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62nd annual Salem News Student-Athlete Award to be presented tonight

It has been around longer than the Super Bowl. And in the North Shore high school sports world, it's viewed as just as difficult to win.

The Salem News Student-Athlete of the Year Award will be awarded for the 62nd time tonight in a gala ceremony at Danversport Yacht Club. Seventeen of the area's best and brightest will vie for the honor of winning this coveted title.

The Salem News Student-Athlete Award, sponsored by Salem Five, celebrates the best of the best in our region. Given out every year but one since 1962, it honors those student-athletes who combine brilliance in the classroom, excellence and sportsmanship in athletics, the ability to be a positive influence in their community, and showing a partiality towards helping others.

One student-athlete from each of our 17 Salem News and Gloucester Times area high schools — Beverly, Salem, Danvers, Peabody, Gloucester, Marblehead, Masconomet, Swampscott, St. John's Prep, Bishop Fenwick, Salem Academy, Pingree, Essex Tech, Rockport, Hamilton-Wenham, Ipswich and Manchester Essex — have been chosen by their principals and athletic directors



The Salem News Student-Athlete trophy

to best represent their school for this year's event.

For the first time, Cape Ann League entries Rockport and Gloucester have joined the mix.

Each of the 17 candidates will be interviewed in 15-minute segments Wednesday afternoon by our panel of judges. When that is completed, the judges will whittle down the candidates to ultimately pick this year's winner. Last year's Student-Athlete recipient was Penny Spack of Peabody High.

Our traditional celebration

dinner for our student-athlete candidates and their families will be held at Danversport Yacht Club. As part of the night's festivities, there will be a slideshow of the student-athletes, gifts, a guest speaker, and the announcement of the Student-Athlete winner.

We will also present the Nelson Benton Memorial Scholarship to this year's Student-Athlete winner. It is named in honor of the late and longtime Salem News reporter and editorial page editor, who retired in 2013.

The winner will also be given a commemorative bowl signifying their win. In addition, their name will be engraved on the Student-Athlete trophy, which will reside in the winner's school until

next year's ceremony. The Paul Revere-style bowl made of sterling silver has the names of all 61 previous winners engraved on its base.

This year's Student-Athlete judges are Shelley Murray, a Senior Vice President, Regional Manager at Salem Five; Mike Maesano, also a Senior Vice President, Regional Manager at Salem Five; Matt Williams, the assistant sports editor at The Salem News; and Phil Stacey, Executive Sports Editor of The Salem News.

Previous Salem News Student-Athlete award winners

Year	Winner	High School
2023	Penny Spack	Peabody
2022	Jamie DuPont	Beverly
2021	Molly McDonald	Essex Tech
2020	Antonio Craveiro	Peabody
2019	Chris Masta	Essex Tech
2018	Lydia Runnals	Danvers
2017	Hugh Calice	Beverly
2016	Michaela Hedderman	Ipswich
2015	Spencer Craig	Marblehead
2014	Jillian Witwicki	Pingree
2013	Dylan Mann	Masconomet
2012	T.J. D'Amato	Peabody
2011	Olivia Raisner	Marblehead
2010	Christopher Splinter	Masconomet
2009	Gregory Doonan	Peabody
2008	Courtney Colantuno	Marblehead
2007	Patrick Bailey	Beverly
2006	Annie McNerney	Swampscott
2005	Kynan Mello	North Shore Tech
2004	Jessica Larsen	Salem
2003	Mike Shanahan	St. John's Prep
2002	Jared Jaffe	Swampscott
2001	Caleb Pelger	Peabody
2000	Andrew Nechtern	Masconomet
1999	Sarah Keenan	Ipswich
1998	Kristin Gleason	Masconomet
1997	Jonathan Eng	Pingree
1996	Molly Cronin	Masconomet
1995	Christopher Lang	Bishop Fenwick
1994	No award	
1993	Sarah Guerin	Swampscott
1992	Sarah McGrath	Beverly
1991	Brant Firestone	Marblehead
1990	Lori E. Hayes	Hamilton-Wenham
1989	Billy Madden	Swampscott
1988	Jeffrey M. Landry	St. John's Prep
1987	Nicole Turgeon	Salem
1986	Mark Jones	Peabody
1985	Duke Pascucci	Beverly
1984	Kathleen Toner	Swampscott
1983	Conrad Keville	Manchester
1982	Scott T. Powers	Danvers
1981	Kristen Foley	Peabody
1980	Benjamin Paul	Ipswich
1979	William Wiltshire	Hamilton-Wenham
1978	Bruce Lynn	Ipswich
1977	Francis Walker	Peabody
1976	Mark Agnew	Masconomet
1975	James Michael Leahy	St. John's Prep
1974	James P. Rosenfield	Marblehead
1973	Peter A. Barry	Hamilton-Wenham
1972	John S. Olbrych	St. John's Prep
1971	Thomas J. Alexander	Beverly
1970	Peter Gorniewicz	Ipswich
1969	Leonard N. Dwinell	Masconomet
1968	James P. Turner	Salem
1967	Michael R. Harris	Hamilton-Wenham
1966	John E. Ormiston III	Marblehead
1965	David C. Gray	Hamilton-Wenham
1964	Paul D. Thompson	Danvers
1963	David G. Doughty	Masconomet
1962	Peter M. Zeitzoff	Beverly

SALEM NEWS STUDENT-ATHLETE NOMINEE

JENNA SCHWEIZER, BEVERLY

Although she does not seek out the spotlight, it tends to find Jenna Schweizer—academically, athletically, and in the various extracurricular activities she partakes in.

The class valedictorian at Beverly High, Schweizer ranks first among the Class of 2024's 278 students and has varied interests of study, ranging from oncology and international relations to law, public policy and biology.

She is also a standout on the soccer pitch and the lacrosse field, earning team MVP in the latter as a junior. Outside of BHS, Schweizer has proven time and time again that she's willing to do anything to help others, particularly children and underrepresented groups.

"One of my favorite characteristics that Jenna possesses is her humbleness. She does not soar above her peers for recognition or accolades; she rises to the top because it is the only gear she runs on—full force forward," said her guidance counselor, Michelle M. Burke.

Owner of an incredible 4.95 grade point average, Schweizer has taken five Advanced Placement classes this school year as well as Honors Calculus. A National Honor Society Member, her academic accolades



consist of everything from numerous Academic Excellence honors to the Harvard Prize Book Award and earning an AP Scholar with distinction award.

A captain in both soccer and lacrosse with exceptional character, her natural skill combined with her

unselfish nature has made her the perfect teammate.

"She's the player who looks out for others, makes sure our younger players are involved and included," BHS lacrosse coach Courtney McKallagat said, noting Schweizer has started since her sophomore year and is

"the engine that makes our team run."

Schweizer interned in the office of Equity Access and Opportunity for Beverly Public Schools last summer, working directly with Dr. Andre Morgan, Beverly's Director of Equity, Access and Opportunity,

and superintendent Dr. Sue Charochak to revise the student advisory council. She tutored third grade students in reading, attended meetings with local community leaders, and drafted emails to reboot the Northshore Affinity group for teachers of color.

MEET JENNA SCHWEIZER

Hometown: Beverly

Age: 18

College you will be attending:

I'm not sure yet

What is your favorite book?

I Am Malala by Malala Yousafzai and Patricia McCormick

What is your favorite movie?

'27 Dresses'

Who is your favorite singer or musical group?

Billy Joel

What is your favorite app?

Apple Music

What is your favorite class in school?

Psychology

What athletic feat are you most proud of?

Being a captain for both lacrosse and soccer. I've always looked up to my captains, so I'm very grateful that I now get the chance to help lead my teams.

What does being a leader amongst your peers mean to you?

It means leading by example and constantly rooting for my teammates on and off the field.

Where do you see yourself 10 years from now?

I'd love to be a civil rights attorney, because it's combination of my passion for law and social justice.

What's something most people don't know about you?

I can crack an egg with one hand.

Previously, Schweizer has worked with Special Olympics teaching soccer, basketball and tennis, interned for the Coalition for Social Justice (Criminal Justice Reform), and created and ran Growing Strong, which were free fitness classes for children.

