

GIFT BEGETS MORE GIFTS

\$10K grant generates more gifts for Gloucester schools' band programs, but \$54,000 still needed

By Times Staff

After-school music programs for grades four to eight in the Gloucester schools continue to grow, but almost half-way through the school year, about \$54,000 is still needed to fully fund them.

At the end of September the programs were boosted by a \$10,000 grant from Ernie Boch Jr.'s Music Drives Us Foundation, the news of which prompted another \$8,000 in donations.

The grant came at a key moment for the band programs. Together, the elementary and middle school bands now serve over 200 students each year, with enrollment steadily climbing since the pandemic, according to the Gloucester Education Foundation.

"Music Drives Us is proud to invest in Gloucester's talented students and educators," said Boch, founder of Music Drives Us. "Access to music changes lives, and we're honored to support this program that is opening doors for so many young people."

However, funding gaps for the music programs remain this school year, and the Gloucester Education Foundation and Gloucester Public Schools are seeking additional donors and sponsors to sustain it.

Gloucester Education Foundation said it has raised \$317,900 to get the band programs restarted at COVID-19



Posing for a photo with a \$10,000 check are, from left, Gloucester O'Maley School Band and Chorus Director Carlos Menezes, Music Drives Us Program Coordinator Jacyn Tremblay and Gloucester Elementary School Band Coordinator Jamie Klopotoski during a presentation at O'Maley Innovation Middle School on Monday.

over the past 3½ years, thanks to the generosity of the Gloucester community and by securing several grants, including this latest one from Music Drives Us.

"The 'pandemic pause' dried up the pipeline of student musicians, so we've put significant funding into the elementary and middle school programs to rebuild them. Major kudos to Carlos Menezes Jr. and Jamie Klopotoski — and Cole Lundquist at Gloucester High — for the massive work they've done since 2022 to grow the bands at all three levels," Emily Siegel, executive director of the Gloucester Education Foundation, said.

"This year, GEF has

committed \$62,000 to the program for school year 2025-26, 70% of their \$92,000 ideal budget — that's for instrumental lessons during and after school for 200-plus students in grades 4-8, plus stipends for the two band directors," Siegel said. "This is by design, to encourage sustainability: we want the district and program to assume some of the annual cost of this program. It is successful, important, and incredibly meaningful for students and families — but GEF simply can't put 25%-30% of our annual program spending towards it every year without cutting into other efforts we want to support — like engineering, theater, the O'Maley

Science Center, O'Maley Academy, Career and Vocational Technical Education, and many more."

The Gloucester Education Foundation still needs to raise \$22,000 toward its \$62,000 share by January, Siegel said.

"We have submitted two grant applications and will be submitting another in the coming weeks for band," she said. "Individual restricted donations are also very helpful. Whatever we can't raise in restricted funds, we will use unrestricted funds raised during our year-end appeal."

Meanwhile, the Gloucester schools' district and band programs are starting to work on raising their 30%, which is \$32,000, Siegel said.

Strategies to meet this need include a Battle of the Bands benefit at The Cut at 6 p.m. Dec. 27 (tickets, \$25-\$100, thecutlive.com) organized by Menezes and Lundquist, and the establishment of a new elementary and middle school Band Booster Club to engage families in fundraising efforts, such as selling concessions at concerts, stronger suggested donations for concert admission, and asking those who attend school concerts to donate.

"We're also collaborating on trying to access some MassHire funds to support Gloucester High School student assistant teachers," Siegel said.

"These are great next steps, as a mix of GEF, district, and program-raised funds is how this program will be successfully sustained moving forward," Siegel said.

In 2024-25, 115 elementary students participated in the schools' band programs and nearly 30 of them advanced to the middle school band this fall. At O'Maley, 97 students took part in daytime and after-school lessons last year, with 100% reaching performance proficiency.

