



Capital District



Sports Women of the Year

2021 Capital District Sports Women of the Year Awards Gala
August 9, 2021 * GE Theatre at Proctors * 7:00 PM

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The 2021 Capital District Sports Women of the Year Awards Program was edited by Eric McDowell. Feature stories written by members of the sports staff of The Daily Gazette of Schenectady, NY. Printing services provided by Miller Printing of Amsterdam, NY. Cover design by Alex Jarvis of Goldilocks Promos of Latham, NY. Photographs provided by Lauren Hull Photography and by family members of the honorees. Special thanks to our generous sponsors, advertisers, and donors for their support of CDSWOY.

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*"It was nice to be able to help people somehow."
 "I really hope to show the younger girls what you can do
 and where you can go."
 "It feels good to know you are helping someone."
 "It became a part of my life. It never felt like an extra responsibility."
 "It was something that I looked forward to because you are helping people."
 "Sports are about more than winning."*

These are not quotes from famous sages that you will find in a dusty old book or in an online search.

No, these are quotes that you will find in these pages of this publication.

These are some of the quotes from the members of the 2021 Class of the Capital District Sports Women of the Year.

CDSWOY was created because of them. CDSWOY honors the exceptional female student-athletes from the high schools and colleges in the Capital District. Thanks to the nominations from athletic directors at these institutions, our friends in the media who cover sports have the enjoyable, exhilarating, challenging, enviable and difficult task of selecting our award recipients. We thank these media members, including our M.C. tonight, Ashley Miller of News Channel 13, for their time. We also thank the talented sports writers from The Daily Gazette, led by Sports Editor Michael Kelly, for their marvelous features that were written exclusively for this publication.

We are so pleased that Annie Scherer, voted the Best Local Performer in the Albany Times Union "Best of the Capital Region," will entertain us with her original songs. We are honored that Tara VanDerveer, the winningest coach in women's college basketball history, graciously provided her time

after winning the NCAA Division I national championship to provide her thoughts about her program as well as her ties to the Capital District. Thank you to our sponsors and advertisers for your support of CDSWOY.

Proctors is our home for this Awards Gala. A historic and treasured facility that has featured legendary stars is a perfect place to bring these shining stars of our communities together.

Special thanks to our CDWOY Board members, Alissa Collins, Jennifer McDowell, and Brendon Phillips. Your support and work for this initiative is very much appreciated.

So, I leave you with one more quote from a recipient.

"When you have a passion for things, you make it work."

These remarkable young women define passion. They make it work. So tonight, it's time for them to sit back, reflect, and enjoy a special evening dedicated to them.

Sincerely,



Eric McDowell
 President
 Capital District Sports Women of the Year, Inc.



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College - Basketball

2021

Naseyah Dix **Bryant & Stratton College**

by Adam Shinder
The Daily Gazette - Sportswriter



Whenever Naseyah Dix is feeling troubled, it's on the basketball court where she can find her center.

"Basketball is my outlet. Basketball is my safety," Dix said. "When I play basketball, I feel safe and I feel comfortable. I'm good at it, so I just ran with it. I want to take care of my family, and I believe basketball is my way of doing it."

A point guard on the women's basketball team at Bryant & Stratton College in Albany, Dix found her love of basketball while growing up in Schenectady, passed onto her and her siblings from her mother Tashana.

"She just poured the sport onto us," Naseyah Dix said. "Me and my siblings just gravitated toward it and ran with it."

Naseyah Dix, who starred for the Bobcats on the court this winter while also making the honor roll academically and volunteering in Albany, is one of the two collegiate honorees for the 2021 Capital District Sports Women of the Year awards.

"She has been a joy to our program and school community," Bryant & Stratton women's basketball coach Jahmel Samuels said.

The road to success has been a long, difficult one for Dix. Her life was thrown into chaos in May 2019 when her cousin, Ayanna Hunter, was shot and killed outside an apartment complex in Niskayuna. The loss of Hunter "made everything harder," Dix said, and played a large role in why she didn't complete her studies at Schenectady High School, instead working to get her GED.

Even that process included obstacles, as Dix said her college enrollment process was initially halted when she was told she hadn't gotten her GED, only for it to arrive in the mail one day before she signed to attend Bryant & Stratton.

"It just made me more hungry," Dix said. "To go through all that and come out of it, it's amazing. It gives me hope. I just want to be able to be the outlet for the kids that are still in Schenectady."

In her freshman season with the Bobcats, Dix put in a starring effort in a season disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, averaging 18 points, five rebounds and five assists per game while playing with what Samuels called "a passion of positivity." She was twice a nominee for the USCAA Player of the Week award, made the all-tournament team when the Bobcats played at the Vaden Cup and was named the team's most improved player.

She also maintained a 3.2 grade point average in the classroom, making the honor roll in both the fall and spring semesters. Along with her academic work, Dix was also dedicated to community service, turning her love of animals into work at the Mohawk Humane Society and her passion for engaging with young people into serving as a mentor at Albany's South End Cafe Healthy Kids Project.

"Naseyah certainly persevered both on and off the court," said John Quattrocchi, who served as Bryant & Stratton's interim athletic director this past school year. "As a tenacious and hardworking player, she matched this intensity in the classroom."

Through all her hard work, it's basketball that remains Dix's primary outlet. She hopes to turn her time at Bryant & Stratton into an eventual opportunity to play at a Division I school, with the ultimate goal of playing professional basketball in Europe.

"That's the end goal," she said. "That's the main goal. Hopefully, I can push on to a high-major, Division I school, then go overseas."

Contact Adam Shinder at ashinder@dailygazette.net or @Adam Shinder on Twitter.



Congratulations Phoebe on all your academic and athletic successes at Glens Falls HS.

Glens Falls Nation is so proud of you, and you are a great role model for future athletes.



Phoebe, we are so proud of you for being included with this incredible group of women. Your determination and desire to succeed has gotten you to where you are today. What we are most proud of is your kindness and willingness to help others. Keep being you because you are amazing!

*We love you,
Mom, Dad and Hogan*

Phoebe Fox
Glens Falls High School

by Stan Hudy
The Daily Gazette - Sportswriter



Glens Falls graduate Phoebe Fox never stops moving or caring.

Fox, who will attend Bryant University, spent her high school career as a three-sport athlete — girls' soccer, Alpine skiing and girls' lacrosse.

When not on the pitch, slopes or field, she dedicated her time to helping others as a volunteer with the Salvation Army as a bell ringer during the holidays and participating in the local Operation Santa Claus fund drive to purchase toys for local children.

The winter weather didn't bother Fox, smiling while ringing for the Salvation Army.

"It was something that I looked forward to because you are helping people," said Fox, one of 10 high school honorees for the second-annual Capital District Sports Women of the Year awards. "You are with your friends; you get to meet new people and know that you are helping out."