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SALEM NEWS STUDENT-ATHLETE NOMINEE

LUKE CONNOLLY, BISHOP FENWICK

It's hard to pin down Luke Connolly ... both on the wrestling mat and in terms of his favorite subject in the classroom.

One of the state's best wrestlers in his weight class, Connolly never lost in a dual meet in his high school career with a perfect mark of 72-0. Overall, his career record was 131-12, winning two North championships, two state vocational championships and finishing as state and all-state runner-up on two occasions.

But that grappling prowess only scratches the surface of what makes this Salem native one of Bishop Fenwick high school's most accomplished student-athletes. A National Honor Society member who carries a 4.11 grade point average, Connolly has received academic awards in Spanish, Theology and Health & Wellness.

His biggest passion in the classroom may be mathematics, however. Connolly has an eye on a future in engineering and tends to attack math problems with the same vigor that he employs in his athletic practices. Much like in the weight room, Connolly sees that more reps lead to more success and sometimes does twice as many problems as are assigned to hone his skills.

"He could use his strong foundational experience to solve the

MEET LUKE CONNOLLY

Hometown: Salem

Age: 18

College you will be attending: RPI

What are your favorite books? *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding

What is your favorite movie? Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith

Who is your favorite singer or musical group? Drake

What is your favorite app? Instagram

What is your favorite class in school? Physics

What athletic feat are you most proud of? Being the recipient of the Presidents Memorial Award as Association of New England Football Official's Player of the Year, because that allowed me to showcase all the hard work and dedication me and my teammates put into the football season.

What does being a leader amongst your peers mean to you? To be is a person that anyone can feel that they can approach and can talk to. Being someone that can be trusted to make the right decisions and be a good role model for others.

Where do you see yourself 10 years from now? Working as an engineer.

What's something most people don't know about you? In my off time, I enjoy doing puzzles and building Legos.

most complicated problems he faced," said math teacher Richard Levesque. "Conscientious to the extreme, Luke never takes the easy path and challenges himself at every turn."

A three-sport captain in football, wrestling and lacrosse, Connolly typically leads by example. He possess a unique ability to relate to those around him and to make a concept, be it in sports or in the classroom, feel relevant and important.

"He has an innate ability to link history or English with present day issues," said Fenwick Dean of Students, assistant football

coach and AP history teacher Dave Dugan. "Luke is one of the most respected young men in our school."

The Association of New England Football Officials bestowed its President's Award on Connolly this past fall, he was a Division 5 All-State choice on the gridiron and received a Scholar Athlete award from the Eastern Mass. Football Foundation. Connolly has been a Catholic Central League all-star in both football and lacrosse and still finds time to volunteer with the Best Buddies program.

"Luke's leadership both in his



classes and on his teams sets him apart, not in a manner in which he puts himself above other but by which he sees the true role of leader as one who serves," noted

Fenwick principal Chris Canniff.

"There is scarcely an individual more diligent and driven, committed and compassionate than Luke Connolly."

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SALEM NEWS STUDENT-ATHLETE NOMINEE

BOBBI SERINO, DANVERS

There's no better example of the great things that can happen when you're not afraid to try something new than Danvers High senior Bobbi Serino.

Opting to give track a chance when high school sports had an extra fourth season in 2021 because of the pandemic, Serino discovered a passion and wound up becoming one of her school's best runners.

The Northeastern Conference indoor mile champion as a senior, Serino's impact is felt well beyond the scoreboard or the stopwatch. Her leadership ability is so powerful that long time Danvers track and field coach Jeff Bartlett believes she's now the standard by which all future Falcon captains might be judged.

"Every captain from here through the end of my coaching career will need to pass the 'Bobbi Test' because they'll all be compared to her leadership abilities," said Bartlett, who went on to describe just what makes Serino's attitude and demeanor so impactful to her peers.

"It is hard to articulate who Bobbi is as a leader and person, but you'll know when you see it," Bartlett said. "It's how she welcomes girls from all event groups and grade levels at practice. She does the same in



the classroom, too: making everyone feel included. It's how she challenges herself and passes that mentality of pushing beyond your limits to her teammates."

As her class treasurer and a vice president of Danvers' successful DECA club, Serino has leadership roles across all facets of her school community. She sports a classroom average

of 100.275 while being a member of the National Honor Society, National English Honor Society and National Art Honor Society.

"Outside the classroom, I know Bobbi as a down-to-earth young woman who remains humble about her numerous accomplishments," said Danvers English teacher John White. "She's the type of kid that

brightens people's days."

Serino is also one of the rare student-athletes to earn a varsity letter in four different sports: field hockey, indoor track, outdoor track and lacrosse. A Salem News all-star in field hockey, she was the Falcons' leading scorer as a team captain last fall and netted the game-winner goal to send Danvers to the state semifinals for the

first time in 30 years during her junior year.

She is also a two-time Joanne Paquette Academic all-star.

"In addition to being one of the best athletes on each of her teams, Bobbi is also one of the best teammates," said Danvers High athletic director Drew Betts. "Bobbi is also an incredible student and active member

MEET BOBBI SERINO

Hometown: Danvers-Age: 18

College you will be attending: Union College

What is your favorite book?: *Nineteen Minutes* by Jodi Picoult

What is your favorite movie or TV show?: *Grey's Anatomy*

Who is your favorite singer or musical group?: Taylor Swift

What is your favorite app?: Instagram

What is your favorite class in school?: Math or Biology

What athletic feat are you most proud of?: Scoring the game winning goal to send our field hockey team to the Final Four during the 2022 season, because the program hadn't made it that far into the state tournament for over 30 years.

What does being a leader amongst your peers mean to you?: Being someone my teammates can look up to. In my efforts to remain disciplined and passionate, I hope to instill the same values in everyone else to help us reach success as a team.

Where do you see yourself 10 years from now?: I hope to be working as a physician assistant in a Boston Hospital while training for the Boston Marathon.

What's something most people don't know about you?: I never planned on running track.

During the Fall 2 season my freshman year (added because of COVID) I had an offseason and was just looking to stay in shape for lacrosse.

in the school community. Regardless of recognition, accomplishments or awards, Bobbi has always remained hard working, humble, and respectful to all she comes into contact with."

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SALEM NEWS STUDENT-ATHLETE NOMINEE

ARMANI BOOTH, ESSEX TECH

A model student, an accomplished and driven athlete, and all-around standup individual, Essex Tech's Armani Booth simply checks all the boxes.

Working a co-op job at Sylvia Electrical in Peabody, Booth has shown a keen interest in learning his trade and putting himself in the best position to succeed. He boasts a 3.92 grade point average and has shown visible improvement as he's gotten older. In the past two years alone, Booth has not earned anything less than a B, something that only happened twice.

"Armani has challenged himself throughout his time here at Essex Tech not only on the athletic fields, but also in academics as well as his career technical area of electricity, which is one of the most competitive programs in the school," said Essex Tech athletic director Michael Murphy. "While being a co-op student working full time with Sylvia Electrical in Peabody, Armani somehow finds a way to be involved in promoting a positive culture around the halls of Essex Tech."

Murphy added that Booth "leads the way in student activities, including Kindness Week, class fundraisers and other school spirit events."



An all-star athlete in both hockey and lacrosse, Booth dazzles as a standout captain for the ice hockey team, where he earned First-Team All-Cape Ann League and Salem News all-star accolades this past winter while helping his team to a second vocational championship.

The 6-foot-2, 230-pound defenseman could provide offense (3 goals, 8 assists and 11 points this season, plus 14 goals and 44 points in his varsity career), but was also a physical force defensively. Not only did he help protect his own net from opponents trying to score, but also laid several big bodychecks in open

ice to ramp up both his teammates and the Hawks' faithful.

"I've coached Armani since he was six years old and he has grown — and I mean grown — into a great athlete and, more importantly, a great kid," said Essex Tech hockey coach Mark Leonard. "I think what separates him from

other big kids is his athleticism. He can skate, is very agile, has great hands and a rocket for a shot. He plays lacrosse in very similar fashion: a physical force on the field, but also very fast and agile for a big kid."

