



## **Brandeis helps Bay State Games team win silver**

**August 1, 2008**

A team of sixth-grade all-stars from Central Massachusetts, including Leominster's Kayla Brandeis, finished with the silver medal in the Junior Girls Division of the Bay State Games last month.

The girls finished 2-1 in pool play, enabling them to advance to the semifinals. After a solid win in the semis, the girls just missed the gold in the finals.

In the finals, the girls earned a rematch against the Cape Cod they lost to in the opening rounds, which was ranked fifth in the nation heading into the tournament. Cape Cod prevailed, 45-30. Despite the loss, the girls finished with the silver medal, capping off a fun and successful weekend.

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## **High school baseball: Class of 2009: Blue-chippers' stock soaring**

**By Hector Longo**  
**Staff Writer**

Our region has churned out some pretty good baseball classes over the year.

The Carlos Pena/Jay Yennaco-led Class of 1995 leaps out with Haverhill's Pena now a star slugger for the Tampa Bay Rays while Windham's Yennaco reached Triple A ball.

The Class of 2009 has shown the makings of greatness.

With their senior years fast approaching, four athletes have attracted the attention of big-time college programs.

Andover's John Farrell has caused a surge in frequent flyer miles with coaches jetting in, just to take a peak at the right-hander.

In Haverhill, it's not the giver but the receiver, rawboned catcher Ronnie Rosario, who is gaining steam as a pro prospect.

And two prep schools, Brooks with lefty Michael Johnson of Georgetown and Pingree with righty Jolmi Minaya-Suriel of Lawrence, will be busy places this spring.

These four came almost out of nowhere.

How did this happen? Let's take a look.

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You simply don't see college coaches from schools like Duke, Auburn and Notre Dame, hanging on local backstops, unless something special is about to take place.

That something special has been the coming out party of Andover High right-hander John Farrell.

"It's been great, coming out of nowhere from a sophomore year when I played JV ball and Junior Legion," said Farrell. "This year the velocity just increased and I've become a better pitcher."

Indeed, Farrell left one final stamp on his 2008 campaign, nailing down win No. 7 of his American Legion summer (against no losses) with an eight-inning, three-hitter in a 4-1 win over Sudbury in the playoffs.

Andover High and the American Legion Post 8 teams totalled 31 wins this spring. Farrell earned 13 of those, losing just once. In 892/3 innings of work, the 6-foot-1, 180-pounder struck out 117 with a 1.64 earned run average.

The college coaches have fallen for Farrell's ease of motion, the movement on his four pitches (two-seam and four-seam fastball, slider and change-up) and, yes, the 90-mph readings on the radar gun.

Farrell, at first, was clobbered by the attention, at least for one April afternoon.

"The first game I pitched that I saw the scouts, I really wasn't used to it," said Farrell, who gave up basketball and football to focus strictly on his pitching. "I was all over the place. Now I see them just about every time I pitch. I'm used to it, but I still get some jitters when the guns come out, though."

Duke and Auburn last week, Notre Dame the week before, Farrell has carved out quite the reputation. In fact, he'll close out his summer with a private workout for the Colorado Rockies, meaning he's on the Major League Baseball radar screen.

Fortunately, Farrell has remained grounded. Student-athletes ranked in the top five percent of their class tend to do that.

"Really, I don't talk about the scouts and coaches and the radar guns when I'm around my friends, just with my parents," said Farrell, who is still sifting through schools with no real leaders in the race yet.

"I want a school where I'll get academics and baseball. I'm only looking at top 30 schools in the country as far as academics go. One pitch could ruin my career, so I want a good academic base to fall back on."

Farrell took the three-tier SAT once and scored 1,660 but has 1,800 as a goal the next time around.

His whirlwind junior year has helped assure that Farrell will be the one calling the shots when that decision is made.

"It's a reward that comes with the hard work," said Farrell, an MVC All-Star this spring. "When they come from places like North Carolina to see me pitch, I love it. That's big to me."

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Someday, it might be a trivia question, fodder for the back of a baseball card even.

"My father's name is Jose Luis Minaya," explained Minaya-Suriel.

"He took the J-O from Jose, the L from Luis and the M-I from Minaya to make my name."

These days Minaya-Suriel, who was born in Puerto Rico and moved to Lawrence at age 3, gives his entire family a handful of reasons to be proud.

On the field, Jolmi was named Eastern Independent League Most Valuable Player each of the last two years for the Pingree School in South Hamilton.

Minaya, a right-hander, went 7-1 with a 1.10 ERA this season as a junior for Pingree, a school with just 330 students.