Within the Glens Falls City Schools, Fox was part of the yearbook committee and selected to the National Honor Society during her junior year.

With soccer in the Foothills Council shifted to the "Fall II" season in March and April that was created to house competitions for school sports teams unable to compete last fall because of concerns related to the novel coronavirus pandemic, Fox's fall became open for an additional sport — tennis.

"I had never picked up a tennis racket before, but my best friend played and convinced me to do it," Fox said. "Now I play all the time."

Tennis provided a new set of challenges for Fox.

"It was different because it's not so much of a team sport, but it was pretty easy to pick up," Fox said. "My serve was good early on, but I was really bad at backhands. It was totally going over the fence."

This spring, Fox returned to the soccer field for her fourth varsity year.

"Phoebe showed dedication and commitment as she was the first player to arrive at practice and the last to leave," Glens Falls girls' soccer coach Thomas Barrows said. "As the captain of the team, she led by example through her positive attitude and strong work ethic."

The Glens Falls girls' lacrosse captain and leading scorer the past four years shined.

"Phoebe's lacrosse knowledge and heads-up game play are unmatched," Glens Falls girls' lacrosse coach Elyse Hagy said of Fox, who will play lacrosse at Division I Bryant.

Glens Falls athletic director Arthur Corlew said Fox was an all-around star during her years at Glens Falls High School.

"Her academic record attests to her hard work, commitment and dedication to be the best student she can be," Corlew said. "In my 29 years in education, she ranks in the top 5% of student-athletes."

"Phoebe is well-respected by her peers. Her hard work serves as a positive role model to all that come in contact with her," Corlew said. "Phoebe, as a leader, sets high standards for herself, and all of her coaches have said that Phoebe is a coach and a leader on and off the field."

Contact Stan Hudy at shudy@dailygazette.net
or [@stanhudy](https://twitter.com/stanhudy) on Twitter.



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Riley Gibbons
Germantown High School

by Stan Hudy
The Daily Gazette - Sportswriter



Germantown salutatorian Riley Gibbons has an eye for soccer and basketball, but also an ear for music.

The three-year National Honor Society member joined the varsity basketball team as an eighth grader before becoming a starter her freshman year. That same school year, Gibbons was part of the inaugural Germantown girls' varsity soccer team.

She's also one of 10 high school honorees for the second-annual Capital District Sports Women of the Year awards.

"Sports have been such a defining part of my high school career," Gibbons said. "My best memories from high school with some of my closest friends started in sports. To be recognized for something that means so much to me means a lot."

Gibbons was a captain and MVP all four years on the girls' soccer program, known as a star talent within her own squad and the Central Hudson Valley League.

"She was often marked with one or two players," Germantown girls' soccer coach Michael Pudney said. "Despite this, she has led the league in assists and was one of the top goal scorers each year in our league. She was named a first-team all-star in the CHVL all four years on varsity."

During the winter she took her talents indoors, leading the school's girls' basketball team in scoring, rebounding and blocked shots as a sophomore and junior and being named a state all-star.

"Riley is the complete package, a player with skills necessary for all positions on the court," Germantown girls' basketball coach Christina Pudney said of Gibbons, who wasn't able to play a senior basketball season because of restrictions related to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

Gibbons, who will attend SUNY New Paltz, is versatile on the field, in the classroom and in the music room. Gibbons earned high honor roll status the past four years and served as class president all four years at Germantown. She is a talented musician, playing drums, singing and songwriting.

She has played snare drum in the New York State School Music Association, and was part of the all-county chorus, all-county band, jazz band, a cappella and the NYS Band Directors Association Honor Band.

"It became a part of my life. It never felt like an extra responsibility," Gibbons said. "It's something that I love doing." She also participated in the drama club.

"Riley remains humble in nature," Christina Pudney said. "She has an extreme social conscience while being soft-spoken, polite and kind."

Contact Stan Hudy at shudy@dailygazette.net
or [@stanhudy](https://twitter.com/stanhudy) on Twitter.



*Jenna Rose Hoffman filled with love, strength and integrity.
 You are such a kind daughter, sister, leader, athlete and scholar
 who always gives and lives life to the fullest.
 We are so proud of you.*

Love Mom, Dad and Luke

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 Capital District Sports Women of the Year

Jenna Hoffman **Maple Hill High School**

by Jim Schiltz
The Daily Gazette - Sportswriter



Jenna Hoffman and the word “idle” just don’t mix.

“As I grew up, I wanted to be involved with everything,” Maple Hill’s Student Council and National Honor Society president, senior class vice president and board of education student rep said. “I have a plan every morning. School first, sports, and do the clubs.”

There’s that volunteer work beyond the classroom, too, that keeps the four-sport athlete and Principal’s List mainstay on her toes. Just for starters, she is a Girl Scout Silver Award winner based on her community service, a Junior EMT and a Pen Pal for Castle Hill residents.

“When you have a passion for things, you make it work,” said Hoffman, who is one of 10 high school honorees for the second-annual Capital District Sports Women of the Year awards.

Sports are among her passions, and during her senior year she played four of them, including tennis for the first time last fall when volleyball due to COVID-19 restrictions at the time was shifted to the “Fall II” season in March and April. She played softball and basketball, as well, and will continue to shoot hoops when she attends St. John Fisher College and majors in Inclusion Childhood Education. The Service Scholarship she received from the Rochester institution means she will be doing many hours of volunteer work, and she said she can’t wait to find out just who she will be helping out.

“I just want to put people before myself,” said the 18-year-old, who during her time at Maple Hill mentored younger students, participated in the Miracle League Basketball program and served on its mental health committee. “It comes from my mom [Jackie Hoffman], who has always been a wonderful role model for me. She made me want to influence people around me.”

“Jenna volunteers so much of her time to help others which makes her an outstanding member of the school community and the Schodack community as a whole,” Maple Hill science teacher and varsity volleyball coach Leonard Bacon said of his team captain and MVP.

Hoffman has been honored time and again for her athletic performance and for her selfless efforts, and has received the YMCA Leadership Award, Hoby Leadership Award, Ryla Rotary Youth Leadership Award, Kiwanis Outstanding Senior Award and a Heisman Scholarship.

“It makes me feel great,” Hoffman said of her willingness to give, like she did by making thank-you signs for essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic and by creating and organizing a holiday video tribute for the Maple Hill staff. “When I become a teacher, my goal is to make them all feel they are something.”

While Hoffman earned first-team Patroon Conference all-star status this school year in basketball and volleyball, she proved to be a pretty good tennis player too and won the league doubles title to go with her numerous other accomplishments.

“She is everything a coach wants in a player and more; she works hard, values commitment, and is coachable. She is humble, hungry, and is always striving for improvement,” said Maple Hill social studies teacher and varsity softball coach Patrick Austin. “When it came time to choose a team captain for this season, it was an easy decision. Jenna is the quintessential role model that others look up to and she has the leadership, poise, and maturity that a coach looks for in a player to fill that position.”