In addition to four years each on the hockey and lacrosse teams at Essex Tech, Booth also golfer for

MEET ARMANI BOOTH

Hometown: Peabody

Age: 17

Plans for after graduation: I'll be continuing my career in Electrical

What is your favorite book?: *The 48 Laws of Power* by Robert Greene

What is your favorite movie?: 'Cars'

Who is your favorite singer or musical group?: Kanye West

What is your favorite app?: ESPN+

What is your favorite class in school?: Math

What athletic feat are you most proud of?: I would say getting MVP last year, with it being my first year playing that position.

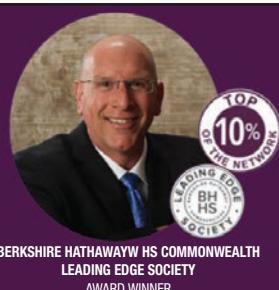
What does being a leader amongst your peers mean to you?: It means I get to set the right example for my colleagues.

Where do you see yourself 10 years from now?: I will own and run my own electrical company.

What's something most people don't know about you?: I enjoy collecting hockey trading cards.

the Hawks for two seasons.

"Armani has set the standard for the athletics program and our school as we have transitioned into the Cape Ann League," added Murphy. "This move challenged all of our athletes to step their games up to a new level and Armani has done just that and much more."



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SALEM NEWS STUDENT-ATHLETE NOMINEE

ELLA COSTA, GLOUCESTER

Dedicated, driven and determined to succeed, Gloucester's Ella Costa simply checks all the boxes for a model student-athlete.

Ranked 29th in her graduating class of well over 200 students with a GPA of 94.88 on a 100 scale, Costa leaves no stone unturned when it comes to her studies. She's a member of the National Honor Society, serves as vice president of student council and volunteers at both the Open Door food pantry and with youth sports in Gloucester during her spare time. Costa regularly challenges herself with honors and advanced placement level courses, too.

"Ella is without question a hard working, determined and diligent student," said Costa's Spanish teacher, Bianna Robles. "She is one of the most accomplished students in her cohort. Ella is an outstanding student and an exceptional individual."

When it comes to athletics, Costa stands out as not only a talented contributor for the field hockey, ice hockey and lacrosse teams, but an irreplaceable leader on and off the playing surface. She's served as captain for all three sports the last two years; she's been a captain for the GHS girls hockey team since she was a sophomore.

She is part of a senior class at Gloucester High that brought the girls hockey squad to their first state tournament berth in over two decades. Costa has received numerous Northeastern Conference all-star accolades and has hit milestones such as notching 100 career points in lacrosse.

"Ella is the classic version of a captain who leads by example and does everything asked of her and more," said her hockey coach, Rob Parsons. "She is fiercely protective of her teammates and, as a defenseman, her goaltender. Her communication with the coaches is insightful and valuable, and she commands respect from teammates and opponents alike. She has been a pleasure to coach."

In addition to all of her other academic and athletic accomplishments, Costa took home the Joanne Paquette Award, as awarded by the Massachusetts State Field Hockey Coaches Association (MSFHCA). She also earned recognition for the University of Rochester Bausch and Lomb award which recognizes students high achievement and rigor in science and math studies, and was a recipient of the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship award, among others.



MEET ELLA COSTA

Hometown: Gloucester

Age: 17

College you will be attending: Skidmore College

Favorite Book: *The Giver* by Lois Lowery

Favorite Movie: 'Imitation Game' or 'Interstellar'

Favorite Singer/Band: Bob Marley & Santana

Favorite App: NYT Games

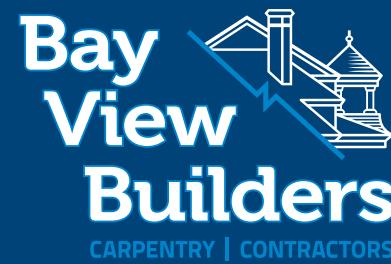
Favorite Class: AP Physics and Robotics

Athletic feat I am most proud of and why: I started all three of my varsity sports as a freshman, and this has given me lots of experience over my teammates and opponents. I've also had more experience in tournament games. With this, I've learned to give it my all every second of every game. I will put in 110 percent effort at any point in the season and do whatever it takes to make my team successful.

What being a leader amongst my peers means to me: It means I need to be a role model and set an example. I was first a captain my sophomore year for ice hockey; since then I've been a captain for ice hockey, field hockey and lacrosse my junior and senior year. I've also been the vice president of the class of 2024 at Gloucester High School for all four years. I am very comfortable with being in a leadership position and use my influence and skills to lead my peers to a common goal.

Where I see myself in 10 years: I hope to have at least my Masters degree in engineering, preferably aerospace, and to continue studying and be a part of a research program. I also enjoy traveling and learning about a culture's language, nature and history, and hope to visit and explore more of the world in the next 10 years.

Something most people don't know about me: I enjoy watching the Premier League and Formula One, as well as learning about the science behind the cars.



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STEWART BERNARD, HAMILTON-WENHAM

A quick glance at Muriel (Stewart) Bernard's transcript will tell you just how serious she takes her academics.

Bernard boasts a 3.98 GPA and has received nearly all As throughout her four-year high school career. She performed very well on her SAT's, too, scoring a 1,390 with a 690 in reading and a 700 in math.

A National Honor Society member and high honors student for every semester throughout high school, Bernard is also the senior class secretary, a member of DECA and both the Science Team and Environmental Club, and a freshman mentor. She's also a volunteer for the North Shore Rovers, spending time teaching disabled children learn to play soccer every Sunday.

"I have had the opportunity to work with Stewart not just as her counselor, but also as a class advisor," said Hamilton-Wenham school counselor Erin Donovan. "In this role, I have seen Stewart confidently share her opinions and respectfully listen to those of others. She is also always on time, as well as warm and friendly to the underclassmen in the group."

In terms of athletics, Bernard shines as a three-sport captain for the soccer, ski and lacrosse teams at H-W. She was a



three-year varsity starter and captain for the soccer team, serving as the goalie during the Generals' state championship victory in 2021. Bernard has received numerous awards for athletic accomplishments, including the 2023 Coaches'

Award as well as Cape Ann League all-star and Eastern Mass. all-star honors.

On the slopes, Bernard served as a two-year captain and helped the girls team go 11-1, consistently finishing among the top five for team events. For

lacrosse, she finished third on the team in points with 29 goals and five assists last spring, helping her team reach the Elite 8 in the MIAA state tournament.

"Stewart leads by example. She is a dedicated teammate who motivates the

team on the field and during the preseason," said H-W soccer coach Emily Leland. "Her work ethic and competitiveness, all while keeping her sense of humor and down-to-earth nature make her an invaluable asset to the team."

MEET STEWART BERNARD

Hometown: Wenham

Age: 18

College you will be attending: Undecided

What is your favorite book?: N/A

What is your favorite movie?: 'Pitch Perfect'

Who is your favorite singer or musical group?: Mt. Joy

What is your favorite app?: Spotify

What is your favorite class in school?: Math

What athletic feat are you most proud of and why?: Winning the soccer state championship my sophomore year. I worked really hard to earn my place on the team and was surrounded by such a strong group of players. It was really exciting to accomplish something that big. It was also the first time a girls soccer team had won a state championship at my school.

What does being a leader amongst your peers mean to you?: Being able to show up with a positive attitude no matter the circumstances and being approachable to teammates. It's really important for a leader to be able to lift up others and bring energy to whatever they are doing.

Where do you see yourself 10 years from now?: I hopefully will have graduated college and maybe grad school. I hope that I'll have done a lot of traveling and built a steady career.

What's something most people don't know about you?: I used to own pet ducks, and I currently have two dogs.

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SALEM NEWS STUDENT-ATHLETE NOMINEE

AMELIA MOORADD, IPSWICH

Throughout her high school career, Amelia Mooradd has shined as a three-sport standout for the Ipswich varsity soccer team and winter and spring track squads.

She's served as a multiple-time captain, too, displaying natural leadership abilities with a propensity for connecting with her teammates and coaches. Along the way, Mooradd has earned consistent praise from her coaches.

"She is one of the most dedicated athletes and leaders I've ever coached," said track and field coach, Martin Binette. "While very humble, Amelia has an incredible work ethic, and this is evident in her performances as a track athlete here at Ipswich High School."

Mooradd helped the Tiger tracksters secure a Cape Ann League championship by thriving in a variety of events, including the long jump and 4x200 relay (helping set a school record in the latter). According to Binette, Mooradd has shown the willingness to compete in virtually any event her team asked — anything from the 55 meter dash to the 4x800 relay — and attacked all of them with confidence.