At 5-11, 158 pounds, he is not a physical specimen. Minaya-Suriel is a pitcher, a self-made one at that.

"The biggest key for me is my slider," said Minaya-Suriel who, when not pitching, played shortstop and hit .491 with 21 RBIs for the Highlanders this spring. "And my cutter is moving like crazy. They're just pitches I tried to learn and kept practicing with, putting my own touch on them."

Don't sell Minaya-Suriel short, though. His riding fastball pumps in regularly at 86 mph, and he's topped out at 88.

That kind of movement and velocity piqued the college coaches' interest, but you don't get recruited by schools like Yale, Richmond, Villanova and Bucknell without good grades.

"The Yale coach told me that my GPA (89.2) was a little bit lower than he might have liked, but I'll be working on that this year," said Minaya-Suriel.

With the time involved in commuting back-and-forth to Pingree each day, playing three sports (cross country and basketball as well), Minaya-Suriel has made good on a chance he took three years ago on the advice of a family friend.

"I was at the Bruce School (junior high) and a family friend recommended the ABC (A Better Chance) program," said Minaya-Suriel, who scored 1,690 on the three-tiered SAT and backed up that showing with a superb 760 on the SAT II in Spanish.

"The first thing I noticed at Pingree was how much (the faculty) cared. I was a little worried, being one of the only minorities there. The ride makes for a long day, but it's been worth it. I've gotten more out of school than I ever could have expected."

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Back in July, the Northeast coaching staff in the Bay State Games had to forgive Michael Johnson.

While pitching for a medal was important, it was hard to argue the alternative, Johnson's summer internship in a lab, doing cell research at the UMass Medical Center in Worcester.

"I think we won the silver, but basically I pitched one day and was committed to work for the rest," said Georgetown's Johnson, who is coming off a breakthrough junior spring at Brooks School.

Contrary to popular opinion, though, Johnson's lab work and possible pre-med future, have little to do with an amazing jump in mph on his fastball, from barely touching 80 to reaching 87-88 regularly.

"I've grown a little and gotten strong, ran cross country in the fall and that helped with my legs, but it's all about arm speed and core strength," said Johnson, a third-line forward on the Brooks hockey team in the winter. "I threw all I could. I've thrown a lot of long toss and focused on being ready for this season. I have to say, it's pretty exciting to see how far I've come from last summer."

It took just a short time for Johnson to realize the prep work had paid dividends.

On May 5, he fanned 17 in eight innings in a 1-0, 10-inning loss to powerhouse Roxbury Latin. Johnson went on to demonstrate that outing was no fluke, fanning an area-best 76 in 442/3 innings for Brooks.

With each punchout, the college interest grew.

"Right now I'm looking at the Ivy League teams, and a lot of the Northeast Division 1s have shown interest like Fordham and UMass," said Johnson, 17. "Right now, I'm trying to keep all my options open."

A 6-foot lefty who throws in the high 80s will attract colleges. But one who is not just a thrower?

"For a long time, I had to rely on location, so I learned how to pitch out of necessity," said Johnson. "That was before this velocity jump."

Pitching for the Newburyport Post 15 American Legion team has done little to slow Johnson, who is 3-0 this summer as Post 15 heads into the double-elimination state tournament (top eight teams in the state) tomorrow in Chicopee.

As dazzling as the strikeout numbers might be, his induction to the Brooks "Cum Laude Society" (top 10 percent of his class) and a gaudy 32 on the ACT (the equivalent of a 2,130 on the SAT) are equally impressive.

And how many top athletes are spending their summer with their eyes focused on an electron microscope assisting in cancer research?

"I'm just looking forward to pitch at the highest level of college ball where I can also succeed academically," said Johnson, who also hit .326 and played first base in the spring. "College is such a huge choice and the recruiting process can be pretty nerve-wracking. Hopefully, I'll just find a way to do what's best for me."

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The San Francisco Giants scout didn't want the day to be fruitless, so he begged Ronnie Rosario for a favor.

Rosario, the Haverhill High junior, had just caught seven innings in the warm May sun, but the scout wanted more.

He asked Rosario to gear up, get back out there and make throws to second.

Normally, the scout would have clocked the catcher in the game. But this is Ronnie Rosario. And nobody would be caught dead running this afternoon. They didn't even try.

Rosario, of course, was a willing participant.

"He works every pitch," said Georgetown's Johnson of his Bay State Games battery-mate. "He's the real deal."

Not since Carlos Pena came out of Haverhill High has a prospect garnered the attention Rosario is receiving.

As polished as the 17-year-old is, he's only been catching for four years. The 6-foot-2, 200-pounder was a shortstop growing up.