Contact Jim Schiltz at jims@dailygazette.com or @Jim Schiltz on Twitter.

Clare Montague Howard

Grit ★ Grace ★ Greatness



Clare Howard
Taconic Hills High School

by Jim Schiltz
The Daily Gazette - Sportswriter



Can you imagine playing five sports, playing three musical instruments, and hitting the books hard enough to earn a bunch of academic awards and rank third in your graduating class?

Clare Howard, Taconic Hills' senior class president, doesn't have to imagine it.

"I really want to be the best version of myself as I can," the 18-year-old academic and athletic star said. "It's rewarding to see it all pay off."

Howard has been adding sports to her resume since she began competing for Taconic Hills as a seventh grader and capped off her record and award-filled scholastic career this school year by participating in soccer and cross country in the fall, swimming and skiing in the winter and track in the spring. She would have done the five as a junior, too, had the spring season not been taken away by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Clare is a remarkable young lady that manages her time well in order to be successfully involved in as much as she is," Taconic Hills Athletic Director and math teacher Angela Webster said of the Capital District Sports Women of the Year high school honoree. "She is one of the most all-around talented individuals I have met in my career. I admire her for her positive, calm demeanor in the classroom while being an aggressive, sportsmanlike competitor on the field."

Howard will focus on the 400 hurdles at William and Mary, and while she has yet to declare a major, she has great interest in the math and science fields where the National Honor Society member has received several prestigious awards.

"I definitely hope I appear as a role model," said Howard. "Our school is K through 12, so I really hope to show the younger girls what you can do and where you can go. It takes a lot of hard work, but it can happen and it's so rewarding."

For her efforts, Howard has been rewarded with several state ski meet and state track championship appearances.

"In eighth grade, I made the state team in the 400 hurdles, and that was a turning point," said Howard, who set PRs in the high and intermediate hurdle events at the recent East Coast Championships. "That's when I thought, 'I can do something with this.'"

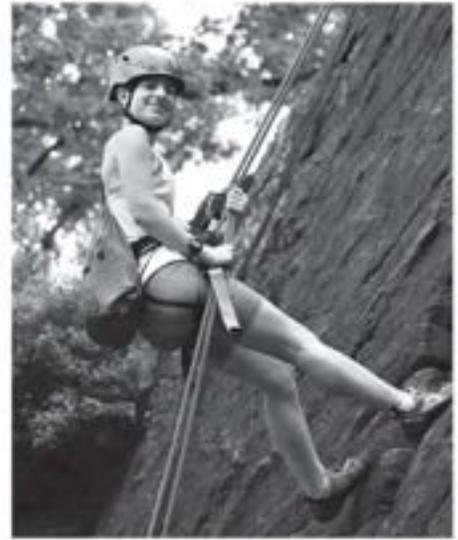
The multi-talented teen can also play the piano, flute and cello, and was invited to perform with the Empire State String Youth Orchestra.

"I was always active growing up, and that carried over to my teenage years," Howard said. "I am just really thankful that with everything I've done, I've had my family and friends and everyone in school backing me up and supporting me."

Howard served as her class treasurer for three years, acted as a board representative for the Scholarship Committee for Dollars for Scholars, and was on the school's COVID-19 reopening committee. Away from school, she has worked with the Humane Society and has helped with a youth track program.

"I have known Clare Howard for the last four years both as a coach and a teacher," said Taconic Hills Dean of Students and varsity girls' soccer coach Patrick McDonald. "Judging from these experiences, I can say with confidence that Clare is a dedicated student-athlete who leads others by setting a strong example with her effort and intensity both in the classroom and on the playing field. Clare is a very friendly, outgoing person. She has a great sense of humor and interacts wonderfully with her peers and adults."

Contact Jim Schiltz at jims@dailygazette.com or @Jim Schiltz on Twitter.

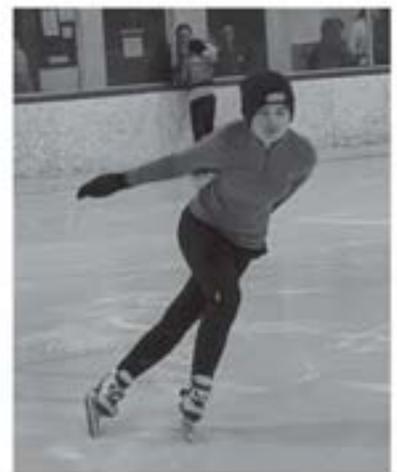


Congratulations Beth!

You continue to amaze us with all you accomplish. We can't wait to see what the future holds for you. Keep reaching for new goals and never be afraid to try new things.



Love,
Mom, Dad, & Erika
Papa & TT
Nana & Dolores
Grandma & Papa
Julie & Paul



Beth Irwin
Guilderland High School

by Ken Schott
The Daily Gazette - Associate Sports Editor



With plenty of time on her hands last year because of restrictions related to the novel coronavirus pandemic, Guilderland High School's Beth Irwin put her sewing talents to good use.

She helped sew over 100 facemasks for people living in a 65-and-over senior living facility.

Irwin, a rising senior who competes in cross country, Nordic skiing and track and field, is one of 10 high school award recipients for the Capital District Sports Women of the Year.

"It was very nice [to do], especially with school just not existing at the end of last year," Irwin said. "It was kind of [like] I had so much going on yesterday, and now there's nothing for, like, two weeks. I like keeping busy. I purposely scheduled myself to keep busy. I picked up sewing as a thing to do. Making masks for everyone was a really good way to fill time and didn't require learning too many new skills.

"I've been sewing in the past, but I just finally had some time to do it, and it was nice to be able to help people somehow."

Irwin, who recently finished her junior year of high school, enjoys sewing.

"I've been able to do it more recently, thanks, kind of, due to the pandemic, which was nice," Irwin said. "I've been sewing since third grade pretty actively."

Besides making facemasks, Irwin has served as a Girl Scouts Ambassador, served meals at the soup kitchen at Temple Beth Emeth, helped a local business clean and rebuild its facility and has completed nearly 200 hours of service in her three years at Guilderland High School.

In the classroom, Irwin has a 97 grade-point average while taking honors, AP and college courses. She received an Academic Excellence in Spanish 4 Award, as well as numerous NYSPHSAA Scholar-Athlete Awards.

Athletically, Irwin ranked second out of 65 student-athletes in cross country and was the recipient of the 100% Award, as well as the 300+ Miles Award. In Nordic ski, she was the MVP in each of the last two seasons and was also the captain of that team this past season.

"Beth has been a very dedicated student-athlete over the last three years on the XC Ski Team," Guilderland Nordic ski head coach Barb Newton wrote in a nomination letter. "She has been a role model for the other skiers on the team with her love and commitment to the sport.

