled to find the ill-maintained rental she was forced out of due to the limited housing market.

“The lack of affordable housing enables landlords to not maintain properties when tenants have nowhere to



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photo link: Sussex Central High School



# Education

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# WILMINGTON'S TARIAH HYLAND WINS JOHN LEWIS YOUTH AWARD FOR ACTIVISM

BY JAREK RUTZ

A 20-year-old college student from Wilmington, who pushed for Black history to be included in

the Delaware school curriculum, has received an award named for a Civil Rights leader. Tariah Hyland, a junior at [Howard University](#) in Washington, DC, was given the 2023 [John Lewis Youth Leadership Award](#) by Delaware Secretary of State Jeff Bullock.

The award honors the accomplishments of Congressman John Lewis, specifically those rooted in activism and courage during the Civil Rights Movement and his long tenure of public service. Hyland's inspiration to give back to the community stems from her belief that students and young people need to have a voice.

"I knew the work was being done, but I didn't really see it being done at the pace or in the way that I felt that it needed to be done," she said. "I didn't feel like students were being mobilized enough or being put at the forefront enough especially within the education space, when a lot of decisions are being made on behalf of students, but you don't see any students at the decision-making table."

That frustrated her and she chose to put action behind those feelings. "Not only was I able to begin to do this work, but I was able to bring other students to the source with me because I knew that my voice wasn't enough," she said. "It wasn't enough to be the only voice in a lot of the conversations that were happening."

Hyland said she was shocked to win the award mainly because the winner was supposed to be announced in December, but she was notified in January. When she received the email of her recognition, she was on the phone with her cousin and immediately broke down in tears. "I was very surprised, thinking and assuming they already notified the winner, and so I was very shocked," she said.

As any young adult experiences, Hyland said she was at a point where she was talking to her cousin about being frustrated with the current place in life she was at, looking for clarity and purpose. "So I think the timing was just so divine," she said.

Hyland won the award due to her role in legislative change, specifically [House Bill 198](#), which required the inclusion of Black history and culture in Delaware's K-12 school curriculum.

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# SUSSEX COMMUNITY VOCALIZES NEEDS, HOPE FOR EDUCATION

BY JAREK RUTZ

A few dozen parents of students, educators and concerned community members shared their frustrations with education in Delaware and hopes for the future during a town hall Wednesday night. The few students in the crowd received applause and praise from the crowd for caring enough to be involved in changing the status quo of a system still funded by an 80-year-old formula. It was the penultimate meeting in a series of five sponsored by the Vision Coalition of Delaware.

“Tonight is about getting feedback from you that will help us as a leadership team develop our vision for the next 10 years,” said Mark Holodick, secretary of education.

Attendees were asked to write a word on one sticky note describing the education now and another word on a different sticky note with how they hope state education evolves.

For the first prompt, people wrote words such as disconnected, disorganized, ambitious, overwhelmed, underfunded, dismal, struggling, vulnerable and trauma. For the second, they said trauma-informed, collaborative, supportive, equitable, empowered, evolved, balanced, transparent, united, inspiring and appropriately-compensated.

Attendees were then asked to discuss the Vision Coalition of Delaware’s “North Star,” which its leaders describe as something that “guides our journey on the path to excellence. It’s designed to show what students need to be, know, have and do for a lifetime of success.

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# WLC NEEDS THREE MORE MONTHS TO SET PERFORMANCE REQ

The collaborative was created in November 2022. Its goal is to improve social and academic outcomes for students at nine Wilmington elementary schools through creative programming and student services that involve parents and educators

Council member Dan Shelton, superintendent of Christina, reminded his peers that each district agenda must be updated, and they will have to vote on it in their March meeting in order to have an answer by the March 31 deadline. Christina’s March school board meeting is on Tuesday, March 12; Red Clay’s is on Wednesday, March 20; and Brandywine’s is on Monday, March 18.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

BY JAREK RUTZ

The Wilmington Learning Collaborative says it needs three extra months to set performance requirements for the schools it’s overseeing. That means the organization will have to go back to the Brandywine, Christina and Red Clay districts for permission to move the deadline from March 31 to June 30.