"Our students are finding confidence, joy, and connection through music," said Menezes, the middle school band director. "This funding allows us to focus on collaboration and performance, giving every child the chance to

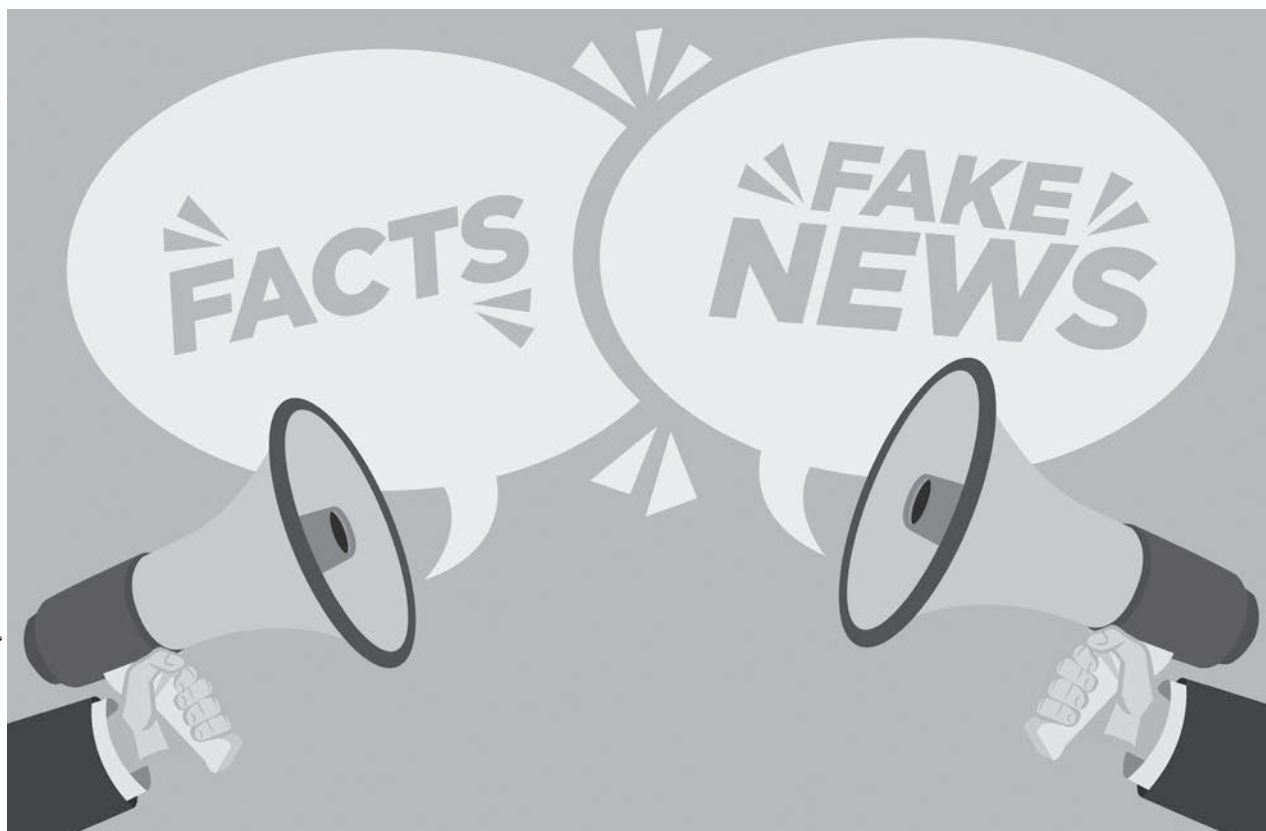
How to help

If you'd like to help keep Gloucester's school bands performing, donations may be to the Gloucester Education Foundation: **Online** at thinkthebest.org/donate. Under "special instructions" write "band." **By check:** Make out to Gloucester Education Foundation with "band" in the memo line, and mail to Gloucester Education Foundation, PO Box 1104, Gloucester, MA 01930.

succeed."

Students performed in school concerts, city festivals, and packed houses at venues such as The Cut. Volunteer mentors from the middle and high school bands contributed over 500 hours of service, while high school musicians gained paid teaching experience, strengthening the pipeline of future music leaders, the Gloucester Education Foundation said.

"Music Drives Us has given us a powerful boost, and we're thrilled to celebrate this grant," Siegel said. "But to keep the momentum going, we need our whole community to step up. Every dollar we raise helps guarantee that any student in grades 4 to 8 that wants to participate in band can, at no cost to their family."



Looking to combat fake news?

Here are some resources to help you determine if what you've read is true:

» **Politifact** is the Pulitzer Prize-winning fact checking operation run by the nonprofit Poynter Institute. The site fact-checks statements by politicians and debunks myriad Facebook hoaxes.