"She has been crucial in recruiting skiers to the program, helping new skiers with technique, and her enthusiasm for XC skiing has been a plus for the program. It's like having another coach on the team."

Irwin is excited to be one of the 10 scholastic award recipients.

Contact Ken Schott at schott@dailygazette.com
or [@slapschotts](https://twitter.com/slapschotts) on Twitter.



Anna Jankovic

*We are so proud of you.
Wherever you go, whatever
you do, we will always be
there supporting you.
Love - Mom, Dad,
Aaron, Stephanie & Family*



The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.
- Eleanor Roosevelt



A dream doesn't become a reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination and hard work. - Colin Powell



Anna Jankovic
Averill Park High School

by Michael Kelly
The Daily Gazette - Sports Editor



During her career at Averill Park High School, Anna Jankovic stood out with her athletic and academic achievements, but it was the way she treated others that impressed so many people around her.

That included her coaches, teachers, community members, fellow students — and, in one particular case, the 8-year-old daughter Keira of Averill Park girls' basketball head coach Sean Organ.

"Keira told me when she is old enough to play school basketball, she wants to be just like Anna," said Organ, who coached Jankovic during her all-star career that included helping Averill Park to multiple area championships. "Keira explained it is because Anna plays harder than any other player, is nice to her teammates and players on the other team, and [because] 'Anna always asks me how I am doing in school and in basketball.'

"I can only hope that Keira becomes the student, athlete and compassionate person Anna is."

Jankovic is one of 10 high school honorees for the second-annual Capital District Sports Women of the Year awards. Her resume sparkles with all types of honors, yet the humble 17-year-old who will play basketball and study biology at D'Youville College in Buffalo said she was "so grateful" to even be considered for Capital District Sports Women of the Year honors.

"I was so excited. It's a big honor to be the person from our school to be nominated," Jankovic said, "To be in the top-10, it's just so cool. I wasn't expecting it. There's so many great people out there from the other schools, so I'm very honored to be in the top 10."

Jankovic starred in basketball, volleyball, and track and field during her years at Averill Park. She also was a high-honor-roll student, a National Honor Society member, and involved in a variety of community and school activities.

Jankovic has spent time working with elementary school-age children, tutoring others and spent three years participating in the high school's orientation program that helps newcomers.

"I just wanted to make them feel welcome in the school," Jankovic said.

As a senior, Jankovic wanted to make sure the school's teachers felt appreciated, too. Through her participation in National Honor Society, she helped lead a drive to make appreciation cards for teachers making the school year possible despite the novel coronavirus pandemic and the restrictions surrounding it.

"We just wanted to show them we were grateful for them, especially this year during the pandemic," said Jankovic, who won her school's Al DeShaw Award, which is Averill Park's highest athletic award and given based on an athlete's dedication, athletic skills and successes, and character. Anna received the APHS Coach ALDI Award, presented to a track & field member at the end of the season for Athleticism, Leadership, Dedication and Integrity.

After college, Jankovic wants to enter into the medical field. She has "always wanted to be a doctor," and wants to base her career around helping children.

"I feel like I'm patient and I'm calm," Jankovic said. "I want to comfort them so they're not scared."

Averill Park athletic director Mark Bubniak said he has "no doubt" Jankovic will be successful in whatever she decides to do.

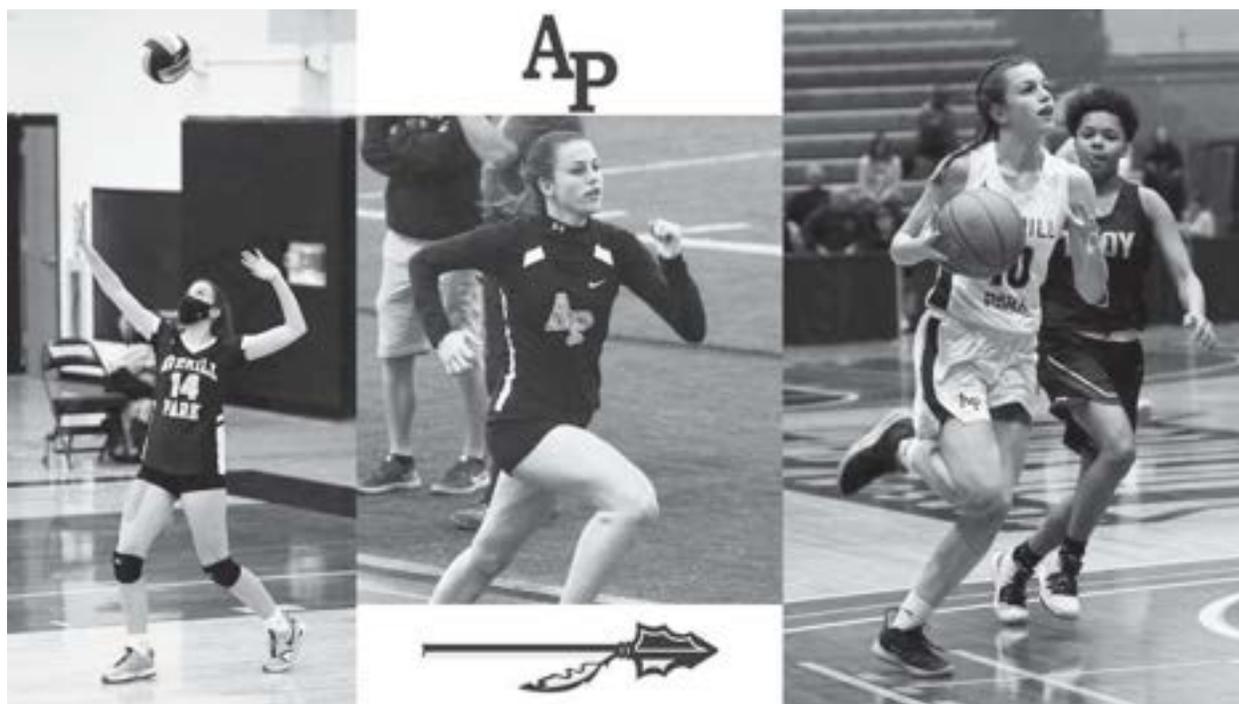
"Anna is an extremely hard worker and work ethic has gotten her to where she is today," Bubniak said. "She is a great student, talented athlete, and serves her school and community in a variety of ways."

"With her determination, work ethic and compassion, there is no doubt that Anna will achieve any goals she so desires," Organ said.

Contact Michael Kelly at mkelly@dailygazette.net or [@ByMichaelKelly](https://twitter.com/ByMichaelKelly) on Twitter.

Congratulations Anna Jankovic!

- From Your Averill Park Athletic Family



AVERILL PARK

College - Soccer

2021

Hallie Klosterman
Russell Sage College

by Adam Shinder
The Daily Gazette - Staff Writer



Last summer, as Hallie Klosterman and her women's soccer teammates at Russell Sage College were preparing for their fall season, everything was thrown into doubt.