The performance requirements include setting goals through written agreements with the three districts to ensure the collaborative is accountable to each district for improving student outcomes. Councilwoman Shanika Dickerson, who’s also a Brandywine school board member, pointed out that she didn’t think the council could make its agreement deadlines before an upcoming WLC retreat. Because any change requires an adjustment to the memorandum of understanding that authorizes the collaborative, the council’s legal counsel and all three school boards have to approve the change.

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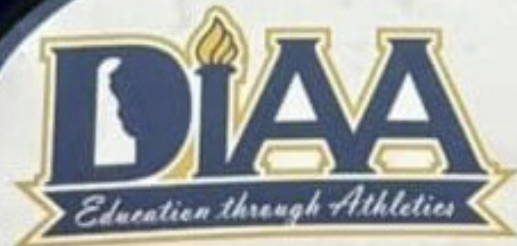
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## DIAA TO FOCUS ON HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES SELLING NAME, IMAGE IN MARCH

BY NICK HALLIDAY

The Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association punted on taking action on name, image and likeness (NIL) regulation at its monthly meeting this week.

The board had been scheduled to consider language that could make it permissible for student-athletes to capitalize financially, but the first move among the board members was a motion to table the vote until March 21. That motion was eventually approved after a 20-minute discussion.

Ted Laws, president of the Colonial School District board of education and a DIAA board member, suggested waiting until action is taken on legislation pending on the federal level. That gave the board a month to do more research as well, he said. Laura Makransky, the assistant attorney general assigned to the DIAA, said federal law supersedes any state regulation or statute should anything happen on that front.

Lenny Richardson, a public member of the DIAA board from Sussex County, said he is not comfortable with NIL despite the fact that 30 states and the District of Columbia currently allow it.

“I’m terrified of NIL,” he told the board.

The board needs to address the issue, and soon, said board member Dorrell Green, superintendent of the Red Clay Consolidated School District. “We’re going to have to confront it at some point,” he said.

He acknowledged that there will be inequities with NIL, as there are with other aspects of high school athletics. Athletes are leaving colleges and universities for greener pastures elsewhere and that has trickled down to the high school level. There are Delaware residents who play in neighboring states because they can strike NIL deals. Others are rumored to be headed out of state if NIL is not in place for the 2024-25 school year.

Still, he supported tabling the vote for another month.

“I think it’s worth a deeper dive,” he said. Salesianum School principal Father Christian Beretta said he has gone out of his way to explain to people that what Delaware is considering is not the same as what has happened at the college level. Many universities have NIL coordinators and have formed collectives to raise money in an effort to keep athletes from transferring. The DIAA proposal, he said, clearly spells out that anything coming through a school is prohibited.

“That is not what is sitting before us here,” he said. “What we’re talking about is more restrictive.” DIAA executive director David Baylor told the board that in his discussion with colleagues in other states, he has found that NIL regulations are “all over the place.”

The model that Delaware is looking at, which is in place in Oklahoma, “seems to be the one that is more manageable right now. Everyone agrees that whatever you implement, you’re going to have to constantly monitor and tweak,” he said.

The board approved that a survey of member schools be taken before the March 21 meeting. Baylor told the board NIL will happen and the DIAA should get in front of it or expect to react later to something they may not like. “We’re naïve if we think that this isn’t coming somewhere down the road,” he said.







# COURTSIDE VIEW – FINAL GIRLS' BASKETBALL TOP 10 RANKINGS

BY JASON WINCHELL

The girls' basketball season ended on Wednesday (Feb. 21) and the brackets for the state tournament came out Friday morning. The seedings came out Friday and there is a lot of intrigue this year as there are many teams on the bubble.