"I started catching my 8th-grade summer when I went out for coach (Senior Babe Ruth) when I was only 14," said Rosario, who overcame an 8 for 31 start to lead the Hillies in hitting this spring at .375. "I was sick of playing down and I wanted to make this team. I went to the tryout, and there must have been 150 kids there. Coach (Larry O'Brien) told everyone to take their position.

"I waited while everyone took their spots at shortstop, third base, outfield, pitcher. I just wanted to make this team somehow, and there were only two catchers. So I said the heck with it. What more is there to do

than just go back there and catch the ball. I caught (current Mets minor leaguer) Tim Stronach and he ended up telling coach that he liked me. I've been catching ever since."

Rosario might not have liked catching immediately, but now he's can't get enough. After catching every high school game, he slid right into the aggressive Haverhill Post 4 American Legion 40-game schedule, working all but a handful of innings.

When the opportunity arose to pick up a handful of August games with the Gately Chiefs in the InterCity League, Rosario jumped at the chance.

There'll also be stops at Steve Buckley's Old Time Charity Baseball Game in Cambridge later this month and the Lynn Invitational before Rosario goes back to school.

"Baseball has opened a lot of opportunities for me," said Rosario, who had been pegged as the Hillies quarterback of the future but left the game after taking a pounding in the Hillies' old single-wing offense. "I will go where I can get the most money and where I can go right out and perform as a freshman."

As for the pro prospects, Rosario is barely scratching the surface.

"At first, the pro scouts were a surprise, things never really sunk in until they came around this spring," he said. "Now I realize what I have in front of me, what I have to work for. The opportunity is there, I'll just strive for more and keep working hard at it."

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# The Republican.

## **West boy's volleyball team wins gold at the Bay State Games**

**By BRYAN ROY**

**Wednesday, August 06, 2008**

While most all-star teams bring together both talent and egos, the Bay State Games West boys' volleyball team took a different approach to assembling its roster.

Rather than selecting the standout high school sensations with that extra baggage, coach Frank Schillinger selected the hardest-working and best character volleyball players during tryouts.

The result? A gold medal at the 2008 Bay State Games.

"We were willing to go into there with a good group of kids with good motivation and attitudes, as opposed to taking a superstar at their individual school," Schillinger said. "We looked at it like we want a group of kids that are going to try to mesh together. There's not going to be any bickering."

Schillinger, a volleyball coach since 1997, entered the tournament as a heavy underdog by selecting those underrated and young players. The West finished pool play with a 9-1 record, then defeated the Southeast, 28-26, 25-19, in the quarterfinals.

But those motivated players didn't back down when a powerhouse Metro (Boston) awaited the West in the boy's scholastic championship game.

"The big twist is just the fact that we were so young," Schillinger said. "We just took a mishmash of kids. We just took everybody by storm."

The West prevailed in three games, 25-22, 17-25, 15-13. It was an upset that Schillinger designed while composing not only his team, but coaching staff, too.

Unlike most Bay State Games teams that only have one coach, Schillinger selected two assistant coaches to reach different levels.

Schillinger, a coach at Chicopee Comprehensive High from 2001-2004 and currently the coach at MacDuffie school, chose Jim Angelos, an offensive specialist, as a disciplinary figure.

Josh Malone, who graduated from Comp last year, filled the second assistant position as a coach that could relay instructions and participate in drills to reach the young players.

When tryouts came, Schillinger knew the pool was above the average high school team, and took into consideration the hustle and extra effort of the players.

"When we decided what we needed, we had to look at all the different elements," Schillinger said. "We could just tell by watching who was on time in the gym, those guys who ran to tear the nets down, every drill we did, you could see the extra amount of energy.

"You're raising the bar because you're getting the best of the best," Schillinger added. "I think we looked at it, we knew we would get the cream of the crop, so we wanted to take it another step ourselves."

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## **Wildcat aces strike gold in Bay State Games**

**By Ryan Bray**  
**Wed Aug 06, 2008**

Weymouth - As two captains on next year's Weymouth High varsity baseball squad, it wouldn't be fair to say Brett Julian and Mike Laracy don't get the respect they deserve, at least not within the Wildcat camp.

Still the incoming seniors came into this summer's Bay State Games with something of a void they wanted to fill. Both pitchers performed at a high level in regular season play and continue to do so with Weymouth American Legion, but it's been a while since they've had something tangible to show people just what they're made of.

And what better way of grabbing people's attention, they thought, than winning a gold medal.