With the COVID-19 pandemic creating waves of uncertainty, the Empire 8 Conference voted to postpone its fall athletic competition. For Klosterman and her teammates, finding ways to stay connected in a time of social distancing became crucial.

"We kept really close with each other over the summer, definitely some team bonding," Klosterman said. "In the fall, we were in our [COVID-safe] pods, but we still did our best to find time together as a team, do Zoom things together and really just practice our patterns as much as we could do in the fall."

When the team finally got together for the rescheduled season in the spring, it was clear all that work — spurred by Klosterman, a team captain as a junior — had paid off.

After a short regular season that saw the forward from Modena twice receive Empire 8 Offensive Player of the Week honors, Klosterman was named the Most Valuable Player of the Empire 8 conference tournament as she assisted on the winning goal in the semifinals and scored both the tying goal late in the second half and the game-winner on a penalty kick in extra time against Utica College as Russell Sage won its first women's soccer Empire 8 title.

"Oh my gosh," Klosterman said, "it was incredible. Everybody on the team, that was their goal. That's what we were striving for. Did we have a perfect season? No. But, in my opinion, winning a championship doesn't have to be a perfect season. If you have some upsets here and there, that's where you learn. That's where your growth comes from. That's what can make or break a championship."

Klosterman, who has already completed her undergraduate work at Russell Sage and is now embarking on a three-year graduate program in physical therapy, is one of the two collegiate honorees for the 2021 Capital District Sports Women of the Year awards.

"She is the consummate team player," said Russell Sage athletic director Sandy Augstein-Collins, "always willing to do what is needed for the sake of the team, above personal goals and agendas."

Klosterman finished with a team-high five goals in the Gators' shortened, seven-game spring season, but it was her willingness to lead by example that was her greatest contribution to the team, according to head coach Garrett Cobb.

"Hallie was a true driver in our team's efforts during the pandemic," Cobb said. "She was a main factor in keeping the team focused and on track for success. Her effort in doing so was amazing and showed initiative by motivating the rest of the team without my direction. The passion and purpose she displayed was evident and has been commended. It has also been noticed by her teammates, as multiple athletes are extremely motivated to follow her example."

Klosterman maintained excellence on the soccer field while also balancing service in the community and top marks in the classroom. Academically, she was named to Russell Sage's President's List, Dean's List and Athletic Honor Society from 2018 through 2021, and this past academic year was named to the college's Athenian Honors Society — all while maintaining a perfect 4.0 grade point average throughout her college career.

"It's always a challenge," she said, "but I find that the busier I am, the more organized I am. I'd rather be busier than not."

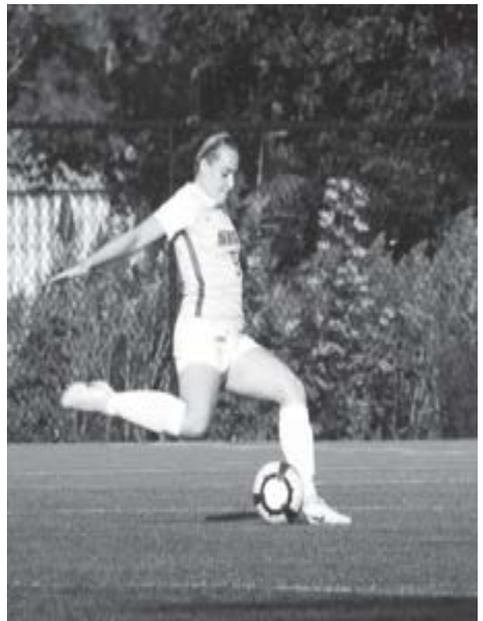
Contact Adam Shinder at ashinder@dailygazette.net or @Adam Shinder on Twitter.

Congratulations!
Hallie Klosterman
Capital District
Sports Women of the
Year Class of 2021!



Junior | Women's Soccer

Congratulations, Hallie! We are so proud of you!



We love you! Mom, Dad, & Lauren

Sara Langworthy Warrensburg High School

by Jim Schiltz
The Daily Gazette - Sportswriter



Sara Langworthy delivered in a big way in her time at Warrensburg Jr./Sr. High School, both in the classroom where she achieved valedictorian status, and in the sports of field hockey, basketball and softball where she not only excelled, but also served as a team captain in each of them.

“Sara truly embodies all of the characteristics necessary of being a student-athlete,” Warrensburg athletic director and varsity girls’ basketball coach Scott Smith said of the Capital District Sports Women of the Year honoree. “She is motivated, dependable, focused and goal-oriented. Sara will never stop pushing herself until she has reached the goals that she has set.”

Langworthy played five seasons of varsity field hockey and four seasons of varsity basketball and softball, yet the National Honor Society member still found the time and energy to put together a superb academic resume while additionally serving other Warrensburg students as her class secretary and a student council and Varsity Club member.

She graduated with a 4.0 career GPA, and earned the Saint Michael’s College Book Club Award for Academic Achievement and Social Conscience, St. Lawrence Augsburg Scholarship, and University of Rochester George Eastman Scholarship.

“Probably in ninth or 10th grade it was, ‘We’re going to do this,’” Langworthy said of her valedictorian spot in the Warrensburg 2021 class of 45. “I made it a goal. I wouldn’t have been happy with myself if I didn’t get it because I knew it was attainable.

“During her many scholastic pursuits, the 18-year-old would often think of Mary Ann Bump, the longtime, popular and enthusiastic Warrensburg field hockey and softball coach who passed away several years ago.

“She was very inspirational for me,” said Langworthy, who was twice named to the all-state field hockey team. “She taught me the game when I was

growing up, but many other things like how to be a good student and a good teammate, and how sports are about more than winning.”

Langworthy took her team captaincy as seriously as a major exam.

“I have always wanted to help others. That’s the career I’m getting into,” said Langworthy, who will work toward a nursing degree at the University of Rochester. “My thought has always been, ‘What if I was in that position?’ If I had a bad day or I wasn’t the best player, I would want someone there to offer help and offer guidance.”

Smith said Langworthy was like another coach during the winter.

“Unfortunately, our basketball season this year was not like our normal basketball season due to the COVID-19 pandemic,” Smith said. “We had a much more condensed season and played less than half the games we normally do. One of the things that I remember most from this season though, is the way Sara worked so hard with our underclassmen on their skills and development. When it was uncertain if we would even have a season at all, that is when Sara stepped up and provided leadership and guidance to the rest of her teammates. I will be forever grateful to her for that. She truly understood what it meant to be a part of our program and to be a leader.”

Langworthy left a lasting impression on Warrensburg varsity softball and field hockey coach Teresa Colvin, too.

“Younger athletes look up to her and I couldn’t ask for a better role model,” Colvin said. “She willingly does the tasks that often go unnoticed just because it is the right thing to do.”