Here are the final top 10 rankings for the regular season voted on by the Delaware Live crew.

**No. 1 Sanford** (13-5) (LW No. 3) The defending champions finish the season strong including wins over Caravel and Ursuline. They played Tatnall on Wednesday.

**No. 2 Caravel** (16-3) (LW No. 1) The Bucs lost at Sanford to end the season at 16-3.

**No. 3 Ursuline** (14-5) (LW No. 2) The Raiders lost to Caravel and Sanford in the last three weeks. They traveled to face Long Island Lutheran (NY) on Wednesday.

**No. 4 St. Elizabeth** (17-3) (LW No. 4) The Vikings rebounded from a tough season last year to win 17 games this year with their only three losses coming to the top three teams.

**No. 5 Padua** (16-4) (LW No. 5) The Pandas who were 7-13 last year, they improved that by nine wins this year and three of their losses were to No. 3 Ursuline and No. 4 St. Elizabeth twice, once in overtime.

**No. 6 A.I. DuPont** (15-5) (LW No. 6) The Tigers won the Flight B championship and had another great season. Their in-state losses were to Caravel, Ursuline and Padua.

**No. 7 Dover** (16-4) (LW No. 7) The Senators had one of their best seasons, including a pair of wins over Cape Henlopen to win the Henlopen North.

**No. 8 Cape Henlopen** (13-6) (LW No. 8) The Vikings had a solid season against a tough schedule. They played at Polytech on Wednesday.

**No. 9 Delmarva Christian** (17-1) (LW No. 9) Delmava Christian had a solid season that ended with a game against Laurel on Wednesday.

**No. 10 Odessa** (15-5) (LW No. 10). The Ducks crashed into the top 10 at the end of the season. Their first year with seniors and the team will be heading to the tournament next week.







# COURTSIDE VIEW – FINAL BOYS' BASKETBALL TOP 10 RANKINGS

BY JASON WINCHELL

The boys' basketball season ended on Wednesday (Feb. 21) and the brackets for the state tournament came out Friday morning. The seedings came out Friday and there is a lot of intrigue this year as there are many teams on the bubble.

Here are the final top 10 rankings for the regular season voted on by the Delaware Live crew

**No. 1 St. Elizabeth** (19-1)(LW No. 1) The Vikings suffered its first loss of the season to No. 6 Sanford, but went 7-1 against teams ranked in our top 10 and deserves the top spot at season's end.

**No. 2 Dover** (17-2)(LW No. 2) The Senators had a great season with their only in-state loss at St. Elizabeth by a point. They played at Sussex Central on Wednesday night.

**No. 3 Middletown** (15-4)(LW No. 3) The Cavs had a solid season against top 10 teams, with its only loss in the state at home to No. 1 St. Elizabeth.

**No. 4 Sallies** (12-8)(LW No. 4) Sallies finished with a winning record with one of the state's strongest schedules. They went 5-1 at home and could be tough if they get a couple of home games in the tournament.

**No. 5 Sanford** (15-4)(LW No. 6) The Warriors are one of the hottest teams heading into the tournament in-

cluding a big 58-51 win at No. 1 St. Elizabeth. They are 11-1 in last 12 games and faced Tatnall on Wednesday night.

**No. 6 William Penn** (16-4)(LW No. 5) The Colonials had a great season after a slow start. Their three in-state losses to No. 1 St. Elizabeth, No. 3 Middletown and No. 4 Sallies were all on the road. They were perfect at home this year.

**No. 7 St. Georges Tech** (13-6)(LW No. 7) The Hawks finished the season strong winning eight of their last nine and that was a heartbreaking one-point loss to No. 6 William Penn. They finished their season at Smyrna on Wednesday.

**No. 8 Appoquinimink** (12-7)(LW No. 9) The Jags tough schedule gave them some tough losses, including losing in overtime to No. 3 Middletown and No. 4 Sallies. They traveled to Cape Henlopen on Thursday.