<https://www.politifact.com/>

» **FactCheck.org**, run by Annenberg Public Policy Center, performs much of the same tasks, and also let's you ask questions of the fact checkers. An example question: Did the Supreme Court rule that it is illegal to take the oath of office with anything but the Bible? (The answer is no.)

<https://www.factcheck.org/>

» **Snopes** is the original fact-checking website. Use the site's search bar to get to the bottom of political statements, viral videos and urban myths.

<https://www.snopes.com/>

» **A Google reverse image search** is the best way to find out if that photo you saw making the rounds on Twitter or Facebook is real. This story from PC Magazine walks you through how to do it on your desktop or your phone.

<https://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2492468,00.asp>

» **Still need help?** Contact us at the Gloucester Daily Times or Salem News, and we'll get the answer for you, no matter the topic. Email Gloucester editor Andrea Holbrook at aholbrook@gloucestertimes.com, or Salem editor John Castelluccio at jcastelluccio@salemnews.com



REAL NEWS IN SCHOOLS

How the program works

Your school can have access to local, trusted journalism from The Salem News and Gloucester Daily Times on a daily basis. We report on news throughout the North Shore and Cape Ann, covering all things local — from schools, to sports, to government, people profiles, business, entertainment and more. You get the facts — the real news — from experienced reporters, photographers and editors you can count on at no cost to your school.

Here are the basics of the program:

What is it? The Salem News and Gloucester Daily Times partner with local businesses to provide free digital access to our newspapers to anyone within a school in our coverage area at no cost to the school. This access encourages students to value the vital news coverage being produced by The Salem News and Gloucester Daily Times. They will build awareness and gain critical thinking skills in the process.

Who can participate? This program will benefit teachers, students, and others in the school community.

Where does it take place? You can access our newspaper online. Teachers can incorporate the program into their curriculums, even having reporters, photographers and editors visit your class.

When can we start benefiting? As soon as we have your commitment to participate in Real News in Schools we will go to work to find a local business who wants to sponsor you. Once we have one, we will work with your IT Department to get the program up and running.

Why is this valuable? There's a lot of fake news out there on social media and elsewhere. The Salem News, founded in 1880 as The Salem Evening News, and the Gloucester Daily Times, founded in 1888, both award-winning publications, have long track records of fair and accurate reporting that cuts through the misinformation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
SALEMNEWS.COM/REALNEWS
GLOUCESTERTIMES.COM/REALNEWS

A BRIGHTER CHAPTER

New mental health center aims to give Higgins students ‘strength to speak up’

By Caroline Enos

» Staff Writer

PEABODY — A ribbon cutting for a new mental health center marked what the city hopes will be a brighter chapter at the Higgins Middle School.

City officials, partnering organizations and students gathered at the school Sept. 19 to officially open the Student Resource and Support Center that began serving middle schoolers on the first day of classes this month.

The center and its three new clinicians provide support for students’ mental wellness and aims to address bullying.

It was bullying at the middle school that caused eighth-grader Jason Bernard to die from suicide in May.

“Seeing everyone here clearly tells us that we have the strength to speak up and always choose to be kind...” Jason’s sister, Cely Rosario, said at the event.

“Jason’s legacy calls us to be better friends, better teachers, better classmates and better humans,” she said. “Together, we can be louder in kindness and stronger in unity.”

Rosario, who cut the ribbon, is a member of the city’s new anti-bullying task force that, like the center, was created following her brother’s death.

“Over the past months, Peabody, its parents, teachers, health professionals, city officials, public safety officials and caring people from all across our city have come together to tackle these very difficult, but very real challenges: mental health, bullying and suicide prevention,” Mayor Ted Betcourt said.

The center is one part of the city’s response to Jason’s death. Peabody now



Cely Rosario, the sister of 14-year-old Jason Bernard who died by suicide in May after facing bullying, talks with eighth grade students (l-r) Aarmani Perez, Isabelly Cardoso, Emmanuel Ortiz and Joseph Deleary during a ribbon cutting ceremony for a new Student Resources and Support Center inside the Higgins Middle School in Peabody last Friday.

DAVID SOKOL/Staff photo

provides free mental wellness support through the app Bloom, hosted workshops for parents and caregivers over the summer, and started a new bullying assessment team that examines and responds to reports of bullying in schools.