Contact Jim Schiltz at jims@dailygazette.com
or @Jim Schiltz on Twitter.

Congratulations Sara! We are so very proud of the young woman you are.



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**Congratulations
Izzy!**

We are proud of you!

"Isabella's work in and out of the classroom led to the ultimate honor of being the valedictorian of her class. From day one she has been a mentor for the younger players. She strives to be the best and makes a plan to improve; she has been one of the leading scorers on the team the past two seasons." -Phillip Meashaw, Galway Girls Varsity Basketball Coach



"Izzy is the type of athlete who brings positivity, confidence, and unity to her teams and community at large. She has many academic accolades, even more athletic accomplishments, and she creates a culture of unity and progress. Izzy is the spark on the field, court or track." -Elise Britt, Galway CSD Athletic Director, Assistant Principal



**HOME OF THE
GOLDEN EAGLES**

Isabella Mancini **Galway High School**

by Michael Kelly
The Daily Gazette - Sports Editor



Above all else, Izzy Mancini loved being on the team.

"My favorite part of my years at Galway High School was playing on the sports teams," Mancini said. "I love the sport dynamic so much — being able to compete is the main thing, but all the sports I played were in a team setting."

And the 17-year-old who competed in basketball, softball and soccer led those teams during a high school career filled with accomplishments in competition, the classroom and in the community.

"Izzy Mancini is the athlete that every coach wishes they had 20 clones of to form their team," Galway athletic director Elise Britt said. "Izzy is the whole package and will continue to excel far past her high school career in athletics, academics and citizenship."

The valedictorian this year at Galway, Mancini is one of 10 high school honorees for the second-annual Capital District Sports Women of the Year awards. She said she was "extremely shocked" to earn such an honor, and it was one that had special meaning to her since one of her best friends, Rachel Wnuk, was one of the student-athletes recognized during the inaugural CDSWOY awards.

"To be able to get the same award, the year after, was incredible because I look up to her," Mancini said.

At Galway, her teammates often looked up to her. A four-year varsity athlete in basketball and soccer, and a three-year varsity competitor in softball, Mancini was a top player in the Western Athletic Conference. More than that, she was a leader on her sports teams.

"From Day 1, she has been a mentor for the younger players," said Phillip Meashaw, who coached Mancini in basketball. "She will frequently take time

to check in with them and is a role model for them by the way she conducts herself at practice and games."

"Izzy is a positive role model with all of her teammates," said Mike Smith, who coached Mancini in softball. "Izzy is a tough competitor who gives 110% in all that she does. It's a pleasure to know Izzy, and even a bigger thrill to coach her and watch her play."

During her years at Galway High School, Mancini earned a variety of academic, athletic and community honors. She also was active in clubs, such as the science club and Leo's club, and served as class treasurer.

Mancini will attend Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences and plans to pursue becoming a pharmacist.

As valedictorian, she addressed her senior class during graduation, and commended all her peers for how they handled a senior year amid the novel coronavirus pandemic. Rather than focusing on "what COVID did to us," Mancini said her Galway classmates became four-sport athletes, watched after younger siblings and took up part-time jobs while finishing up their high-school careers.

"You can push through it," Mancini said, "and my class did that."

So, too, did Mancini.

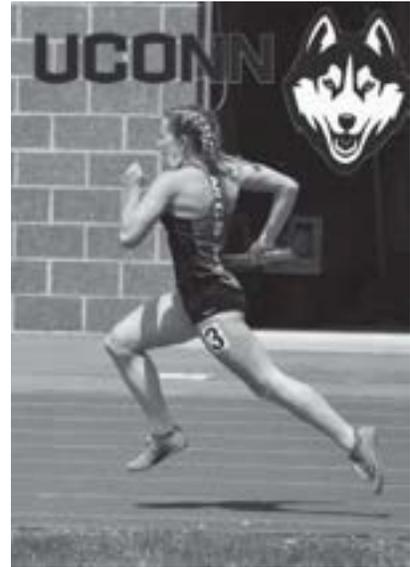
"Izzy is the type of athlete that brings positivity, confidence and unity to her teams and community at large," Britt said. "Izzy has many academic accolades, even more athletic accomplishments, and creates a culture of unity and progress."

Contact Michael Kelly at mkelly@dailygazette.net
or [@ByMichaelKelly](https://twitter.com/ByMichaelKelly) on Twitter.

Madison Relyea

Wow! What an exciting journey!

So proud of you Maddi! Love, Mama & Dad



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Love, Nikki
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**Keep chasing
your dreams
Maddi! Your
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Madison Relyea
Mayfield High School

by Michael Kelly
The Daily Gazette - Sports Editor



Her high school career was filled with championships and honors, but Maddi Relyea of Mayfield High School said selection as one of 10 high school honorees for the second-annual Capital District Sports Women of the Year awards held special meaning for her.

"It honestly feels amazing," the 18-year-old Relyea said. "It's one of the biggest honors I've received. It's great that it's about women in sports. I'm so honored to be selected for this."

During her high school career, Relyea won the 2020 Nordic ski state championship, and would have been favored to repeat in 2021 if the sport's championship was not canceled because of restrictions related to the novel coronavirus pandemic. She competed in multiple state championships as a runner, and starred on both Mayfield's cross country and track and field teams, and graduated holding a variety of school records.

"I'm just so thankful for how it all went," Relyea said.

Relyea credited her coaches — including Rebecca Newkirk and Sharon Roth for cross country, Ryan Bornt for skiing, and Jon Caraco for track and field — for turning her into a championship-level competitor who will run at the University of Connecticut. While Relyea competed for a smaller school, she was especially grateful for how her coaches made sure she could compete at the highest level and at invitational events often primarily crowded with large-school athletes.

"They knew when to push me," Relyea said. "I've had the perfect coaches."

She added: "I'll miss them all so much. I need to come back and see them."

A National Honor Society member and a scholar athlete, Relyea also was involved in her community, volunteering and helping at a variety of events. Meanwhile, the three-sport athlete also spent time working in the summers at her family's Gordon's Lakeside Marine in Mayfield.