From a leadership perspective, she has more than gained the trust of her coaches with her maturity and focus.

"She has worked to organize fundraisers for the program, gotten underclassmen involved in team spirit activities, and essentially worked as an extension of the coaching staff in practice," added Binette. "I have no problem putting her in charge of a group of athletes on a daily basis and fell completely

comfortable that they'll get their workouts completed effectively."

Mooradd is arguably even more accomplished in the classroom. She has never received anything less than an A- the past four years and maintains a 4.415 GPA on a 4.0 scale, putting her among the top 10 percent in her graduating class. Mooradd goes above and beyond by enrolling in multiple honors and advanced placement level courses, and she scored a 1440 on her SATs.

A National Honor Society member serving as parliamentarian, Mooradd also served as a board member for the Ipswich/Rowley Rotary Interact, was treasurer for the Model UN, a member of the Green Team/Environmental Club and 40 Percent Club (mental health resources and awareness), and a key contributor for the math league, among other things.

She's received numerous levels of recognition, including the Outstanding Initiative in World Language, Outstanding Achievement in Physical Education, the Distinguished Achievement Award, and Certificate D'honneur Bronze Medal.

"Amelia has been a leader in and out of the classroom since her freshman year," said IHS principal Jonathan Mitchell. "She is a dedicated student and a person of exemplary character and responsibility. As I tell students, the way you do one thing is the way you do everything, and Amelia does everything well, demonstrating a commitment to excellence that extends beyond sports and into every aspect of her life."



MEET AMELIA MOORADD

Hometown: Ipswich

Age: 18

College you will be attending: Undecided

What is your favorite book? *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien

What is your favorite movie? "Pitch Perfect"

Who is your favorite singer or musical group? Taylor Swift

What is your favorite app? FaceTime

What is your favorite class in school? Chemistry!

What athletic feat are you most proud of? My soccer team for upsetting our bracket in the Division 4 playoffs last fall. Having a positive attitude and determined spirit, we made it to the Elite 8 as the 26th seed and created lifelong memories while proving to ourselves that we can achieve anything as a team.

What does being a leader amongst your peers mean to you? It means setting an example of hard work, inclusivity, and positivity. It doesn't take having a title to become the leader you want to be, as you should always be the best version of yourself no matter who is watching.

Where do you see yourself 10 years from now? I see myself working in a field that I am passionate about, likely related to chemistry and the sciences, and pursuing my interests to explore different languages and cultures through travel.

What's something most people don't know about you? Last year, I had a Duolingo streak in French for 963 days!



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SALEM NEWS STUDENT-ATHLETE NOMINEE

FINN O'HARA, MANCHESTER ESSEX

As salutatorian of his graduating class at Manchester Essex Regional, Finn O'Hara clearly strives to do his very best in any academic endeavor he attacks.

The standout student boasts an otherworldly 5.49 GPA, scored a remarkable 1,550 on his SATs with a 790 in math and 760 verbal, is a member of the National Honor Society (Executive Board), and a DECA participant. In addition, O'Hara challenges himself further by partaking in the math team, debate team, science team, peer mentor and anti-defamation programs.

O'Hara has enrolled in 10 different advanced placement level courses, shining in all of them. He has never received anything less than an A- in any of his classes over the past four years.

"In Finn's time as a student-athlete at Manchester Essex, he has exemplified the qualities of true leadership and sportsmanship," said MERHS principal Julie Sgroi. "He consistently demonstrates a strong work ethic, determination and resilience in all endeavors. He maintains an impressive academic record while balancing the demands of training and competition."

That training is directly related to his prowess on the track and cross country surfaces. A truly gifted and passionate runner, O'Hara has secured impressive personal best times in the mile (4:21), 800 meter (1:56.5) and 5K (16:24)

races. He took home first place at the MIAA Division 4 outdoor track championships and has earned numerous other victories and top five finishes throughout his career.

O'Hara was named the Cape Ann League Baker Division Cross Country Runner of the Year as a sophomore and junior, and has been named an all-star at various levels numerous times.

O'Hara's father ran for Marquette University while his grandfather ran at Loyola University and competed in the 1500m at the 1964 Summer Olympics while holding the indoor mile world record for 10 years. Now, O'Hara is following in their footsteps.

"Finn is a rare student-athlete who consistently raises the bar for himself and others," said Hornets' athletic director Cameron Molinare. "He is an exceptionally high-achieving athlete and student. He is responsible, reliable and respectful, and is a positive role model for the younger students at our school."

O'Hara serves as a three-sport captain for the indoor and outdoor track teams as well as the cross country team. He's a relentless leader in the school community, and according to Molinare, "despite carrying a rigorous academic and athletic workload, he always takes the time to check in on and converse with his teammates, coaches, teachers and school administrators."



MEET FINN O'HARA

Hometown: Manchester-by-the-Sea

Age: 17

College you will be attending: Amherst College

What is your favorite book?
Remains of the Day by Kazuo Ishiguro

What is your favorite movie? 'Good Will Hunting'

Who is your favorite singer or musical group? Coldplay

What is your favorite app? Clash Royale
What is your favorite class in school? Physics

What athletic feat are you most proud of? My performances at the MIAA Division 4 outdoor track & field state championships.

What does being a leader amongst your peers mean to you? For me, being a leader has always been about support. I strive to be the best leader possible by lifting up those around me in every community that I am a part of.

Where do you see yourself 10 years from now? I hope to have achieved both a bachelor's and master's degrees. Even more importantly, during my advanced education, as well as when I enter the workforce, I want to continue impacting the communities to which I belong. I want to ensure that everyone I work with feels empowered to be themselves without fear of judgment, and I hope to be a caring leader that everyone feels comfortable turning to for support at a moment's notice.

What's something most people don't know about you? While I am very social and enjoy chatting with friends, I also truly love the quietude of nature. Whether I am hiking up north, finding tranquility in a botanical garden, or running through the woods, nature always brings me peace.



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RILEY SCHMITT, MARBLEHEAD

Marblehead High has long been known for both its excellence in the classroom and on the playing fields. To shine in one of those is commendable; to do so in both arenas is the mark of an elite student-athlete.

It's that rarified air where Riley Schmitt resides.

Schmitt is a terrific student, owner of a 4.399 grade point average. The High Honor Roll student scored 1,390 on his SATs and was a National Spanish Exam silver medalist.

Currently taking five Advanced Placement classes, Schmitt is a member of both the National Honor Society and Spanish National Honor Society. He was also selected as Marblehead's Male Student-Athlete of the Year as both a sophomore and a junior.

"Riley is extremely bright," said Marblehead mathematics teacher and varsity baseball and basketball coach Michael Giardi.

"He's one of the top students I've had over the years. He's someone who's committed to not just doing the work and getting it right, but he wants to understand why we got the answer that we did. That's important to him.

"He takes my AP Calculus class, which is high level math with some concepts and ideas that are more abstract. But Riley's been



outstanding all year with his high level thinking."

A natural leader who served as captain of the Magicians' soccer and indoor track teams this year, Schmitt is also an all-star baseball player for MHS. He has been a varsity member of all three sports since his sophomore year.

Riley sees himself as driven, and as a leader. His

dedication to being a true student-athlete has been evident since I first met him," Marblehead Director of Athletics Greg Ceglarski said. "He gives equal time and effort to his academics as well as his athletics — and the success he's had over the years is proof of this."

After back-to-back seasons of winning his team's

Defensive MVP award in soccer, Schmitt earned team MVP honors this past fall. He's also a three-time All-Northeastern Conference selection in the sport, and was a Salem News all-star.

A Coaches Award winner in indoor track, Schmitt took it upon himself to serve as a mentor to his younger teammates in the weight

room, serving as a de facto strength and conditioning coach.

"Riley can always be counted on as one of Marblehead's best student-athletes. From high pressure situations to daily practice, Riley stays steady and focused," said Ceglarski.

"It's players like Riley that younger student-athletes learn from."

