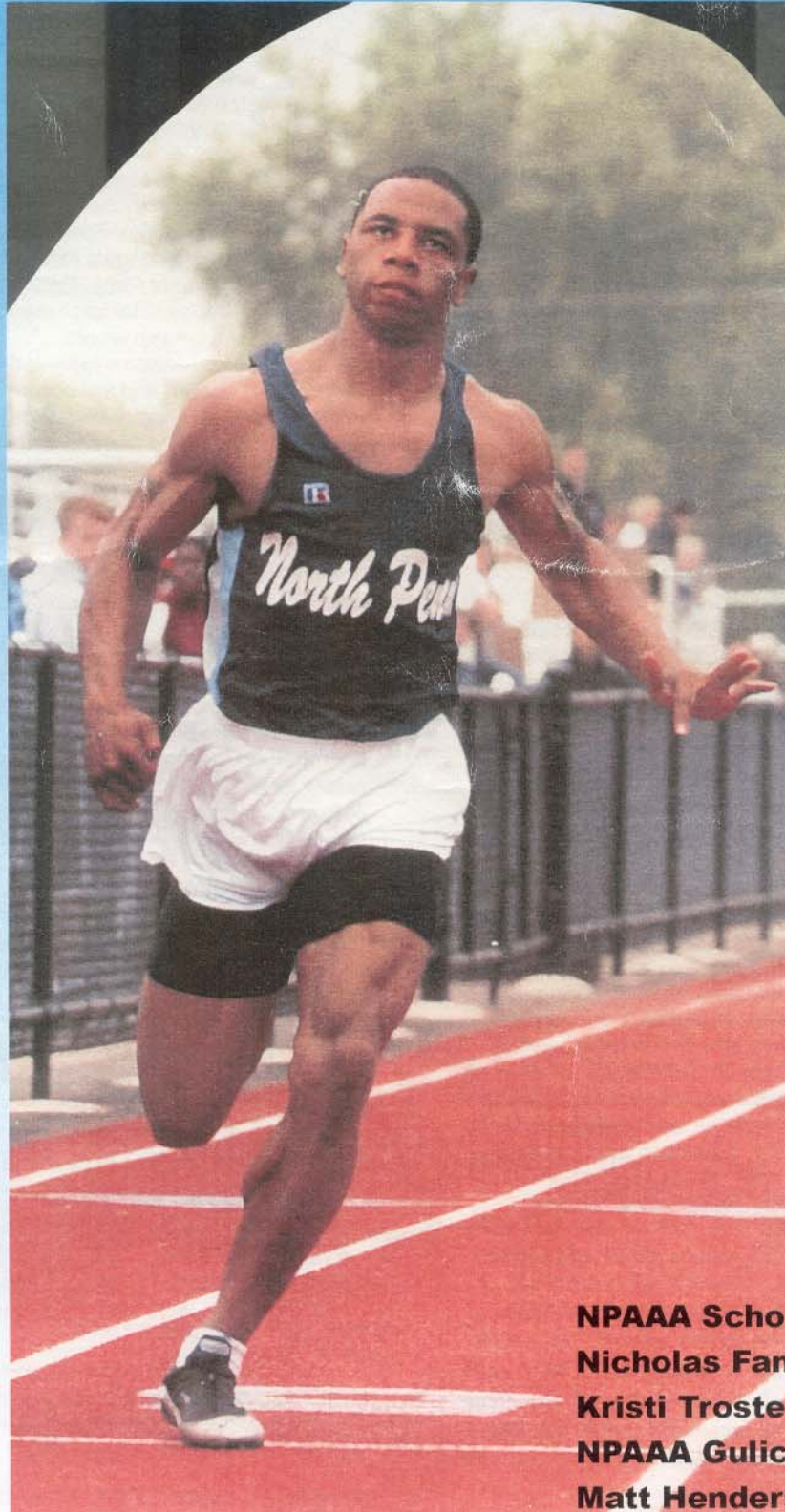


Knight Times

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Photo/ Chris Stanley/Reporter

NPAAA Scholarship Recipients
Nicholas Fanslau
Kristi Troster
NPAAA Gulick Memorial
Matt Henderson (pictured)

History of North Penn Area Public High School's Sports 1920 to Present

by Dick Shearer

Track dynasties are not created overnight, yet a combination of athletic excellence and properly primed public relations can go a long way. As early as 1920--long before Jim Crawford Sr. arrived on the scene--Lansdale High School was developing a national reputation, thanks to a series of superb relay teams that were perennial winners at the Penn Relays in Philadelphia.