**No. 9 Seaford** (17-2)(LW No. 10) Seaford had another great season winning the Henlopen South. They were at Newark Charter on Wednesday

**No. 10 Howard** (12-7)(LW No. 8) Howard had a tough schedule that included a season-ending game at Middletown on Wednesday.

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## TOP RANKED ST. ELIZABETH HOLDS OFF LATE MIDDLETOWN RUN

BY GLENN FRAZER

There is a saying when a team starts out a game and can't miss a shot, "they were in range when they stepped off the bus!" That's how locked in the St. Elizabeth Vikings basketball team was when they raced out to a 22-12 first quarter lead, and extended the advantage to 45-22 at halftime Tuesday. The Vikings connected on eight 3-point shots in the opening 16 minutes and at one point held a 42-16 lead. Temple commit Aiden Tobiason drained three of the long-range shots and led the Vikings with 18 first half points.

The third ranked Middletown Cavaliers were in jeopardy of being "blown off" their home court, but head coach Azeez Ali had the team come out in full-court pressure to start the third quarter. The press made a difference as the Cavs went on a 15-2 run to slice the

deficit to 11. Zion Mifflin and Clyde Frasier led the Cavaliers in that period, scoring 13 of the team's 19 points. The defensive effort included several blocks by Akendre and Aviyon Matthews. The Viking lead that was as many as 26 points, had dwindled to 12 at the end of the third as the Cav's Jack Murdaugh made a "three" with time running out.

The second half rally continued into the final quarter when Middletown outscored St-E 13-3 with 2:45 to go. The game was 56-54 as Aviyon Matthews continually powered his way to the rim, scoring 10 points including going a perfect 6-for-6 from the foul line. Then came a key moment of the game when coach Mike Cassidy inserted eighth grader DaShuan Holden in at point guard. Holden drove to the rim, scored and drew contact. The

next possession, Holden again was fouled. He made both free throws and pushed the Viking lead to 62-55 with just 1:48 left. Middletown missed a couple of opportunities and was forced to foul. Tobiason made seven of eight free throws giving his team a double digit lead that ended the Cavalier rally.

After the game, coach Cassidy told us his team did a great job of rebounding, "We're not a tall team, Aiden at 6-5 is our tallest player but he's primarily a wing. We talk about rebounding together and crashing the board hard." Referring to his eighth grader (Holden) coach remarked, "He's special, he's a press-breaker and a good ball handler. He's good in the spread offense and setting up other players."

Tobiason led the way for St. Elizabeth, scoring 28 points including going 11 for 14 at the foul line. Caden Harris chipped in with 11 while Kenneth Hunter Jr. and Julius Wright both added 10 points for the Vikings. They completed the regular season with a record of 19-1 and will probably get the top seed when the tournament committee meets Friday.

Middletown had a 13-game winning streak snapped, but is also likely to draw a high seed in the tournament. The Cavaliers were led by Aviyon Matthews and Frasier with 16 points each. Teammate Mifflin added 13. The Cavaliers made three 3s compared to 10 by the Vikings. Middletown faced Howard Wednesday night to complete their regular season, then will meet the Wildcats again Saturday for the Blue Hen Conference title.







# SUSSEX CENTRAL ROLLS EARLY TO STATE DUAL CHAMPIONSHIP

BY BENNY MITCHELL

Sussex Central head coach Shane Miller used the experience of last year to motivate his team on what it would take to win the DIAA Division I state wrestling championship.

“Last year after we lost I took them into the locker room and told them we will be back here and remember what this feels like,” Miller said.

That would be all the motivation the Golden Knights needed as they rolled through the lower weights winning the first five bouts all with bonus point victories to win the DIAA Division I state championship 36-34 over Cape Henlopen.

The dual meet began at 113 pounds where Sussex Central put out one of the team’s best wrestlers in two-time state champion Malachi Stratton who won a 19-3 technical fall over Cael Baker. Jayden Meith then won a

19-8 major decision over Hudson Senard at 120 pounds followed by Chase Murray’s 8-0 major decision over Tripp Gannon at 126 pounds.