MEET RILEY SCHMITT

Hometown: Marblehead

Age: 18

College you will be attending: Undecided – but probably Virginia Tech

What is your favorite book? *The Intelligent Investor* by Benjamin Graham

What is your favorite movie? John Wick

Who is your favorite singer or musical group? Run – DMC

What is your favorite app? Spotify

What is your favorite class in school? Spanish

What athletic feat are you most proud of? Teaching one of the younger track athletes.

What does being a leader amongst your peers mean to you? It means leading by example and making personal connections with everyone on a team. As an introvert, I excel in smaller settings and 1-on-1 communication. I believe building rapport with the team and gaining their trust is important. Leading by example is a key element of leadership because the younger kids are always watching the upperclassmen. I always looked up to the upperclassmen, and assuming that role now has been very meaningful to me.

Where do you see yourself 10 years from now? As a successful businessman starting my own company. I always watched 'Shark Tank' when I was younger and have been inspired by the show. I hope to take advantage of my business degree and make this dream come true.

What's something most people don't know about you? I am an avid pickleball player, and my partner is Matt Mahan. We like to go down to the courts on a day off of baseball and play.



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ELLIE GREEN, MASCONOMET

In her four years at Masconomet Regional High School, Ellie Green has never had a letter on her report card besides A ... and in fact has earned more than 20 A-pluses.

That incredible academic achievement has Green ranked No. 10 in Masco's Class of 2024 out of 252 students. With a weighted grade point average over 5.00, she rates among the top 96 percent of her class while earning a St. Anselm Book Award.

"Ellie excels academically and athletically, starring in three seasons of track. She has been the recipient of several MVP Awards, even as a junior. If we gave an MVP trophy out for the classroom, she would have won it," said Masconomet math teacher Lauren McAuliffe.

As a three-season distance runner in cross country, indoor and outdoor track, Green has been a valuable asset to many successful Chieftain teams. She excels making sure a sport like track, which can sometimes feel individualized, is seen as a collective and collaborative effort.

"Ellie has shown tremendous initiative and creativity in fostering team spirit and camaraderie. She worked with her fellow captains and the boys' captains as well as parents to organize pasta parties and also organized a team-building tie-dying activity," shared Masco track coach Cara Mailo. "These events not only brought the team closer but also connected us with the



community, reflecting her ability to lead and serve others."

The Northeastern Conference champion in the 1000 meter run this past winter, Green qualified for the MIAA's Meet of Champions. She's been a member of several state qualifying relay teams as well, as Mailo notes her "continuous quest for improvement in her performance and mental toughness set her apart."

As a peer leader, student council official and member of the psychology and Red Cross clubs, this Boxford native is never afraid to venture outside her comfort zone.

Trying new things and meeting new people are two of her core beliefs and she frequently uses those to make the most of her experiences in the classroom.

"Ellie's drive to know more and think more deeply enriches the learning experience for everyone ... she embodies the best aspects of collaborative learning," said English teacher Shannon Murphy. "She always brings a seriousness to the task at hand, asking probing questions, freely admitting when something does not make sense and questioning her own reasoning. That pursuit of answers is not

at the expense of others' learning but to their benefit."

Put another way, Green simply knows how to make her fellow students, and fellow runners, feel seen.

"Elie is known as a fierce competitor but also as a friend," said Masconomet coach Liz Dean. "She's the teammate everyone wants on their team, who makes you better simply through her energy and commitment, who when exhausted herself will make sure to congratulate each and every person just for competing."

MEET ELLIE GREEN

Hometown: Boxford

Age: 18

College you will be attending: Wesleyan University

What is your favorite book? *A Little Life* by Hanya Yanagihara is incredible, but *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* by Taylor Jenkins Read is a close second.

What is your favorite movie? 'The Pitch Perfect' trilogy

Who is your favorite singer or musical group? Right now I love Noah Kahan.

What is your favorite app? The Photos app is the best.

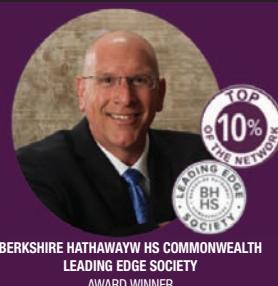
What is your favorite class in school? My current favorite is AP Psychology, but my all-time favorite has been the Digital Society class I took as a junior.

What athletic feat are you most proud of? Getting first place in the 1000m at the NEC Indoor Championship Meet. It was my first-ever first place medal and I put so much work all season into reaching that goal. I was finally able to capture a great mental mindset going into the race, and it had a huge effect on my confidence.

What does being a leader amongst your peers mean to you? Forging relationships with all involved to create an atmosphere of trust, friendliness, and fun. Take a sports team, for example. As a leader, I do not necessarily have to be best friends with everyone, but respect is huge, and creating an atmosphere of amiability is key for me. Being a leader is also putting myself out there! Being totally and unapologetically me will help people feel comfortable, especially if they are younger. Plus, some of my closest friends are underclassmen that I never would have been this close with if I hadn't put myself out there as a leader.

Where do you see yourself 10 years from now? Honestly, I have no idea! I am not sure what career path I want to take but I have a feeling I will end up somewhere in the psychology field. I will probably still be somewhere in New England, perhaps exploring city life.

What's something most people don't know about you? Most nights I don't stay up past 9:30 pm. I love my sleep and am definitely a morning person.



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SALEM NEWS STUDENT-ATHLETE NOMINEE

ABBY BETTENCOURT, PEABODY

Would you believe that Abby Bettencourt has taken more Advanced Placement courses in her high school career than she has losses on the softball diamond?

Indeed, the Peabody High three-sport star has tackled 12 AP classes (and earning an AP Scholar with Honor Award from the College Board along the way) while losing only six games thus far heading into her senior season as one of the most decorated pitchers in all of Massachusetts.

Those numbers only scratch the surface of the incredible career Bettencourt has put together at Peabody Veterans Memorial. Ranked No. 3 in her senior class of 281 students, she has received a Harvard Book Award while being a member of the DECA Club, President of the Model UN and part of the Mayor's Leadership Council.

She has been accepted to attend Brown University, where she will follow her mom Laurent's footsteps onto the Bears' softball field.

Then there is her reputation in the circle. Bettencourt is one of the only athletes to ever win Salem News Player of the Year in a single sport three times and has 546 career strikeouts. Last season, she had an earned run average of 0.88, tossed multiple no-hitters and struck out all 15 batters she faced in one perfect game.

Far from a one-dimensional player, she hit .500 and also led the North Shore in home runs with 10.

Yet Bettencourt does not specialize in softball, but rather is



a throwback three-sport athlete. She's a league all-star as a point guard in basketball and is one of her school's best all-time volleyball players with a school record 1,518 assists in her career.

"There are many words to describe Abby, but my favorite is game changer," longtime PHS volleyball coach Lisa Keene said. "In volleyball, softball or basketball you cannot take your eyes off her. Whether she is setting a

volleyball, dribbling the basketball up the court or pitching a softball, she stands out as one of the very best. She is the hardest worker out there and never gives up on herself or her teammates."

Bettencourt was only the second Peabody High player in the last 20 years to be picked as a Division 1 Mass. Volleyball Coaches Association All-State honoree. As Salem News Player of the Year in volleyball, she's one of

only a handful of females to ever receive that honor in two totally different sports.

"With all her accomplishments, she ranks as one of the all-time best ever at PVMHS," athletic director Dennis Desroches said.

A three-sport captain, Bettencourt also finds time to volunteer as a youth sports coach as well as with Unified Sports and with the Best Buddies organization.

MEET ABBY BETTENCOURT

Hometown: Peabody

Age: 18

College you will be attending: Brown University

What is your favorite book? *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins

What is your favorite movie? 'High School Musical'

Who is your favorite singer or musical group? Taylor Swift

What is your favorite app? Instagram

What is your favorite class in school? AP Calculus

What athletic feat are you most proud of? A softball game against Bishop Fenwick in which my two sisters and I all hit home runs in the same game. This feat was something we never even considered achieving, and it was incredible to share an accomplishment like this with my sisters (Bo and Isabel). My sisters are my biggest supporters and inspiration when it comes to softball, and this moment was something I will never forget.

What does being a leader amongst your peers mean to you? Being someone my peers can rely on to steer them in the right direction. It's not about being in control, but being an equal that peers respect and come to in a time of trouble and a time of triumph. I emphasize to all my teammates that I have their back and will support them through thick and thin. As a leader I ensure I lead by example and never overlook the little things.