"I was telling Mike (Laracy) that I wanted to win the gold so bad," Julian, 17, said with a laugh. "I hadn't taken home a medal or a trophy since I was 15."

With that goal in mind, Laracy and Julian did their part in helping the Southeast team claim a 7-6 win over Northeast in the gold medal game in this year's Bay State Games.

After dropping a 6-5 decision to Central in the opening day of play on July 7, Southeast rallied to win three of its next four games over West (4-0), Coastal (11-5) and Metro (11-1) before topping Northeast in the finals on July 10. Laracy, 17, pitched 2 1/3 innings of no-hit relief behind starter Steve Perakslis, while Julian, after allowing a single with one out in the sixth, settled down to close out the game for Southeast.

"It's an honor to win it," Laracy said of claiming Bay State gold. "It feels good to be the best in the state. It was a real team effort and everyone did their part."

Laracy and Julian, who along with fellow pitcher and future co-captain Cam McDonald helped pitch the Wildcats into the opening round of the Division 1 South Sectionals, were among the estimated 25 players who tried out and were selected as part of the 2008 Southeast team. Julian tried out for last year's games, but did not make the cut.

"I just really enjoyed it," Julian said. "I was really looking forward to competing."

The 2008 games were also a first for Laracy, who said he saw the events as a good way of staying on his game over the summer.

"I just wanted to keep on playing," he said. "Plus, it was a good opportunity to get looked at by some scouts."

And while the gold medal win more or less speaks for itself, both players said the thrill of winning the games was only heightened by the fact that the two long-time teammates were able to do it together.

"I was rooting him on the whole time," Julian said of Laracy. "Watching him compete well at the level he did was nice to see."

The gold medal win is the latest achievement for the Wildcat teammates, both of whom have been playing about as long as they've been old enough to throw. Laracy, who worked his way up the ranks from tee ball to varsity and legion, cited his father and grandfather as his biggest inspirations, while Julian, whose older brother Chris also played ball at Weymouth High, grew up around the sport from a young age.

"Ever since I was 6, I just came up watching kids play," said Julian, recalling his earliest memories of being a batboy before suiting up to play himself. "I've been around baseball my whole life. It's good to still be playing at a high level."

The thrill of their championship win is still fresh in their minds, but Laracy and Julian aren't anywhere close to being finished. They're in the midst of a mid summer playoff run with Weymouth Legion, while their senior season at Weymouth High still awaits ahead.

"Things are looking good for us," Julian said. "We've got a lot of kids coming back, so hopefully we can be a (Bay State) league contender."

## Wellesley's Sonia Raman Named New Head Coach of Women's Basketball

By Mindy Brauer  
DAPER STAFF

August 8, 2008

Sonia Raman, who has served as an assistant coach at Wellesley College for the past six years, has been named head coach of MIT women's basketball, as announced by Director of Athletics Julie Soriero.

In addition to serving as the 12th head coach in the history of MIT women's basketball, Raman will fill a key role as the Assistant Director of Compliance. A highly-regarded and dynamic young coach, Raman is also a lawyer, who has spent the last seven years in compliance for the United States Department of Labor and Fidelity Investments.

"The commitment Sonia has to the game of basketball and to the coaching profession is obvious," said Soriero. "She has a solid background in teaching, recruiting and player development. Sonia is ready to take the next step and lead her own program and we are excited that the program she leads will be MIT."

As a top assistant at Wellesley, Raman had been responsible for opponent scouting, including MIT, which competes against Wellesley as part of the New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference. Her in-depth knowledge of NEWMAC will serve as a strong asset as the Engineers look to build upon last year's success. The team reached the quarterfinals of the NEWMAC Tournament after compiling a 12-13 regular season record, its best in five years.

"I am very excited for the opportunity to coach the women's basketball team at MIT," said Raman. "I have tremendous respect for the MIT student-athletes from my time as an opponent in the NEWMAC. I can't wait to get started as we strive towards excellence together."

Prior to Wellesley, Raman spent two years as an assistant coach at Tufts University, where she also played while serving as team captain. Coaching at various camps across New England for the last 16 years, Raman was the head coach of high school, collegiate, and post-collegiate all-stars from 2000–2005 in the [Bay State Games](#).

## **WICKED LOCAL** BRAintree

### **Braintree laxers earn Bay State silver**

**By Staff reports  
Tue Aug 19, 2008**

Braintree - Five members of the Braintree Wamps varsity lacrosse team helped the Southeast team take home a gold medal in this summer's Bay State Games. The medal was one of 155 earned by the Southeast teams this year, including 47 gold and 59 silver.