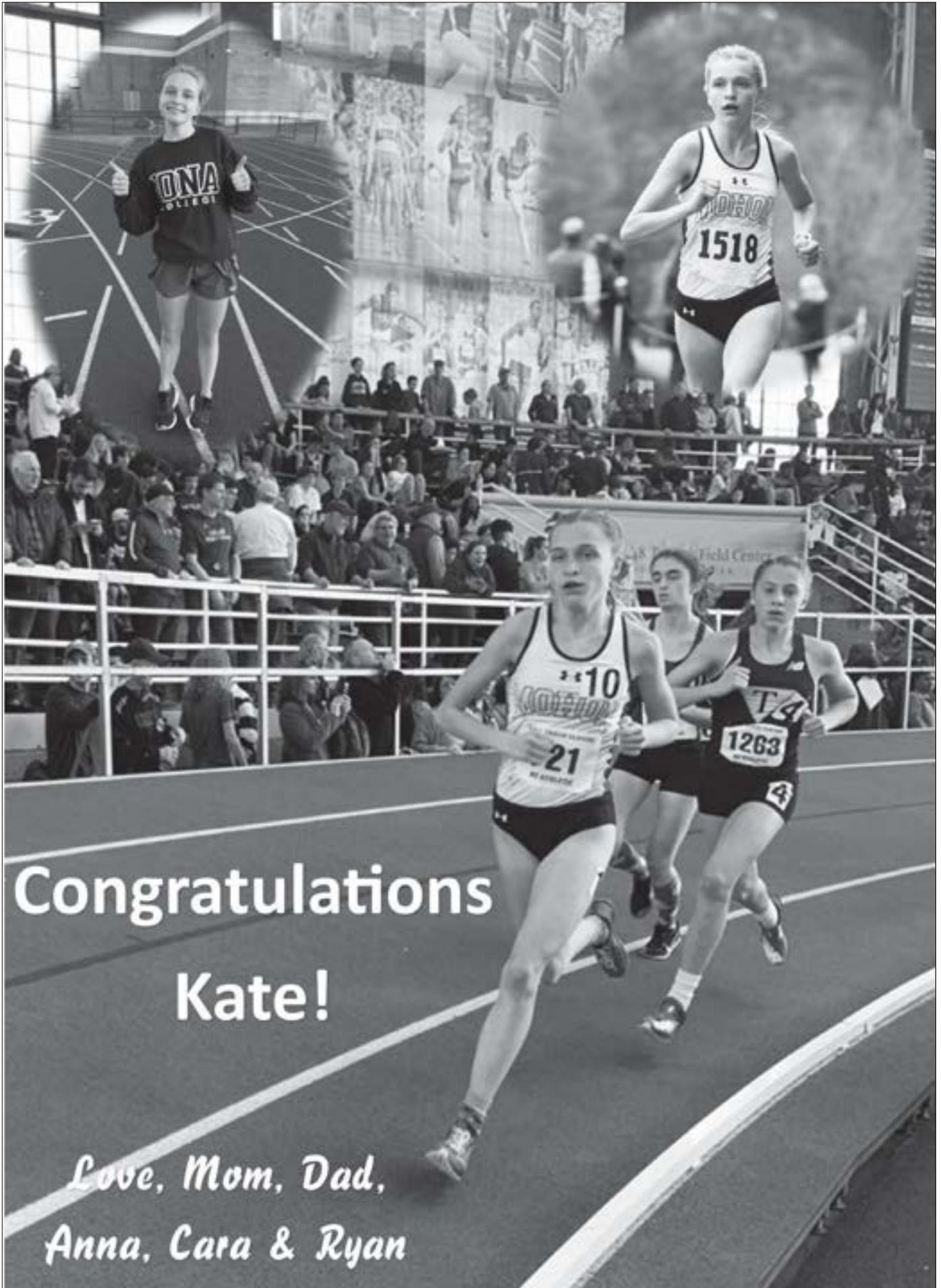
At UConn, Relyea knows what she plans to study.

"I've always been interested in psychology," Relyea said. "I took a psychology course, too, in my senior year of high school, and that really nailed that down for me."

A Mayfield native, Relyea said she "wanted to go to a really big school" for college, and she'll certainly get that at UConn. She loved growing up, though, in Mayfield and developing so many close friendships with her teammates and peers.

"I'm so thankful I went to Mayfield," Relyea said. "You don't get that tight-knit community and friendships at a big school. I can name literally everybody that goes to my school. Here, you're with all your best friends, and that's the best thing you can get."

Contact Michael Kelly at mkelly@dailygazette.net
or [@ByMichaelKelly](https://twitter.com/ByMichaelKelly) on Twitter.



**Congratulations
Kate!**

*Love, Mom, Dad,
Anna, Cara & Ryan*

Kate Sherman
Mohonasen High School

by Mike MacAdam
The Daily Gazette - Sportswriter



The athletic achievement portion of Kate Sherman's high school resume requires multiple volumes, like a set of encyclopedias.

A grand pair of bookends complete the picture, though, as the Mohonasen High graduate bracketed her outstanding career as a distance runner with a stellar academic record on one side, and a busy schedule of school and community service on the other.

For that, Sherman was named to the Capital District Sports Women of the Year's class of 2021.

"I was very honored to be picked as one of them, and I was honestly kind of shocked, because I didn't know it was an award that was do-able for me," she said. "But I thought it was really cool, and it's really great that they were doing specifically a women's award."

Over the course of her running career at Mohonasen, Sherman broke 11 school records at various distances in indoor and outdoor track, while winning multiple Section II championships, and holds the school record on almost all of the cross country courses that Mohonasen typically competes on.

She reached the cross country state meet for the first of three times as a freshman, and finished 16th there as a sophomore and seventh as a junior, while winning the Section II championship and earning all-state first-team honors, a first for a Mohon runner.

Sherman said her most memorable race was a third at sectionals when she was a freshman, because, for one thing, it served as a springboard for everything that followed.

"That was my first time going to states, and I feel like it was the first time that I performed really well and it was that start of everything like that, because I went to states two years after that, too," she said.

"It definitely helped me prepare better. I knew what to expect for when I would actually be more competitive in the state meet."

During her pandemic-disrupted senior season, Sherman managed to be named Mohonasen's Athlete of the Year while also earning the Artemis Award for having the highest athletic point total and a 96.7 academic average. She has been a NYSPHSAA scholar-athlete every season and serves on the Mohonasen Athlete Advisory Committee and served on the Suburban Council Athlete Leadership Council for two years.

Sherman was an officer for the Mohonasen Student Athletic Club, a community service organization involved in activities such as Toys for Tots, City Mission, Mohon Food Pantry and Anchor Room, which collects clothing donations for students.

"And with our team, we always do a Thanksgiving food drive and put together boxes," she said. "My school helps a lot with that, but also my parents helped me get involved in stuff like that. It feels good to know you're helping someone, especially at the holidays like Thanksgiving. It's really important, and I always feel happy after."

Sherman will attend Iona College, where she will run track and cross country and plans to major in political science.

Contact Mike MacAdam at mikemac@dailygazette.com or @Mike MacAdam on Twitter.



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Tonight's Guest Speaker Tara VanDerveer – Stanford University

Tara VanDerveer, the all-time winningest coach in women's college basketball, is the virtual guest speaker for the 2021 Capital District Sports Women of the Year Awards Gala.

Coach VanDerveer is a member of both the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame and the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame. A five-time national coach of the year and 16-time Pac-12 Coach of the Year, VanDerveer, who prior to coming to Stanford served as head coach for a combined seven seasons at Idaho and Ohio State, has accumulated an impressive 1,125-255 (.815) record in her 42 years as a collegiate head coach and an 973-204 (.827) record over 35 seasons at Stanford.