The 1920 team--comprised of Russell Kratz, Harry Hunsberger, Charles Beeman and Warren Wieand--claimed victory in the suburban mile relay, winning in a time of 3:40.2, a half second slower than the relay record established five years earlier by Cheltenham. Runner-up Media was eight yards off the Lansdale's pace.

Word of the Maroon's success was top news on the front page of the May 6 *Lansdale Republican*. And no wonder. Joseph K. (Dobbie) Weaver not only coached the quartet to victory, but he was also editor of the newspaper -- hence he had a public forum to extol his runners' accomplishments.

According to Weaver's account, so great was the feeling of school pride that a special assembly was held Monday morning (the races were held Friday and Saturday) to celebrate the victory with speeches, cheering and music--'a rousing exercise', the coach said.

The following year -1921- Lansdale's relay team was well regarded, well recognized and was no longer in a position to surprise unsuspecting opponents. Still the Maroon prevailed in the Suburban mile, besting its previous time with a 3:36.8 to erase Cheltenham's six-year-long Penn Relay record. The next day, Lansdale finished one-fifth of a second behind West Philadelphia in a competition among the best scholastic relay teams in the nation. The 1921 team was comprised of Russell Kratz, Wieand, Beeman, and Willard Kratz, Russell's brother.

The Republican's account of the victory went something like this:

'Upholding Lansdale athletic tradition in a wonderful exhibition of fight, courage, and simon-pure superiority, Lansdale High's Relay Team swept all competition behind at Penn, Friday, won the Suburban High School Mile-Relay Championship and shattered the previous championship record...'

'...The Lansdale team is the idle of the entire Philadelphia section and the occupants of the University of Pennsylvania cheering stands shouted approval to the 'little wonder school' as the Maroon and White flashed past the tape in front of schools ten times as large.'

Weaver's relay dynasty was put to the test in 1922. Wieand and Russell Kratz were gone, Beeman was now team captain and Willard Kratz was the only other returnee from the 1921 squad. The 50 percent turnover rate opened up spots for Chandlers and George Sands, then a sophomore. The faces changed but the results were much the same. Lansdale captured its third consecutive Penn Relays Suburban title in the Friday competition and finished a mere two yards off the pace in Saturday's nationals. Sands, who later went on to greater athletic accomplishments and a long career as a Lansdale area physician, was an easy winner in both of his quarter miles at the 1922 Penn Relays, and served notice that the success of Lansdale High's track program was not a short-term proposition.

Dobbie Weaver was not hesitant to boast of his relay teams' accomplishments in the newspaper. But his runners lived up to his lofty rhetoric--year after year. It's not boasting if you can back up the talk with solid performances. That's what they did--in a legacy that now spans more than 80 years.

Dick Shearer is a former editor of The Reporter. He is now President of the Lansdale Historical Society, which provided the information for this column.

Knight Times



North Penn High School Sports News

Girls Hoops: Senior gets 1000th point in loss to Abington. *By Tim McManus, staff writer.*
Towamencin - Lindsay Sock scored 11 points in her final regular-season game as a Maiden to surpass the 1,000 point milestone in a 62-45 loss to Abington.

Wrestling: Zac Fryling repeats as champion at Hershey to claim his second PIAA Class AAA state championship crown. Fryling overcame an early deficit to win the match by a 12-6 decision, giving him his second 160-pound state title in as many years.

Boys Swimming: North Penn wins fifth state title in seven years. *By Kevin Hunter, staff writer.* At State College, North Penn wrapped up the Class AAA team title Saturday by outscoring second-place Parkland 177-137 on the Penn State campus.