The Southeast team rolled to wins over Metro (18-7) Central (15-14), West (15-3) and Northeast (12-10) before losing to Central in the Gold Medal game (10-6) on July 13.

Craig Richardson (right), Brett Richardson (bottom right) Kevin Lydon (#16, bottom left) all netted goals for Southeast. Ben Dalton and Ryan Holbrook (not pictured) also represented the Southeast team for the Wamps.

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## **WICKED LOCAL** MALDEN

### **Chinese-American athletes share perspectives on Beijing Games**

**By Rich Tenorio  
Wed Aug 20, 2008**

Malden - For Chinese-American athletes in Malden, the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing can serve as a window through which they view sports familiar to their culture transmitted to a global audience.

The Beijing Games also represent a chance for these athletes to show pride in their homeland, including its history and culture, and to reflect on the role of sport in Chinese society.

In phone and email interviews, four Chinese-American athletes shared their perspectives on the role of the Beijing Games, both in China and in the United States this week.

#### **National pastimes**

Certain images of the Games have become familiar to US audiences: the achievements of Michael Phelps and Dara Torres in swimming, for instance, or the men's and women's basketball teams cruising past the competition.

Just as the Games are a way for the U.S. to display its prowess in these pursuits, so too are they a chance for China to showcase its own strengths in sports.

"Sports have always been a big part of the Chinese culture," Andrea So, a Hong Kong native who will begin teaching math at Malden High this fall, wrote in an e-mail interview with the Observer. "Almost all schools in China start their days with morning exercises. Sports that require minimal (equipment) such as

basketball, volleyball, badminton, table tennis, etc. tend to be the most popular among the general public.”

Both the Chinese Olympians and the Malden Chinese-American community reflect this trend.

The Chinese men’s and women’s table tennis teams have won gold medals, with one team having yet to drop a single set to its opponents. Malden resident Yin Wang, a Chinese immigrant, has won multiple Bay State Games championships in table tennis.

“In China, the national sport is Ping-Pong,” said Wang, using the official Chinese name of the sport. Wang, a 22-year-old incoming senior at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, has played Ping-Pong for 14 years. He has played at the Bay State Games and MIT and in the National Collegiate Table Tennis Association. His father, Dongxue Wang, and a younger cousin also play Ping-Pong.

Just as Chinese Olympians discovered venues to display their prominence in certain sports on the Beijing stage, so too have Chinese-Americans in Malden found local opportunities to participate in sports that are popular to their culture.

So has enjoyed success at the Wah Lum Kung Fu and Tai Chi Academy on Ferry Street, winning gold medals at a tournament in Baltimore. Members of the Chinese-American community in Malden also participate in the Malden Badminton Club (MBC), which has at least 200 active members and meets on Friday evenings at the Salemwood School. Several MBC members have streamed Olympic badminton matches on their laptops.

### **Excitement and apprehension**

Among the emotions that surfaced in athletes interviewed was a feeling of pride that their homeland would host an Olympics. Wang remembered the moment in 2001 when he and his mother waited to see who would get to host the 2008 Summer Olympics.

“Me and my mom had been up all night till dawn,” he said. “We jumped in the air for joy. There’s no moment like it.”

For So, however, the moment brought not only joy, but also apprehension.

“Such a big event would bring China lots of attention, both positive and negative,” she said. “A successful Olympics would raise China’s standing internationally, yet every little mistake made would catch the attention of the world.”

As the date for the Olympics approached, tensions did rise.

Deadly violence broke out in Tibet and Xinjiang, and protests accompanied the torch relay route in Europe and North America. China continues to face criticism over human-rights issues.

The athletes interviewed were mixed in their assessments of China’s policy on human rights.

The Chinese-Americans interviewed were mixed in their assessments of China’s policy on human rights.

“(As) much as China has (come) a long way, it is still a dictatorial government, and with dictatorial government, it has only one right, government right,” Peter Chiu, a Hong Kong native and an MBC member, wrote in an email. “I think (it’s) going to take a long time for the country to come out of this dictatorship as it has been this way for over four (thousand) years.”

“Political issues will always be there in China,” Wang said. “It has five thousand years of culture. A lot of things are still old.” He added, “It’s hard for the rest of the world to understand some things. In terms of how China handles the affairs of its people, the most important thing is how the Chinese government

treats its people, its citizens, and how the Chinese people treat the rest of the world. I really am not too worried about these issues.”

### **Let the Games continue!**

Regardless of their political position, the Chinese-American athletes interviewed for this story shared an intense interest in the Games.

“We stay up pretty late,” Wang said. “For the Ping-Pong competition, we definitely mark our calendars and remember it.”

