

1986: That Championship Year

BY DAN WILLIAMS
Sports Editor

Editor's Note: The following is the first in a two-part series summarizing the outstanding athletic efforts in the North Country during the 1986 sports year.

Oh, what a year!

The year 1986 will be long remembered around these parts as one of the finest and most exciting sports seasons in the Potsdam area history.

It had everything. It offered team championships and individual crowns. The Year of Achievement—1986.

College Report

The single biggest sports news here in the North Country and to a certain extent, nationally, was the dramatic and history-making 32-0 national championship season enjoyed by the fabulous Potsdam College Bears basketball team.

Coached by the dynamic Jerry Welsh, 1985-86 Division III Coach of the Year, the Bears rolled past all of the opponents en route to Division III's first perfect season.

With a heart-stopping 76-73 win over a determined LeMoyne-Owen club, Potsdam won their second NCAA Division III title in six years.

The Bears' success was a tribute to the team's ability at any level in perfecting their Indiana turned the trick in 1976.

Potsdam was ranked number one in Division III all year and led the nation in scoring margin. Two players, senior Roosevelt "Pony" Bullock, and junior Brendan Mitchell, were named first team All-Americans, and two others, Barry Stanton and John Leonard joined Bullock and Mitchell on the all-SUNYAC squad.

Sports Illustrated featured the Bears' perfect season with a two-page, three photo article in March. The perfect season was capped off later in the month when New York Governor Mario Cuomo flew to Potsdam to honor the Bears before 2,000 ecstatic supporters.

And, as 1986 was nearing its end, the Bears were still at it. By defeating Staten Island last Tuesday, Potsdam ran their 1986-87 slate to 9-0, for an incredible 41-game win streak, one of the longest in NCAA history.

Other Bears

Teams A Hit
Potsdam hockey player Howie Vandermast, a sophomore defenseman, was named co-Player of the Year in SUNYAC, and his coach, John Horan, was tabbed as the league's co-Coach of the Year.

Potsdam's field hockey and women's tennis teams enjoyed fine seasons last fall, both placing high in the SUNYAC and state competitions. Tennis star Diane Moses won the SUNYAC singles title at No. 4 and Chris Lukalo finished third at the state tournament.

Clarkson Hockey

The surprising Clarkson University hockey team, under rookie coach Cap Raeder, shocked everyone in the ECAC hockey world by earning an appearance in the ECAC championship game.

The Knights, 18-11-3 on the year, upset defending national champ RPI in the first round of the playoffs and went on to meet Cornell in the title game. The Big Red squeaked past Clarkson 3-2 in overtime to take the title. Knight fans were upset that their squad was overlooked by the NCAA selection committee.

Other highlights for the Knights iced were their dual wins over powerful Harvard and the naming of defenseman Andy Otto to the All-American team.

On the negative side, the Clarkson men's basketball team finished 9-25 and stretched their losing streak to 31 games last fall until finally losing the team's first game.

William James Tomada earned All-American recognition, the women's basketball team finished 16-7, their best record ever, Marilyn Johnson's ski teams placed third in the nation, and the lacrosse squad finished with a best-ever mark of 10-5.

High School Sports

One of the biggest high school sports stories of 1986 was the continuing rise of the Potsdam High school boys basketball team to state contention.

The rejuvenated Sandstomer program won their first Class C title in 23 years last March with a 72-54 win over St. Lawrence Central. Next up was a classic struggle between Potsdam and the Malone Huskies in the Class B-C showdown. The Huskies had blown out Division I champ Gouverneur in the Class B championship and were thought to be too powerful for the tiny Stoner quintet.

But, the Stoners dug in and played exceptional defense, eventually losing to Malone 66-62 in overtime. Potsdam still advanced to the state tourney, where they had to meet 10th-ranked Cooperstown, a team even more powerful than Malone.

Again, the Stoners didn't back down, fighting the larger team with every tooth and nail until the end. Finally, Cooperstown emerged as 74-69 winners, but the Stoners had gained the statewide respect they yearned for.

Two players, Basil Cheney and Andy Ondek, were named first team All-Northern for their excellent play.

As the 1986-87 season rolls into high gear, Potsdam remains unbeaten, with a 7-0 record. And, for the first time, the Stoners are ranked 20th in the New York State small schools poll.

The Sandstomers weren't the only local team to win a championship last winter. Over at Parishville-Hopkinton, the Panthers won their first NAC regular season title ever and reached the finals of the Section 10 Class D-2 championship, before dropping a 59-46 decision to Lisbon.

Head Coach Larry Jenne was tabbed as coach of the year in Division II and three players earned all-NAC honors.

The P-H girls team also enjoyed a banner year. They reached the finals of the Class D-2 championship, losing to eventual Section 10 champion Harmon-DuP. in the final.

Winter Track

Working from the backyard to the ice, the Potsdam success formula spilled over the cold Pine Street Arena floor where the Stoner iced skated all the way to the semi-final round of the state tourney.

Coach Jerry Patterson led his sextet to an impressive 16-7 record, finishing second in the league to powerhouse Massena. In fact, the Stoners met the Red Raiders in the Section 10 championship last winter in Canton, dropping a 4-3 battle, which was described as one of the best high school games in local history.

Potsdam defeated host Suffern High 5-2 in the state quarterfinals and then lost a heart-breaking 4-3 overtime game to Rome Free Academy in the semis.

Senior Ron Reagan, now skating at Clarkson, was named the MVP of the league and sophomore net-minder Scott LaGrand earned best goals against average in the NAC.

Revier, McDonald, Tyler

The indoor track season brought out many spectacular performances by athletes from Potsdam and Norwood-Norfolk. None were more spectacular than Flyer Leslie Revier. Revier is easily the most outstanding athlete

of 1986. Many of her exploits will be looked at in next week's issue, when spring, summer, and fall sporting achievements will be outlined.