Where do you see yourself 10 years from now? Working in the medical field. I'm not sure what part, but I've always wanted to be able to help others. The medical field has been my dream, as I would be able to help those who cannot help themselves.

What's something most people don't know about you? I have two dogs, Mookie and Betsy, that were named after Mookie Betts right before he got traded to the Dodgers.

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SALEM NEWS STUDENT-ATHLETE NOMINEE

MATT THERIAULT, PINGREE

A football player nicknamed “Tank” might not strike a neutral observer as the gentle giant type. But Pingree School senior Matt Theriault definitely takes after his childhood dog, Tiny (a 200-pound St. Bernard) in that regard.

An exceptional leader who believes in making his teammates feel included, Theriault had to face a new challenge this fall when he was injured for the first six games of his football season. By sharing his positional knowledge and being an encouraging voice on the sidelines rather than sulking about his own fortunes, Theriault set the stage for Pingree to reach a New England Bowl championship game.

“Matt Theriault is the perfect young man to coach in that he’s willing to sacrifice personal interests for the team. He understands the value of preparation and practice, always maximizes his effort and energy and is a leader by actions, not just words,” said Pingree football coach Mike Flynn.

Overcoming adversity is nothing new for Theriault, who has played sports while dealing with Chron’s disease and a form of colitis for most of his life. Instead of shying away from a potentially debilitating or awkward condition, he’s made it his mission to volunteer at camps for the Crohn’s & Colitis Foundation and is helping launch a



support group for college students with the disease.

That’s also part of what drives Theriault’s rigorous course load and success in the classroom — he hopes to one day work as a biomedical engineer and develop treatments or a cure for Chron’s.

“He’s an inspiring leader,” Pingree athletic director Betsy Kennedy said.

Selected for Pingree’s Cum Laude Society, Theriault

received a Science Award, is captain of Pingree’s DECA team (in addition to the football and basketball teams) and has been a high honor roll student for each of his three years at the South Hamilton day school.

“As a two-year captain, his leadership vocally and as a role model has set a very high bar for future captains,” said Highlander hoop coach Steve Gibbs. “Matt is a selfless young man who is always

supporting his teammates. He possesses the most positive can-do attitude, which spreads throughout the team.”

On the football field, Theriault scored a school record six touchdowns in a game and was selected All-Evergreen League as well as an All-New England honorable mention. A Boxford native, he was also Eastern Independent League honorable mention and all-star in basketball.

MEET MATT THERIAULT

Hometown: Boxford

Age: 19

College you will be attending: Undecided

What is your favorite book? *Lord of The Rings* by JRR Tolkien

What is your favorite movie? ‘Lord of The Rings’ trilogy

Who is your favorite singer or musical group? Guns ‘N’ Roses

What is your favorite app? Hudl

What is your favorite class in school? Linear algebra. It’s the highest level of math I’ve reached so far and has some of the most useful material, especially in programming.

What athletic feat are you most proud of? The football game I scored six touchdowns. It was a very special day when all of my hard work finally paid off in a way I never expected. I was also very fortunate to have my team behind me, rooting for me to beat the school record and playing as hard as they could to allow me the chance at that.

What does being a leader amongst your peers mean to you? Leading by example and doing my best to ensure everyone feels included. When I step onto the football field, I let my discipline and intensity speak to the player that I am. Though not particularly tall or big, I fight for every yard and give my all on every play. When facing adversity, I’m the first to ensure that my teammates keep their heads up and continue pushing forward.

Where do you see yourself 10 years from now? I hope to be working as a biomedical engineer for a company that works towards finding treatments, and even a cure, for Crohn’s and colitis. Having Crohn’s myself and having several friends who suffer from Inflammatory Bowel Disease, I know how hard it can be when a suitable drug to treat one’s symptoms is not available. By becoming a biomedical engineer, I hope to contribute to the development of more effective treatments and perhaps help find a cure for Crohn’s Disease as well as many other chronic illnesses.

What’s something most people don’t know about you? I love dogs more than anything else. In fact, I believe no creature is more perfect than a dog! I used to have a 200-pound St. Bernard named Tiny who slobbered, dug up our backyard, and chewed our furniture. However, Tiny was the biggest-hearted, most lovable, gentle giant.

I now have a golden retriever named Nilla who acts like a cat — she naps all day, is stingy with her affection, and has no interest in retrieving, but I adore her nonetheless. I also have another dog, Barkley, who is an energetic Chocolate Lab. Though he is over three years old, he has endless energy like a puppy and will chase after anything that someone throws him. Having had dogs my whole life, I could never envision myself without one, as my dogs feel like a part of me.

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SALEM NEWS STUDENT-ATHLETE NOMINEE

SYDNEY BOUCHIE, ROCKPORT

What's it mean to go above and beyond as a high school student?

Just ask Rockport's Sydney Bouchie, who seems to have that mentality down to a T.

Throughout her high school career — and her senior year in particular — Bouchie has demanded excellence from herself. She's enrolled in a rigorous courseload that includes advanced placement calculus, European history, and Literature and Composition, passing all of them with impressive marks. She's ranked among the top in her class with a 3.91 GPA, is a member of the National Honor Society, and serves as a dedicated leader who expects the best from not only herself, but her peers and teammates.

"In my opinion, Sydney is one of Rockport's youthful ambassadors," said Rockport High athletic director John Parisi. "The consistency of her characteristics and attributes that come to mind are present in all aspects of academic, athletic, and social life in Rockport; she's always polite, a true team player, unselfish and with a tenacious spirit."

Bouchie is a member of DECA, an international student organization that is an extension of the marketing/business curriculum,



and has been honored with numerous awards and accolades.

A three-sport standout, Bouchie certainly doesn't take any time off. She shines as a captain for the varsity field hockey and softball teams at Rockport while also playing on the co-operative girls hockey team in Gloucester during the winter, which enjoyed a historic season en route to

a Division 2 playoff victory this winter. She earned Cape Ann League field hockey all-star honors three straight years as well.

Bouchie is one of those rare student-athletes who takes pride in everything she does — and it shows.

"I think what sets Sydney apart is the scoreboard never mattered to her," said Rockport field hockey coach Mary Ryan. "Please don't

take this as winning didn't matter to Syd, because it does. View it as an individual who understands the big picture — there is always a winner and a loser, but what can you learn from the result of the contest is what will set you apart from others."

Referred to as a "talented, well-rounded person who cares about others", Bouchie is a true role model

in every sense of the word.

"I really cannot say enough good things about Sydney," added Scott Larson, Rockport High's social studies department coordinator. "I have always been impressed with her leadership in the school building and her strong character. She is a fine young woman, and I know that she has a good deal of success ahead of her."

MEET SYDNEY BOUCHIE

Hometown: Rockport

Age: 18

College you will be attending: Boston University

What is your favorite book? *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald

What is your favorite movie? 'The Hunger Games'

Who is your favorite singer or musical group? SZA

What is your favorite app? Snapchat

What is your favorite class in school? AP Calculus

What athletic feat are you most proud of? That I've received the Cape Ann League all-star award in field hockey for three years in a row, starting my sophomore year. This is a very big accomplishment that doesn't happen to many people, so receiving this award as a sophomore was very exciting — and then maintaining the title and award was an even bigger feat to be proud of.

What does being a leader amongst your peers mean to you? It means that I am an inspiration to those around me. I lead them through example with passion, grit, bravery, and poise.

Where do you see yourself 10 years from now? I see myself with a degree from Boston University and will have started my small business or started managing a business. I will have a family and hopefully have moved back to my hometown.

What's something most people don't know about you? That I excel in school as well as just on the field. Many people assume that I am just sports oriented, when in reality I also put a lot of effort in the classroom.

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SALEM NEWS STUDENT-ATHLETE NOMINEE

SHANE FIELD, SALEM

Shane Field might best be described as a foxhole guy. On the football field, on the wrestling mat or in the classroom, he's the kind of guy you'd love to have next to you in any times of trouble.

One of the most valuable, yet under-the-radar, players on Salem High's Division 6 Super Bowl team this past fall, there was nothing Field couldn't — or wouldn't — do for his Witches. Often taking on blockers rather than carrying the ball himself, he was always willing to do the dirty work that resulted in wins but not personal glory.