Both So and Wah Lum academy student Eugene Szeto, who was born in Hong Kong and currently attends the Beebe School, have watched the Games every night — although Szeto, it seems, is a bit more excited over how the US is faring.

“I am very excited that the U.S. is winning in many events such as swimming with (Michael) Phelps and the (women’s beach volleyball team),” Szeto wrote in an email. “Every time I watch them, I always (know) that they’ll win.”

For the Chinese athletes, there have been difficulties, such as the controversy over the ages of members of the women’s gymnastics team and the exit of star Liu Xiang, who won his nation’s first gold medal in track and field at Athens in 2004, to an injury in a hurdling heat.

Yet there have also been moments of triumph, such as the achievements of the table tennis teams. And there was the spectacle of the opening ceremony, which featured a run through the air from Li Ning, who won six medals at the 1984 Los Angeles Summer Olympics.

“It was definitely one of the most memorable opening ceremonies I watched,” Wang said. “There was a lot of culture involved. It’s who we are.”

“Everything from athletic facilities to the opening ceremony have shown that China has caught up to the international standards,” So wrote. “The Olympic Games have truly opened China’s door to the rest of the world.”



## **Around town: Some new faces around town**

**By Bernie Beck**  
**Thu Aug 21, 2008**

### **DYLAN NEWMAN TAKES GOLD AT BAY STATE GAMES**

Dylan Newman of South Plymouth capped a perfect track season July 12 at the Bay State Games held at UMass Lowell. Despite the extreme temperatures, he led from the beginning in the junior boys’ mile and took the gold medal in a personal best time of 5.07, taking more than three seconds off his personal best time. His closest challenger finished more than 11 seconds behind, in taking the silver medal. Newman had qualified for the State finals in the South Coast Regionals held at Notre Dame Academy in late June. At that time, he also set a personal best time of 5.10.9.

Earlier this year, Newman set a new mile record at Plymouth South Middle School, only to break his own record two days later at 5.13.23. He will now represent Massachusetts in the State Games of America to

be held in Colorado Springs, Colo., next summer. He will attend Boston College High School this fall and hopes to continue his winning ways as he is still eligible for the junior category in the Bay State Games in 2009. He also set new course records for cross country last fall at both Carver and Silver Lake middle schools.

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## **Catching Up With ... Bishop Fenwick field hockey star Kara Charochak**

**By MATT WILLIAMS**  
**August 27, 2008**

How old were you when you started playing field hockey?

I went to a camp at Gordon (College) in eighth grade; that was really the first time I'd played. I grew up playing basketball and softball. I tried out for Fenwick field hockey as a freshman and fell in love with the game.

Is it different trying to get recruited to play in college after starting at such a late age?

My coaches have been great helping me in that way. (Former Fenwick) Coach (Jill) McGinnity, who's now at Salem State, was the first person to tell me that I could really play at a Division 1 level and (current) coach (Mary Beth) Mahoney has been really helpful.

What kinds of camps and showcases have you been to this summer?

I played in the Bay State Games and the Cape Cod Classic. I also did the futures program, which is a 10-week clinic with a regional tryout. Basically, the best girls from Massachusetts go to play at Virginia Beach.

Was that your favorite vacation spot from the summer?

Definitely. My mom and I got to spend some time on the beach during the futures program. I love to go to the beach here, too, and to New Hampshire with friends. Anything in the sun.

You're planning to play field hockey in college. Is there a front-runner yet?

I really like UMass-Amherst. They have a great sports management program and a lot of other good programs if I decide to study something else.

What are you most looking forward to about the upcoming fall sports season?

It'll be great being back on the field for Fenwick and with my friends. You're in school with them, too, so that makes it better going back.

Is there a particular class you're looking forward to?

Definitely gender studies. Also government, because I love history. It's all so factual | there's no guessing or figuring out anything.

What are your favorite TV shows?

I like Big Brother a lot, and anything that's on HGTV, which has a lot of interior design shows.

Do you have any pre-game superstitions?

I'm not superstitious. I try to get zoned in and get the team focused, but I'm also not too serious because I know you could get psyched out. I try to stay relaxed but ready to go.

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## **Mid-life rush: Smith still the one in United States Track & Field New England Masters Championship**

**By Dom Nicastro / Correspondent**  
**Wed Aug 27, 2008**

Wenham - At 49, Wenham's Ian Smith is on the older end of the 45-49-year-old men's national masters running age group.

But he sure is showing those younger runners how to compete.

Smith won the 400-meter race in the United States Track & Field New England Masters Championship recently at Springfield College. His time of 53.64 puts him in the top six in the country for his age group.