Evan Cordrey recorded the first of two pins for the Golden Knights over Max Meadows in 1:34 at 132 pounds. Talan Savage finished the early run with a 16-1 major decision over Colin Poulis at 138 pounds giving the Golden Knights a 24-0 lead to start the match.

“Where we started when they sent us out I was thrilled and I knew we were going to put points on the board, momentum was definitely in our favor,” Miller said.

Nick Walker got the Vikings in the win column with a 16-3 major decision over John Rovillard at 144 pounds.

Sussex Central then won the next two bouts when Justin Craig won a 7-1 decision over Noah Diamond at 150 pounds and Justin Negron won a 5-1 decision over

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Brady Cole at 157 pounds as the Golden Knights extended their lead to 30-4 with just six bouts left in the match.

Hayden Wheeler (165) pinned Maddox Roberts in 2:42 and Luke Arnold-Decyk (190) pinned Ivan Flores in 4:35 for Cape Henlopen. Those two pins sandwiched Gabe Cannon’s 2:26 pin over Jeffery Rainier at 175 pounds that would seal the match for Sussex Central who led 36-16 at that point of the match.

“When Gabe goes out on the mat we know he is coming off with six points. It’s always nice to have on the back end,” Miller said.

Sussex Central forfeited the final three bouts, claiming its first state title under Miller and the third in program history.







# SEAHAWKS PIN THEIR WAY TO SECOND STATE WRESTLING TITLE

BY BENNY MITCHELL

Delaware Military Academy rode six pins enroute to a 38-32 victory over St. Mark's to capture the DIAA Division II state championships. The title was the second for the Seahawks in consecutive years.

The championship match began at 113 pounds, the Seahawks reeled off three straight wins to begin the match all earning bonus points. Cole Perrin got it started pinning Adelyne Till in 45 seconds at 113 pounds. Tyler DelCollo followed at 120 pounds pinning James Holmes in 1:24. Gavin Mundy capped off the fast start at 126 winning a 16-1 technical fall over Aaron Menicella as DMA jumped out to a 17-0 lead.

"We were counting on pins early, we knew the bonus points were going to be huge," DMA head coach L.A. Collier said.

Chris Foster got the Spartans in the win column at 132 winning a 2-0 decision over Dylan DelCollo, but Piero Papili answered quickly for the Seahawks pinning Jack MacDonald in 1:02 at 138 pounds.

St. Mark's cut in the DMA lead winning the next two bouts as Alex Baxley (144) won a 10-5 decision over Jackson Grandel and Ben Ranauto pinned Charles Perrin in 2:11 at 150 pounds narrowing the lead to 23-12 midway through the match.

Then came the big match within the match at 157 pounds where two of the top wrestlers in the state met between DMA's Malcolm Roy and Brayden Raunato. After two periods the match was tied 4-4 when Roy threw Raunato with a lateral drop and the pin in 4:28.

"I was surprised by the pin, Malcolm can be lights out and he was tonight," Collier said.

The Spartans took the next two bouts with Jacob Ebaugh (165) winning a 9-0 major decision over Ethan MacDonnell and the return of Luke Spoor, who has missed most of the season with an injury, pinning Nathan Wesberry in 1:23 at 175 pounds as St. Mark's trimmed the DMA lead to 29-22.

The two teams traded the next four bouts ending the match. The Seahawks Hayden Moaney (190) pinned Vincent Hurst in 45 seconds, the Spartans' Finn Hanna won a 16-2 major decision over Emelio Messina at 215 pounds. DMA clinched the match at 285 pounds where top-ranked Cael DiNigris won a 9-0 major decision over Aiden Zellman extending DMA's lead to 38-26.

Clif Bakhsh ended the match for St. Mark's pinning Cyrus Hurley in 3:23.

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