The Student Resource and Support Center is the first of its kind in the district. While the health center at the high school provides mental health support, this is the sole focus of the new resource at the middle school.

Located between the main office and nurses office, with private entrances from both, the center has three recently hired mental health clinicians who see students for appointments or on a drop-in basis.



DAVID SOKOL/Staff photo

The new Student Resources and Support Center at the Higgins Middle School in Peabody has three full-time clinicians specialized in mental health.

The district plans to add more permanent walls around those clinician’s work spaces, which are currently curtained off,

but there are private areas where students can speak with them in the meantime.

The clinic also follows HIPAA requirements, can

provide counseling or external referrals, helps students file bullying report forms, and is working to offer after-school sessions.

“One of our main goals this year as a school and as a school district is to make sure that every student in our schools has a trusted adult that they can identify and they can go to at any time during the school day,” Superintendent Josh Vadala said.

“We’re really working hard to make sure that that is possible, and a huge part of that is the student resource center.”

The center is run in partnership with the organizations Family Continuity, which recently merged with the mental health and substance abuse organization



Pins with the message “Be Kind” are seen on a table for guests during a ribbon-cutting ceremony for a new Student Resources and Support Center inside the Higgins Middle School in Peabody last Friday.

Advocates, and Embrace Pathways.

“The vision of this is very clear: to build on the incredible supports that we already have in Peabody, to break down the barriers that prevent students and families from being able to get the care that they need, and lastly, to offer resources for staff,” said Lauren Chianciola, a licensed therapist with Advocates.

Like Chianciola, Rosario urged students to reach out to the center for help when they need it.

“I am very hopeful that every teacher, every authority, every student truly takes advantage of this fruit, this seed that we are planting, because it’ll only get better for the generations that are coming behind you,” she said.

Her family has started Jason’s Legacy Foundation in memory of her brother. The foundation plans to award scholarships for graduating high school seniors in Peabody.

Unions protest hiring terms for new high school

By Michael McHugh

• Staff Writer

SALEM — Several city councilors and members of local labor unions spoke out last month against the Salem High School Building Committee's recent vote to not include a project labor agreement that would include standards for local hiring.

Committee members provided an update on plans for the new \$455.5 million facility at a Sept. 15 City Council committee meeting after members of local labor unions protested outside City Hall.

The project is to create a new four-story, 365,000-square-foot building between the current high school's footprint and Highland Avenue with an estimated 30-month construction period.

In addition to addressing code, energy, and learning space inadequacies of the current building, the design provides space for a new auditorium, new media center, career and technical education spaces, classrooms, and spaces for special education, nursing and health.

The project also aims for net zero energy with a geothermal wellfield and solar panels. The existing field house will be demolished for a new one of similar size and include an indoor walking track. The design also includes plans for the creation for two new soccer-lacrosse fields, overlapping baseball-softball fields, and new tennis/pickleball courts.

The Massachusetts School Building Authority will reimburse 45%-60% of the total cost that will be determined on Dec. 3. Salem taxpayers will be asked to cover the remaining costs with a property tax increase, which they will vote on sometime in May 2026.

If the city were to vote down this project, the city is still required to do a basic renovation to bring the building up to code for an estimated \$353.6 million, but with the



Protesters lined up along Washington Street

Hall on Monday.

DEREK KOUYOUNJIAN



Labor union protesters line up along Washington Street in front of Salem City Hall on Monday.

cost then entirely placed on the city. Construction on a basic renovation would also likely be spread out over more than 30 years, with an assumed 5% in cost escalation each year, according to the Building Committee.

Based on a cost break-down by Associated Builders

& Contractors and PM & C, who were hired as owners project management (OPM), the Building Committee voted 9-4 to not include a project labor agreement (PLA) in the proposal.

Committee members cited concerns that signing a PLA could limit competition

among subcontractors, which in turn could lead to a higher total project cost.

"When you limit the competition, the cost will be more," committee Co-Chair Rick Jones said. "The fiduciary responsibility of our committee is to look out for the taxpayer, and that is why I

personally voted (not to sign a PLA)."

Salem Ward 6 Councilor Megan Stott, who is also on the building committee, said that had she not missed the meeting, she would have voted with the majority of her colleagues to not include a PLA.