"And I'm old for my age group," Smith said with a laugh. "Normally toward the end of your age group you start dropping off inevitably."

Next running season, Smith will be in the next age group, 50-54, so he'll be a young pup again.

The New England Championship was merely another resume-builder for Smith, who won three gold medals at this summer's Bay State Games, was once ranked in the top 10 in the world in the 800, won a United Kingdom 800 master's title in his home country and an American Indoor title and a previous New England championship in his adopted country.

His Bay State time in the 400-meter dash was 55.20, which means he's even getting better.

Springfield's James Morton, who trains with Smith out of the Mass Velocity running club, said Smith is the ultimate sprinter.

"Ian has that incredible combination of endurance and speed," Morton, 53, said. "He's one of these few runners who can run the 400 and 800. Most runners our age are running the 800 and 1,500. The 400 is an all-out sprint. In order to prepare for it, you got to do speed work. You're always on the edge of pushing yourself just to the edge of injury, but not too much where you're hurting yourself."

Smith said he's been concentrating on flat-out speed work through workouts at Gordon College. It is not easy to find the time, he said, with his family commitments and managing his new C-suite level management consulting firm out of Beverly, The Portfolio Partnership.

He lives in Wenham with his wife, Shona, and daughters Emily, 17, and Megan, 13.

The next step for Smith is preparing for the 2008-09 running season, where he plans to make a lot of noise in the next age division.

"I'm looking forward to being a young 50," Smith said.

His best time in the 400 is 53.5, and he is not far from there. His time of 53.64 at New England's may mean, he said, he has an "800 in me."

He's also eyeing some relay teams out of Mass Velocity; it usually competes with a team from California and a few others for the top spot in the country.

With Smith on the team, it can only mean good things, Morton said.

Despite picking up the sport a few years back after a near 20-year layoff, Smith has not missed a beat.

"It really does say something about Ian's ability to recapture his talent," Morton said. "That story is not unusual though. Some of us ran in high school and college. I didn't. Some say we're at an advantage because we didn't run constantly, and we gave our bodies a break. Ian was out of the sport for a while, and he'll tell you he wishes he hadn't been."

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## **Retro look: Field hockey team hopes to rekindle past success with familiar face along the sidelines**

**By Nikki Gamer/danvers.sports@cnc.com  
Thu Aug 28, 2008**

Danvers - A message to all the field hockey teams in the Northeastern Conference and beyond this season: Danvers coach Barbara Damon is back, and she's ready to win.

"How we doing ladies?"

During the third day of preseason workouts, Damon sat on her stool, and watched her girls run laps.

"If you're going to throw up, do it over the bushes please," she chided.

Damon is a field hockey veteran. She coached the varsity team for 16 seasons, and was one of the most successful Danvers high school coaches of all-time, having won the Northeastern Conference all those years.

Damon retired from that position some time ago, and a new coach took over. Then the program fell on some hard times.

Last year, the team won only three out of 18 games, and missed making the state tournament for the second year in a row. But now that Damon's back, she hopes to turn things around, adding that it feels good to be heading up the varsity team once again.

"We need to get that fire back in the belly," Damon said.

Things the team will initially work on include defense, making the scoring pop and being first to the ball.

"I'm trying to find the kids with a natural nose for the goal," Damon explained.

The Falcons will also work on improving their passing game, because it's important to find a rhythm.

Getting the confidence back will also be an integral part of the group's success.

"A lot of it is bringing back that level of play, that passion, that love for the game," the coach said.

So far, Damon has seen good results from those who played over the summer. A handful of athletes played in the Reading league, while a few played in the Bay State Games. Most of the girls coming back went through some type of field hockey summer camp, as well.

"Their stickwork has improved. That's what we really need to get back," Damon added. "I'm hoping to develop some real strength of play, especially with the freshmen."

This fall, the locals will play 16 conference games, and two non-league games against Malden and Everett.

Marblehead is a solid team, Gloucester always proves to be a good competitive rivalry and Peabody can be "scrappy."

With a new coach at the helm, the girls will enter the season on an even playing field; there is a lot of opportunity to impress. Everyone is working for a starting role.

Players to watch include captains Suzy Libby on defense and goalie Diana Bean. The formidable midfield will be comprised of Rebecca Leslie and Stephanie Costa, while Anna Matchak looks to break into the forward line.

"[Matchak's] got speed," Damon said.

Captain Libby explained that so far, practice has been "back to the basics." She's excited about the season and said the team looks pretty good.

"We still have a lot to work on, though," Libby said. "Barb (Damon) knows so much about the game; we can't wait to learn."