In the winter, all Revier did was win three Section 10 championships and a state title. She took the triple jump, with a section record leap of 38-7.5, the long jump (17-4) and the 300 (43.6) at the sectionals. At the state indoor meet, the explosive senior won the triple jump event with a new state record leap of 39-2.75, the third longest high school girls triple jump in USA history at that time.

Her teammate on the boys side, Steve McDonald, was impressive also. He led his team to the Section 10 Class C championship by winning an unusual triple at the sectionals. The lanky senior won the 55 hurdles, the 600 run, and the 1000 run. Fellow Flyer Greg Hill took first in the sectional mile.

Potsdam High's Katie Tyler, a sophomore at the time, led the Stoners girls team to a Class C title by placing second in both the 1500 and 3000 runs. Her time of 5:02 in the 1500 broke a school record.

Bantams Are Champs

In the final sports story of last winter, the Potsdam Bantam team, coached by Coach Tom Malone, won the 1986-87 Bantam title in New York at the national tournament and fared well, finishing third.

Next week, we'll take a look at the equally successful spring and fall sports teams, plus some exciting action from the summer of 1986.

P-H Nips Canton

Non-league boys hoop action on Monday saw Parishville-Hopkinton nip Canton 52-50 and Brushton-Moira outscore Malone 69-64. Nonleague action will also be on tap locally tonight (Tuesday) as OFA hosts Harrisville, Heuvelton entertains Canton and Colton-Pierrepont visits Morrisstown.

P-H erased an 11-point lead in the final six minutes to rally past Canton. Mike Snell's 15 points paced the Panther effort while Chris Richards capped off a 12-point night with a jump shot which proved to be the difference on the scoreboard.

Canton's ever-present center Terry Thivierege led all scorers with 18 points and Phil Royce followed with 12.

Brian Gale and Leon LaMere combined for 20 and 16 points as B-M prevailed over neighboring Malone. John Spaulding's 17 points led the Huskies.

Lisbon topped Division I foe Gouverneur Monday night with a fourth quarter surge. Against the Wildcats the Knights forged a 20-12 margin sparked by Duane Rayburn who came off the bench to score his nine-point total with a strong effort on the offensive boards.



IN THE HEADLINES — Norwood-Norfolk track great Leslie Revier made lots of headlines last year as she enjoyed a banner year as one of the nation's top triple jumpers.

Revier Set For Track Season

BY ANDY MAUK
Massena Observer

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. — Former Northern Athletic Conference cross-country, indoor track, and track standout, Leslie Revier, started practice in October for the University of Minnesota Gophers indoor track team, which competes in the Big Ten.

Revier, a 1986 graduate of Norwood-Norfolk Central High School, was actively recruited by Golden Gopher second-year head coach Gary Wilson, a 1974 graduate of Cortland State.

"We're real happy with her progress," Wilson said from his campus office at the University of Minnesota. "We saw her first at Yale and we picked up on her and followed her — we realized she had some outstanding indoor marks. We're just thrilled with her," Wilson added.

Revier, primarily known for her aptitude in the long jump and triple jump, impressed Wilson in recent time trials in the short distance area.

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UNBEATEN CHAMPS — Number one signs were prevalent last year as the Potsdam College Bears blasted their way to an undefeated Division III national championship. Here, they are shown posing with their championship trophy in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Bears' Streak Reaches 41; Mitchell Tourney MVP

STATEN ISLAND — Senior All-American Brendan Mitchell's inspired play led the Potsdam Bears basketball team to an exciting 74-64 win last Tuesday night over Staten Island in the championship game of the Dolphin Holiday Classic.

With the win, the Bears extend their winning streak to 41 games, the longest in the nation at any level.

Mitchell earned the most valuable player trophy in the tournament, while teammates Barry Stanton and Steve Babiarz were selected to the all-tourney team.

Mitchell scored 17 points and pulled down a career high 18 rebounds in the championship game to offset an identical 17-point, 18-rebound effort by the Dolphins' 6-10 center Gunnar Oberg. Stanton led the Bears with 19 points and Babiarz continued his hot shooting with 18 points (7-10 from the floor, 3-5 from three-point range). Sophomore Joe Smith also hit double figures with 10 points.

The leading scorer for CSI was forward Jay Zieris, who pumped in 24 points against Potsdam. Steve Krsiche added 10 markers.

Potsdam overcame a fast CSI start and took a 34-30 lead at intermission. A switch from zone defense to man-to-man in the second half allowed Potsdam to pull away from the hosts.

In the tourney's first round action, the Bears blasted highly-regarded William Paterson 88-66 in a game which wasn't even that close.

Coach Jerry Welsh substituted freely throughout the game and 10

of the 13 players found the scoring column.

Babiarz, the Bears' leading scorer this year at 19.5 per game, led Potsdam in this one with 23 points (10-12 from the floor). Mitchell tallied 19 points and had 11 rebounds for another dominating performance. Freshman Todd Anthony hit for a career high 10 points.

Pacing William Paterson were

Brian Wood (15 points), Gino Morales (13 points) and William McBroom (12 points).

Potsdam shot 61 percent from the floor, while holding Paterson to 43 percent.

The Bears will travel to the University of Buffalo tomorrow night (Wednesday) and then will host Brockport State Saturday afternoon in Maxey-Hall.

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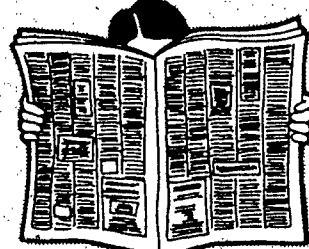
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