The 2020-21 season was a momentous one for VanDerveer, as she led the Cardinal back atop the collegiate mountaintop, all while maneuvering a global pandemic, and also broke the all-time wins record in women's college basketball. On December 15, 2021, she became the sport's winningest coach, breaking Tennessee's Pat Summitt's mark of 1,098. Stanford finished the year 31-2, winning both the Pac-12 regular season and tournament titles, earning the No. 1 overall seed in the NCAA Tournament and claiming the national championship for the first time since 1992.

VanDerveer became the second women's coach to reach 1,000 career wins when Stanford beat USC on Feb. 3, 2017. She has led Stanford to three NCAA titles (1990, 1992, 2021). She has advanced the Cardinal to 13 NCAA Final Fours, 23 Pac-12 regular-season titles, 14 Pac-12 Tournament crowns and 32 trips to the NCAA Tournament.

Her teams have won 20 or more games 36 times, including each of the last 20 seasons, and collected at least 30 victories 16 times. She has accounted for 973 of Stanford's 1,149 total victories since its first varsity season in 1975 (85%). Overall, VanDerveer has guided her players to two Wade Trophy Player of the Year honors, two Naismith Player of the Year honors, 32 first-team All-America honors, and 18 Pac-12 Player of the Year awards.

In 1995-96 VanDerveer served as head coach of the USA Basketball National Team, leading the team to a 52-0 exhibition record and then to the Olympic gold medal with a perfect 8-0 run at the 1996 Atlanta Games.

VanDerveer is a 1975 graduate of Indiana University, where she was a dean's list scholar for three years and a sociology major. An avid piano player in her spare time, VanDerveer is a Boston native who grew up in Schenectady. She is also a published author. Her book *Shooting From The Outside*, which chronicled her 1996 Olympic and National Team experience, was released in September 1997.



Congratulations Jenna on an outstanding accomplishment! We are proud of you and all you have done. The Maple Hill Athletic Department wishes you all the best!





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Annie Scherer, a singer/songwriter from Voorheesville, N.Y., will be the guest performer for the 2021 Capital District Sports Women of the Year Awards Gala on Monday, August 9 at the GE Theatre at Proctors at 7 p.m.

In April 2021, Annie was voted the best local performer in New York's Capital Region according to the readers of the *Albany Times Union*.

Annie combines her passion for classic rock icons such as the Beatles and the Rolling Stones with her love for alternative artists like Lana Del Rey and Lorde. Her music fuses strong lyrics with haunting melodies.

Annie's musical career began at a young age. At just six years old, Annie began piano lessons and devoted 13 years to classical performance. A year after she started playing piano, Annie wrote her first song. By age 12, Annie had taught herself guitar and started gigging and writing more seriously.

In 2015, she began recording her first EP, *'Dreams Like This'* with the help of David Flint, a Nashville producer. The EP featured five original tracks and was released on January 1, 2017. That same year, she won a regional contest to sing the National Anthem at Tri-City Valley Cats.

As a student at The College of Saint Rose, Annie was awarded the Producer's Choice for the 'Celebration of Music' PBS special in Troy, NY,

hosted by Ethan Bortnick. She won a trip to Los Angeles, where she was taped performing her original song, 'Andy Warhol'.

After releasing several singles, Annie's first full-length album, *'Garden Bed,'* debuted on March 26, 2021. Annie wrote all the songs and produced all but one track. *'Garden Bed'* showcases Annie's skills as a composer and multi-instrumentalist, as she performs the trumpet, piano, guitar, and ukulele, while arranging string quartet scores for songs like "Kaleidoscope" and "Ashamed." The album was widely praised by numerous outlets, including *American Songwriter*, the *Albany Times Union*, and *NYS Music*.

In addition to her musical aspirations, she is a visual artist who does charcoal portraits. She recently graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Science in Music Industry.



"A talent worth becoming acquainted with."
- Jim Shahan, Times Union

"I can only imagine that people will find themselves similarly as inspired by Annie Scherer's striking vocals and expressively boundless approach to songwriting."
- Amelia Vandergast, A&R Factory

garden bed annie scherer

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we congratulate Beth Irwin for earning
the prestigious Capital District Sports Women of the Year award.
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The Capital District Sports Women of the Year Executive Board: Brendon Phillips, Eric McDowell, Jennifer McDowell and Alissa Collins. (Photo by Lauren Hull Photography).

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Clare Howard

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*"To accomplish great things, we must not only act,
but also dream, not only plan, but also believe."*



—Anatole France

CONGRATULATIONS SARA



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Best of Luck at the University of Rochester!!!
~ From all of your Coaches and Teammates



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The first Capital District Sports Women of the Year Awards Event took place on August 18, 2020 at the Desmond Hotel in Albany, New York. Pandemic restrictions were in place, but each honoree was allowed to bring two guests.

Here were the 2020 recipients.

2020 GRAND COLLEGIATE WOMAN OF THE YEAR:
Morgan Burchhardt, The College of Saint Rose

2020 GRAND SCHOLASTIC WOMAN OF THE YEAR:
Lydia Ware, Averill Park HS

The other members of the CDSWOY Class of 2020:

Liz Brady, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
MacKenzie Brown, Rensselaer HS
Amelia Canetto, Taconic Hills HS
Morgan Fish, Fort Edward HS
Megan Flynn, The Sage Colleges
Rachel Hunsicker, Lake George HS
Brytney Moore, Northville HS
Brooke Pickett, Stillwater HS
Makenzie Terrell, Middleburgh HS
Lauren Willis, South Glens Falls HS
Rachel Wnuk, Galway HS

For a video of the 2020 Event, a look at the program and photos, go to CDSWOY.COM and the top bar, "Honorees."



2020 CDSWOY Grand Scholastic Award Winner Lydia Ware of Averill Park High School (left) is joined by the CDSWOY Grand Collegiate Award Winner Morgan Burchhardt of The College of Saint Rose at the Awards Event.

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2020 CDSWOY Awards Photo Gallery

Photos by Lauren Hull Photography



Marisa Jacques of Spectrum Sports served as the M.C. ▲



Chris Plonsky of the University of Texas, a prominent hall of fame collegiate athletics administrator, addressed the inaugural class as the virtual guest speaker. ▲



A look at our special awards for our special recipients. ▲



Lauren Willis of South Glens Falls provided smiles with her remarks. ▲



Grand Scholastic honoree Lydia Ware of Averill Park joins her parents with the award and a New York State Senate Proclamation. ▲



Brooke Pickett of Stillwater during her acceptance speech. ▲



Grand Collegiate honoree Morgan Burchhardt of the College of Saint Rose at the post-event press conference. ▲



RPI's Liz Brady was the first student-athlete to speak at the event. ▲



Rachel Hunsicker of Lake George is on her way to accept her award. ▲



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