"Shane's dedication, hard work, and exemplary performance on the field have not only elevated the teams but also inspired his fellow athletes to strive for excellence," Salem High athletic director Reilly Christie said. "Shane demonstrated a unique ability to unite his teammates, fostering a sense of camaraderie and commitment that greatly contributed to the success of our sports programs."

The MVP of Salem's Thanksgiving win over arch rival Beverly last November, Field totaled up 10 touchdowns and was a Northeastern Conference all-star.

Wrestling, however, might be Field's best sport. He went 36-5 this past winter and won both a sectional and state

MEET SHANE FIELD

Hometown: Salem

Age: 18

College you will be attending: Curry College

What is your favorite book? None

What is your favorite movie? 'Holes'

Who is your favorite singer or musical group? Rod Wave

What is your favorite app? TikTok

What is your favorite class in school? Gym

What athletic feat are you most proud of? Making it to the Division 6 Super Bowl championship. Although we did not win, our team gave everything we had and we were one of the best teams to ever play at Salem High School.

What does being a leader amongst your peers mean to you? It means you have to provide your full effort and dedication towards your team and earn your teammates' trust so they'll believe in you and follow, you even when things get hard.

Where do you see yourself 10 years from now? Working as a licensed electrician and working towards owning my own business.

What's something most people don't know about you? I have wrestled pretty much my whole life, but I actually do not like or enjoy it.

championship at 175 pounds.

In the classroom, Field carries a 3.97 grade point average and ranks 21st in Salem High's Class of 2024. He specializes in electrical work and hopes to one day own his own electrician's business.

As a leader, Field's ability to find common ground with seemingly different groups such as athletes, high-level academic types and vocational students is unique. He's the rare kid who fits in with any group and can unite those that might not seem like they should be on the same page.

"Beyond his athletic prowess, Shane is a remarkably intelligent and charismatic individual. His academic achievements reflect his commitment to excellence in all areas of his life," Christie noted.

"In the classroom, he has consistently displayed a strong work ethic and problem-solving skills that set him apart from his peers. His ability to balance the demands of academics and athletics is a testament to his organizational skills and resilience. He is a positive force within our school community."



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SALEM NEWS STUDENT-ATHLETE NOMINEE

AZRIEL TAGUIAM, SALEM ACADEMY

If there were ever an athlete who showed that actions speak loudest, Azriel Taguiam would be the top of that list.

The Salem Academy senior doesn't just elevate his game in the classroom, nor does he merely star in cross country, basketball and baseball for the Navigators. He serves as a role model in all areas, willingly helping others to achieve their full potential.

"I could not speak higher of the character and example set forth by Azriel in the hallways of our school and as an athlete on the trail, court and field," Athletic Director Joe Desjardins said. "Azriel displays exceptional organization and balance as he continuously excels in the classroom."

That's apparent by his 4.73 grade point average, his 1,520 SAT score (780 math, 740 ELA), and the five Advanced Placement classes he's taken as a senior, shining in all of them. The National Honor Society member has also earned 'A' Honor Roll accolades all four years of high school.

"Azriel is a rare student whose passion for learning and knowledge really shines through in everything he does," noted Lydia Rice, an AP Calculus and AP Statistics teacher at Salem Academy. "He has gone out of his way to take the two most difficult math courses offered in our school (the aforementioned two Rice teaches) and leads

the class through in-depth discussions that better the understanding for himself and his fellow students. In these two classes he holds the highest grades among his peers while also excelling in his athletic commitments as well."

A two-time captain in both cross country and baseball, Taguiam has also been dynamic in his two seasons on the basketball court. He explained to his younger cross country the expectations of the team, and that leadership, along with his school record times on the course, led the Navigators to their first ever Massachusetts Charter School Athletic Organization (MCSAO) state championship.

"I couldn't think of a more deserving athlete than Az to be recognized for his work ethic and dedication," cross country coach Nate Geary noted.

He's not only a point guard on the basketball team, but also volunteers his time with the school's middle program as a mentor, helping to run drills and keeping the scorebook and/or clock for the squad on game days.

"Peers of mine never stop highlighting Azriel's accomplishment as a student," said SA baseball coach Mike Bartati. "Pair his academic success with the demeanor, poise, and leadership he displays on the baseball field, and it's hard to compare this student-athlete to another."



MEET AZRIEL TAGUIAM

Hometown: Salem

Age: 17

College you will be attending: Undecided

What is your favorite book? *Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls

What is your favorite movie? 'The Lego Batman Movie'

Who is your favorite singer or musical group? Bruno Mars

What is your favorite app? Bloons TD6

What is your favorite class in school? AP US Government and Politics

What athletic feat are you most proud of? Playing basketball in the Philippines. The energy and physicality of basketball culture of the country is unrivaled.

What does being a leader amongst your peers mean to you? A lot of people think that you need confidence, you need empathy, and you need good communication skills to be a leader. For me it's different: I learned confidence, and I learned empathy, and I learned good communication skills from being a leader. To me, being a leader for my peers means so much to me because of what I've learned from being one.

Where do you see yourself 10 years from now? I hope to be doing my residency program on track to becoming a doctor!

What's something most people don't know about you? I yell very, very loud.

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SALEM NEWS STUDENT-ATHLETE NOMINEE

JAKE VANA, ST. JOHN'S PREP

If anyone on the St. John's Prep hockey team wasn't sure how to celebrate their just-won Division 1 state championship on St. Patrick's Day at TD Garden, they merely needed to turn to captain Jack Vana for advice.

That was the sixth state title that Vana has captured in his high school career, with a chance to make it seven before he graduates as the Eagles' lacrosse team goes for its fourth state crown this spring.

But athletic dominance is only part of Vana's story. The Boxford resident is also one of his school's top students, with a 4.51 GPA, and gives back with the same care and compassion that he gives to his studies and his athletics.

"The only challenge in writing a recommendation for Jake Vana is relaying the qualities that he possesses without sounding extravagant," St. John's Prep school counselor Nancy Sacco stated. "In my 25-year career as a school counselor, I have rarely met an individual who is as remarkable in every trait of adolescent development and character quality. There is nothing that I can relay that will be overstated; Jake is simply a standout person."

With a rigorous academic workload on his classroom ledger, Vana's hard work and commitment to learning has earned him National Honor Society and German National



Honor Society accolades the last two years. He has helped to improve the overall school experience by serving as a member of the MACD Student Advisory Council. Vana loves to be challenged, and combined with his natural intelligence and curious nature allow him to excel.

That extends onto the playing field, where he is a captain for soccer, hockey and lacrosse. His teams have won three lacrosse state titles, two in hockey and one in soccer, with Vana earning

league, state and even All-New England honors along the way. He will continue his academic and athletic career by playing Division 1 lacrosse at Princeton University.

"Jake's leadership, empathy, an dedication to service make him a role model for his peers and an invaluable asset to our school," Dean of Students John Pynchon, who doubles as Vana's lacrosse coach, said.

Sacco noted how Vana also serves as a mentor for incoming freshmen, is a youth sports volunteer coach, and

runs fundraisers for hospice and active military veterans while also serving as a peer mentor on programs about toxic masculinity. He is also a representative on the school's Multicultural Affairs and Community Development Student Advisory Council.

"In my memory I have hard-pressed to recall a student who embodies the degree of excellence in the classroom, standout talent on the field as well as compassionate servant," Sacco said. "Jake is as good as it gets."

MEET JAKE VANA

Hometown: Boxford

Age: 18

College you will be attending: Princeton University

What are your favorite books? *Mind Gym* by Gary Mack, and *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare

What is your favorite movie? 'Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story'

Who is your favorite singer or musical group? Bon Jovi

What is your favorite app? ESPN

What is your favorite class in school? English Literature with Mrs. Dennig

What athletic feat are you most proud of? Earning acceptance as a student-athlete into Princeton University. From a young age, my parents emphasized the value of academics, community service, and extracurricular involvement. Along my journey, I developed a passion for sports, and with the support of my family, I pursued my athletic aspirations while challenging myself academically at one of the region's top institutions. St. John's Prep provided me with opportunities to give back to my community through various programs and activities, enriching my overall experience.