The Falcons will have a scrimmage day Friday, which Damon says will be a good challenge. After that, let the games begin.

Danvers takes on Peabody in the season opener Tuesday, Sept. 2 at home.

"They'll be a lot of screaming from the sidelines," Damon said.

## **Field hockey boasts speed**

**By Ryan Wood  
Sat Aug 30, 2008**

PLYMOUTH - The past few years saw more and more wins slowly start to mount for the Plymouth North varsity field hockey team. Last season's team posted a quite impressive 6-10-2 mark. They missed out on the postseason tournament by six points (three victories).

"Every year we build on it," Plymouth North head coach Kim Allen said. "The Cape teams can't take us lightly anymore."

That all may change this fall as Head Coach Kim Allen returns 13 players, including four-year starting goalie Emily Bryant, who has proven to be quite stubborn between the pipes. Atlantic Coast League all-star and senior Captain Lauren Paton, fresh off a stint at the Bay State Games, returns at center back. And up front, the Eagles have the luxury of a player who can score at will – senior Captain Lauren Foley, who led the team in scoring the past two seasons. The Eagles also have strength and leadership from senior Captain Tory Danner, who plays up front alongside Foley. A few others that Allen has high hopes for include Meghan O'Reilly, Colleen Taylor, and Nicole Holmes.

"I'm excited about this year," Allen said. "We've got a great group of seniors."

The Eagles came into camp ready to go. Many of the girls either participated in camps or at the Bay State Games. Some players took part in a field hockey camp this off-season at Forges Field. Also, the middle school field hockey program, which emerged two years ago, has spawned some pretty decent players.

"We had some freshmen coming in with experience," Allen said. "That's going to be a benefit in the long run."

The Eagles need to work on their midfield game in order to make a run at a tournament berth and to challenge for a top spot in the Atlantic Coast League.

"I think our weakness is going to be at midfield," Allen said. "We're not as strong with our drives, but we are much faster than we were last year."

The Eagles have two fresh faces on the coaching staff. One is 2007 graduate and field hockey player Stacia Parks, a volunteer assistant, as well as assistant varsity coach and junior varsity Head Coach Lauri Fultz. The Eagles open the season Friday, Sept. 5, at Silver Lake.

## Girls volleyball aiming high

**By Josh Centor/Correspondent**  
**Fri Aug 29, 2008**

Medfield - The Medfield girls volleyball team was unable to win its third consecutive state championship last fall and the Warriors are looking to get back on top this season.

Medfield lost a five-set heartbreaker to Westborough in the sectional final last year, and head coach Jack Hastings says the Warriors are hungrier than ever.

"It still leaves a bad taste for us," Hastings said. "To say the girls were disappointed is an understatement. They're very focused this year."

With 12 players returning from last year's team, the Warriors have one of their most experienced teams ever, which doesn't mean good things for the rest of the squads in the state.

"Some coaches are trying to put a team together and create chemistry. We already have the core of people molded from last year so we can hit the ground running," Hastings said. "Sometimes you get lucky like that."

The team will be led by senior co-captains Caitlin Barrett and Melissa Haskell, both of whom have been integral members of the Medfield program for the past few years.

Barrett, who excelled in her transition from libero to setter last season, may be the best player in the state.

"We just need Caitlin to be able to bring what she has for the last three years. She's a special athlete no matter what she does," Hastings said.

While Barrett receives much of the attention from opposing teams, Haskell has also emerged as a standout player for the Warriors.

"Melissa will be a go-to player for us this year," Hastings said. "She got a little taller and put in a lot of work in the off-season. She knows what she has to do and her success will translate to other people on the court."

Medfield has eight seniors on the roster, but a number of talented juniors will play key roles in the Warriors quest for the state championship. Along with Barrett and Haskell, juniors Jess McLeod and Ally Le-Bruno played for Hastings in the Bay State Games this summer and were part of the gold medal team.

"Jess was a first-year varsity setter last year and did a really nice job," Hastings said. "Ally had been at libero since Caitlin moved to setter and has improved a lot. Both girls love the game and put a lot of work into it."

Although Medfield seems to be a team without weakness, Hastings warns that all teams have deficiencies.

"I think our weakness will be ourselves. Last year against Westborough, we played the fifth game not to lose, instead of playing to win. I think we have to be able to get back to playing to win," Hastings said.

While a state title might not be far-fetched, Hastings and the Warriors aren't looking toward November just yet.

"I'm thinking about winning the first game next Wednesday. That's the only thing we can do," Hastings said.

Medfield opens its season on September 3 against Medway.