The Hatfield Museum & History Society

The Hatfield Museum & History Society is a Non-Profit Corporation formed for the purposes of locating, identifying, displaying and preserving books, documents, photographs, memorabilia and any other items relative to the history of the Borough of Hatfield and Hatfield Township, and Hatfield High School Sports.

Please contact: Larry Stevens at 215-362-0428.

North Penn/Souderton Area Sports Hall of
Fame Inductee

May 2, 2003

***Lee Saverio:** A 1947 graduate of Lansdale High School, Lee Saverio lettered three years in baseball and two years in basketball.

He was all-league in both his junior and senior years, and was MVP as senior.

He also played American Legion baseball for two years. He was captain both years and was named to the Eastern Pennsylvania Legion All-Star game as well

as the Pennsylvania All-Stars at Philadelphia's Shibe Park.

Locally, he played for the Lansdale Sons of Italy, Doylestown AC, North Wales AC and the Lansdale Tigers.

He played professional baseball for the Lansdale Dukes of the Independent League, two years for the Detroit Tigers of the North Atlantic League and one year for the New York Yankees of the Inter-State League.

After his playing days, he coached American Legion for 21 years, winning 12 Bux-Mont League titles, two district titles and was a 1962 runner-up.

He also coached for the Lansdale Tigers of the Perkiomen Valley Twilight League.

He served on the Board of Directors of the Lansdale Little League, helped start and coach both the Lansdale Community Baseball League and the North Wales Realtors of the Perkiomen League and coached the Lansdale Knee-High Team of the Bux-Mont League.

In Memoriam

George J. Atwood: George J. Atwood, 81, a longtime resident of Lansdale, died February 26, 2003 in Holy Cross Hospital, Fort Lauderdale, Florida. He was the husband of Pearl C. (Nace) Atwood. They had been married for 57 years. The Atwood's wintered at their home in Florida.

He graduated from the former Lansdale High School in 1938 and attended the University of Pennsylvania until entering the U.S. Army to serve during WWII. He was a survivor of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

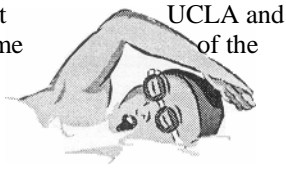
Mr. Atwood, who played football and baseball for the Maroon during his high school days, spent five years in the South Pacific. When he got home, he returned to the gridiron, playing for the Lansdale Hawks in 1946 and 1947. But it was softball that prolonged his athletic career. Mr. Atwood was a stellar fast-pitch hurler, playing for many Bux-Mont area teams including the Sons of Italy, the Cannoneers, St. Marie and First Baptist Church of Lansdale. He also competed in many softball tournaments during a 24 year pitching career that stretched from 1946 to 1970.

,Reflections/Excerpts from speeches given by Tony Bartle and Kathy Kreisher Rhodes. January 6, 2003 annual membership meeting.

Tony Bartle-

"I graduated here in 1980. Had a wonderful experience here as well as the summer programs in Lansdale. Some of the things that I think are tied into success in athletics and business that some of you might run into later in life and now as you compete here at NP. First is confidence. The first five guys in an event are only a step apart but the guy in front, if it seems that he slows a little, then so does the guy in second. That first place guy has the confidence to stay there and he does. The best three guys I ever raced against always had the confidence they would

win. Next is a winning attitude. Without it you are not going to win at anything. Motivation is another asset needed. I remember my freshman year at the beginning of the season. Some of the guys who had been beaten the previous year, beaten up pretty bad by USC, seemed to feel that the meet wouldn't turn out well. And the next day we lost 80 to 20. Some of the guys met with the older swimmers and discussed that meet and got ourselves motivated to go to USC the next year where they had not lost at home for 24 years and we beat them. Seeing the smiles on the faces of the older guys on the bus ride home was motivation that lasted for many years. Perseverance is a big thing. I was voted MVP Freshman and had success in most of my meets. I had a continuing back and forth dialog with my father all through that first year. All my brothers and I had a great relationship with our father. But my father passed away that summer and I had a lousy sophomore year only competing at a high level in the 200 fly. It seemed that I had no one to swim for that year. I came back in my junior year and the miles we swim (about 12 a day) seemed like drudgery. I decided then that I would swim for myself and I got back on the track, had two good years and felt successful. But it was because I persevered. But there are always bumps in the road and it is how we handle those bumps that makes us a success or not a success. But for me, being in the right place at the right time has worked for me. Also having three of the greatest brothers in the world has also helped. My mother and father sacrificed greatly for all of us and having parents that care has to be right up there with any success a man can get. And those relationships have helped me tremendously in being a parent myself."