What does being a leader amongst your peers mean to you? I firmly believe that true leadership necessitates fostering compassion and empathy, as it is through lifting each other up that collective goals are achieved. Moreover, I recognize the importance of standing by one another during both moments of triumph and adversity. Leading by example has been paramount in my leadership journey.

Where do you see yourself 10 years from now? I envision myself utilizing the expertise and insights garnered over the preceding years to contribute meaningfully and to achieve success. My hope is to channel my love for communication towards igniting a passion for sports within others. I've long held the dream of becoming a sports analyst for ESPN, driven by the belief that sports possess a remarkable ability to unite individuals of diverse ages and backgrounds. It's my goal to continue to defy conventional expectations by simultaneously pursuing a professional career while being a professional athlete. Lacrosse and the Premier Lacrosse League (PLL) is a unique path that would allow for dual pursuits, offering a platform where top athletes can excel professionally while pursuing off-field careers.

What's something most people don't know about you? When I'm not studying, working out, hanging out with friends or teammates or my family you can usually find me on the basketball court. Although basketball isn't my primary sport, my passion for the game runs deep.

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SALEM NEWS STUDENT-ATHLETE NOMINEE

VICTORIA QUAGRELLO, SWAMPSOFT

Victoria Quagrello's motto might as well be: If something's worth doing, then I'm going to do it to the absolute best of my ability.

It's a mindset that has served the Swampscott High senior exceptionally well over the last four years, as she's excellent in the classroom, on the athletic fields, and out in her community with equal parts grace, class and determination.

"Student-athletes like Victoria do not come around often," Katelyn Leonard, her Big Blue basketball coach, stated. "So often it is the individual accolades that drive a student-athlete, especially in this age of social media. Victoria is different; on the field and court she has one goal in mind: do whatever it takes to win the game. In the classroom, she is just as relentless in her work ethic to be the best that she can."

Quagrello is the No. 3 student in Swampscott's senior class with a GPA of 103.83. A member of the National Honor Society for the last two years, she has won awards ranging from the Moynihan Lumber Student-Athlete of the Month Award to the University of Pennsylvania Book Award. She thrives on academic challenges and takes all of her school's most difficult courses.

She has attended numerous leadership conferences held by both the MIAA and the Northeastern Conference, and will be continuing her

studies at Middlebury College, where she'll play soccer for the Panthers.

"Victoria's academic profile is nothing short of exceptional," said Julie Mazzola, Quagrello's counselor at SHS the last three years. "She is a dedicated life-long learner, driven by an insatiable curiosity that fuels her relentless pursuit of knowledge."

A three-sport captain in soccer, basketball and tennis, Quagrello was named an EMASS First Team all-star on the pitch last fall, is a three-time NEC all-star as well as a Salem News all-star.

In her free time, Quagrello finds time to work with and inspire others. She has coached with the North Shore Rovers soccer programs the last three years, working with children with disabilities. She's volunteered at the Swampscott Senior Center, raised money for breast cancer research with her SHS soccer team, and has been a four-year DECA member among her many accomplishments.

"What truly sets Victoria apart is her character," Courtney Russo, a member of Swampscott's English Department, said. "She comes from a loving and supportive family, and that foundation is evident in her actions and interactions with others. She embodies the values of sportsmanship, integrity and perseverance, making her not only an exceptional athlete but also an outstanding individual."



MEET VICTORIA QUAGRELLO

Hometown: Swampscott

Age: 17

College you will be attending: Middlebury College

What is your favorite book? *Where The Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens
What is your favorite movie? 'Mamma Mia!'

Who is your favorite singer or musical group? Sza

What is your favorite app? Photos App

What is your favorite class in school? Biology

What athletic feat are you most proud of? Having the opportunity to play basketball with my older sister Paige my freshman and sophomore year, then being able to play with my younger sister Olivia as a senior. I'm so glad to have played with people who know me better than anyone else. The season was much more enjoyable surrounded by the people who are closest to me.

What does being a leader amongst your peers mean to you? It means keeping others responsible for their actions, providing a safe space where those around me are comfortable, and always setting an example for others. I was always lucky to have such great leaders and captains that I was able to learn from and implement into my leadership abilities as a captain.

Where do you see yourself 10 years from now? I hope to be working in the pharmaceutical field, living near my family, and keeping close ties with the friendships I've built since I was a childhood.

What's something most people don't know about you? I spend the summers on the beach teaching kids how to paddleboard.



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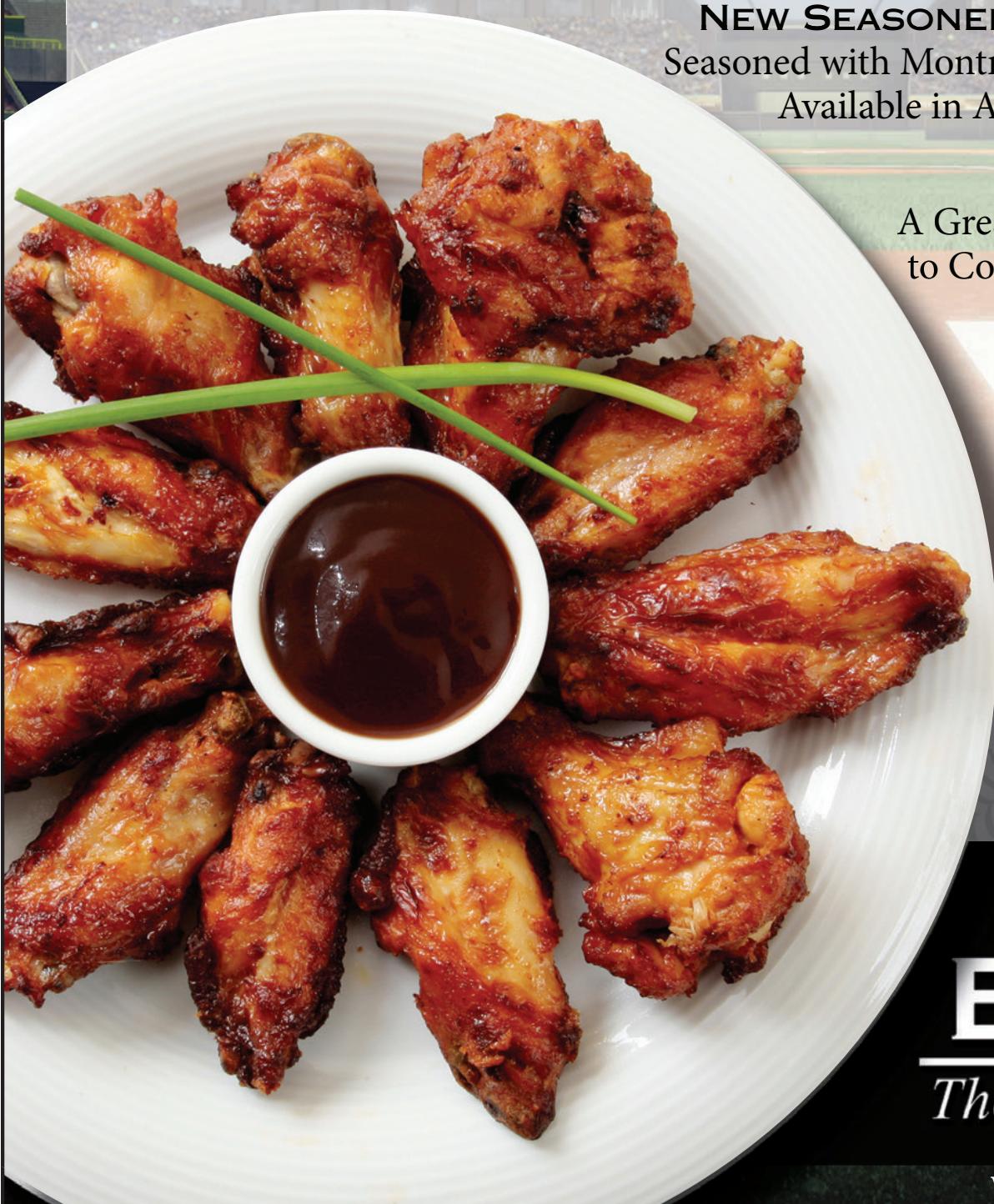
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