"It was just not presented to me that (a PLA) was something absolutely needed," she said. "And for me, one of the biggest reasons is that with a PLA, you have to use a union workforce. Without one, you can still use a union workforce."

Following their protest outside City Hall, members of local labor unions such as Dan McNulty, director of operations of the Massachusetts Building Trade Unions, said during the public comment period of the meeting they were disappointed at the committee's decision.

McNulty said, based on a recent study from the Illinois Economic Policy Institute, that public projects with signed PLAs actually increased bid competition.

"The two-sentence analysis from the OPM says that (a PLA) will 'reduce bidders and raise costs,' with no information to point to," he said. "We have a sample size of 700 public projects in Illinois, 500 with PLAs, and 200 without. (With PLAs) we found increased bid competition, with no impact on total project cost."

Other union members spoke to the necessity of a PLA for local union members and students in CTE programs to be guaranteed work on the project. Local Salem code articulates a "good faith effort" required of contractors to achieve 20% of total hours from Salem residents or within 10 miles, but with no material guarantees.

"This PLA could have been a guarantee for our students in our CTE program to have apprenticeships and start working with some local unions to secure a job afterwards," Salem Teachers' Union President Ann Ber-

man said. For more information on the project, visit sites.google.com/salemk12.org/shs-building-committee.

Michael McHugh can be contacted at mmchugh@northof-boston.com or at 781-799-5202

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THE STARS COME OUT

Latest Beverly High Hall of Famers honored in ceremony

By Phil Stacey
» Executive Sports Editor

BEVERLY — The stories they shared were as legendary as the athletes themselves.

The inductees into the 18th annual Beverly High School Sports Hall of Fame, which took place before a packed house at the Beverly-Peabody Elks Lodge #1039 Oct. 4, shared memorable tales and the lessons they've taken with them since wearing the Panther colors.

There was field hockey and ice hockey superstar Nicole Woods, recounting how her father Jack managed to watch games that she and her sister (and fellow inductee) Corinne played in two different countries ... on the same day. There was the school's first 1,000 point scorer in girls basketball, Laura Sullivan, imploring the packed audience to "please be a part of someone's village, particularly a child or adolescent", the same way she had growing up in the Garden City.

There was Fred Paglia, a soccer great who helped Beverly reach the 1979 Division 1 state final, who came up with his family from his home in Tampa, recalling how he left Beverly High with a PhD: "Passionate, Hungry and Driven." Running phenom shared how she school choiced into Beverly High as a sophomore, wanting to be part of the school's unparalleled track and field program. There was Connor Irving, who admitted growing up he "couldn't wait to be in the Orange-and-Black" and always remembered the words of wisdom his legendary coach, Bob Gilligan, would preach: playing hockey is a privilege.



Among those inducted into the Beverly High School Sports Hall of Fame were (from left): Caitlin Harty, Nicole Woods, Brendan Flaherty, Corinne Woods, coach John Hilton, Fred Paglia, Sarah Rood, Laura Sullivan, Connor Irving, coach David Wilbur, and Monica Adler. Missing is Millie Chapman.



Members of the 1982 girls track and field team, as well as the 1982-83 boys indoor track team, pose for a photo after going into the Beverly High Sports Hall of Fame.

DEREK KOUYOUNJIAN PHOTOS

A dozen former athletic greats and two championship teams were enshrined on this evening. They included Adler's classmate, close friend and fellow running superstar, Millie Chapman (who is working in Zurich, Switzerland and was represented by her parents at the event); football, indoor track and lacrosse ace Brendan Flaherty; famed soccer and track whiz Caitlin Harty; gymnastics wunderkind Sarah Rood; storied coaches Jack Hilton (track and field) and Dave Wilbur (baseball and football), and both the 1982 girls track team and the 1982-83 boys indoor track squad.

Master of Ceremonies Bernie Stavis — a 2010 BHS Hall of Fame inductee — kept the evening running smoothly after dinner by introducing each new member of the Hall, then listened along with the rest of those in attendance to the rapt stories that were shared.

The Woods sisters played field hockey, ice hockey and lacrosse together for one season, when Corinne (Class of 2011) was a senior and Nicole (Class of 2014) a freshman. Now married, they both treasured the recollections from those days 14 years ago.