Kathy Kreisher Rhodes-

"Before I came to NP I knew a lot about the school because my parents both went to Lansdale High School and I have three older brothers who all went here and played sports. My coaches here were great. In tennis I had Dot Ball; in basketball I had Joan Moser and Jim Crawford; and in softball I had Miss Joan Moser again and Miss Claire Gilchrist. My best sport was softball. In 10th grade we were Bux-Mont champs and went to regionals. In 11th grade we were Bux-Mont champs, runners-up in regionals and went to states and lost in the finals. Selma Robinson, who teaches here at NP, was instrumental in helping me with my education. She was a graduate of Lock Haven and she encouraged me to also go there. My brother Kurt also encouraged me to attend college. My first year at Lock Haven I played soccer and softball. I continue to play softball today. I am a professional but do not get paid to play. Often when we play other teams we are playing against players who do get paid to play. I like to play against other



women from around the country and Canada and I am still hanging in there. Being here at North Penn really got me on my way with sports and going to college and into teaching."

Where are they now?

Greg Matusky, captain of the 1979 NPHS track team, lives in Ardmore, PA, with his three children and his high school sweetheart, the former Judy Rodkey, who was all- state in cross country and a member of the 1979 Pennsylvania State Champion 4 X 800 team. Greg continued his track career after high school as a three-year letter winner at the University of Pennsylvania, running the intermediate hurdles.

Greg now owns Gregory FCA, one of the region's largest public relations firms with 27 employees. In 2002, along with former NPHS track captains Steve Bond, Class of 1978, and Greg Sargent, Class of 1980, Greg helped found the James K. Gullick Memorial Fund, which raised \$6,500 last year to fund annual scholarships for North Penn Track athletes. Last year's winner, Steve Craig, received a \$1,500 scholarship which went to help finance his education at Duke University.

"North Penn track and field represented a defining moment in my life," says Greg. "Without it, I don't know if I would have ever found a comfortable place in high school. With it, I gained a degree of confidence that has served me well over the years. North Penn has an outstanding track and field tradition, starting with James Crawford, Sr. including coach Gullick, and now being continued by Dick Swanker and the world-class job he is doing with the program. Thousands of kids have benefited from the program, as seen by the number of people who contacted us, contributed to the Fund and offered their support in the future. That's a great testament to the quality of the program and coaches who have served it over the years." Greg's father, Paul Matusky, was assistant principal of North Penn High School through the 1970s.



To contribute to the Fund, contact Greg Matusky at 610-642- 8253 or greg@gregoryfca.com

Photo caption: Greg Matusky beats Pennridge's Tim Lewis at the 1979 Penn Relays. Lewis went on

to play defensive back for the Greenbay Packers and currently is the Defensive Backs Coach for the Pittsburgh Steelers.

The James K. Gulick Memorial Fund

The following was excerpted from the James K Memorial Fund announcement letter signed by: Steve Bond, Gregory Sargent, and Greg Matusky, past track team captains.

Last year's first-ever winner Steve Craig received a \$1500.00 scholarship and is now a freshman at Duke University, competing in cross country, and winter/spring track. Steve, anchored North Penn to the national indoor 4x800 meter relay national title twice, while anchoring the Penn Relays Championship Distance Medley Relay to victory in 2002. We are all proud that your support is helping him extend his education at Duke.

This year we plan to make a second \$1 500.00 scholarship available to another senior member of the North Penn Track Team.

Please make contributions to:
James K. Gulick Memorial Fund
27 West Athens Avenue
Suite 200
Ardmore, Pa. 19003

The gift is tax deductible and every dollar raised goes directly to scholarships.