"Playing three sports with Nicole as a senior was the highlight of my entire athletic career. So going in together makes it that much sweeter," said Corinne, who went on to play Division 1 field hockey at Bryant University and is now a police officer in her hometown. "Nicole's skills were just unbelievable."

"It's been a long time since we've done anything athletic together," added Nicole, a former University of

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Louisville field hockey star who also played for the U.S. National Field Hockey team. “We were competitive and made each other better by competing non-stop. But we were never rivals.”

Adler, who like Chapman graduated in 2010, was a High School All-American in the mile and both an All-State and Division 2 champion in the event. The bond she made with her teammates created many lifelong friendships; she said that many of their own young children are around the same age and they meet up for playdates.

“We took our academics and athletics seriously to where it became normalized,” Chapman, now a nurse, said. “It’s a personality type, too, where you have to love running. I certainly did.”

Irving, whose game-winning goal in the third period of the 2014 Division 2 state championship game gave Beverly its first (and to date, only), boys state hockey title, comes from a prominent hockey family in the city. The program’s all-time leading scorer with 198 points, he admitted the call informing him he was going into the Hall of Fame was a surprise.

“We’re all still best friends,” Irving, who now calls Wells, Maine, home, said of his Panther teammates. “We see each other all the time ... although we play more golf than hockey now.”

Arguably the school’s greatest-ever gymnast, Rood (now Timson), recalls her four years at Beverly High as “the most fun in my life.” An excellent student, she also left her mark on the mats by helping the Orange-and-Black to one state championship and a pair of second place finishes, emphasizing Saturday that “my team won the state championship, not me.”



Beverly High Sports Hall of Fame committee members include (from left): Todd Lampert, Carla Femino, BHS athletic director Ryan Wood, Bernie Stavis, Kevin Leahy, Dave Jellerson, and Bruce Doig.



Beverly High Sports Hall of Fame member Connor Irving (foreground) and the crowd at the Beverly-Peabody Elks Lodge #1039 listen in during the ceremony.

Flaherty (Class of 2013), is regarded as one of the school’s all-time gridiron greats, leading the Panthers to Super Bowl titles in 2010 and 2012 and one whose school records for career touchdowns (61) and points (380) will not be broken anytime soon. He was also an All-American in lacrosse and a burner on the indoor tracks during the winter months.

“My dad (Tim) is a Hall of Famer and my mom (Anne) has given so much to the school as an athletic trainer,

so at an early age it was very engrained in me what it meant to play sports at Beverly High,” Flaherty said. “I felt so much pride putting on the jersey and representing the city and my school.”

Harty, who graduated No. 2 in the Class of 2014, recalled her soccer team beating Central Catholic in penalty kicks (2-1) in 2012 for the school’s first-ever Division 1 North title in girls soccer program history. One of the all-time offensive powerhouses for Beverly, she was also unbeaten as a

senior on the track.

Sullivan, a Class of 2000 graduate, recalled fondly how she, her teammates and even parents had to sign a contract “for the privilege to play for Coach Fortch”, referring to girls basketball coach John Fortunato, which ultimately led to her being a three-time Northeastern Conference all-star and becoming the first BHS hoop squad to go 18-0 in league play as a senior.

Paglia gave the night’s most moving speech, thanking his former soccer



Bernie Stavis, a former Beverly High three-sport star who is in the school’s Sports Hall of Fame, served as Master of Ceremonies.

coaches, the late Bill ‘Buzz’ Foley and Todd Lampert (who was in attendance Saturday) who taught him “we is the most important word in the English language, not ‘I’”. Both men impacted the Class of 1980 graduate greatly, said Paglia, now the President of Kraft Foodservices in North America.

Hilton, the evening’s first inductee, had remarkable success with his boys track teams between 1976-82. He drew a hearty chuckle from the audience when he equated coaching to being in a marriage: “you

have to make all the major decisions.”

Wilbur, one of the most respected coaches in Beverly High history, was the head baseball coach for 17 years from 2002-18 and won 225 games, three NEC crowns, two Division 2 North titles and one state title game appearance. He was also an assistant football coach for many years and stressed “there’s no Hall of Fame without the players”, collectively thanking all who played for him and that he was “an honor and privilege to coach them.”

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build the foundation
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