

2015 Spring Sports Review

It was one of Fox Chapel Area High School's best spring sports seasons in recent years. Baseball, softball, boys' tennis, and boys' volleyball were section champs and advanced to the WPIAL playoffs. Boys' and girls' lacrosse also qualified for WPIALs. Boys' volleyball, ranked number one in the state all season, won the WPIAL championship for the first time since 2006, and were the PIAA runner-up. Two individuals placed at the state championship level, including runner Elias Graca, who won the WPIAL championship in the 800-meter runner and set a new meet record for Class AAA . During track's indoor season, Elias was ranked number two in the state and second best in the country in his signature event. The other student-athlete who placed at the PIAA championship games was singles tennis player Sid Rajupet, a junior, who placed fourth.

Baseball (8-2 section/14-8 overall)

Five-year head coach Michael Frank said he couldn't have been more pleased with this year's results. For the first time since 1999, the team earned the WPIAL AAAA Section 3 title. They advanced to the WPIAL playoffs, where they won their first playoff game since 1978. Coach Frank attributed their success to an enormous amount of commitment, selflessness, and a team-oriented mentality. Although the team graduated its entire starting outfield, there will be plenty of experienced players returning next season to continue the momentum created this spring. Named to the all-section first team were senior Greg Yaksich, and juniors Josh Anderson, Patrick Monteverde, and Jacob Pilarski. All-section second team picks were senior Dan Vargo, junior Zachary Burkhart, and sophomore Josh Kieffer. Junior Michael Marsico was voted all-section honorable mention. In addition, Coach Frank was named WPIAL AAAA Section 3 Coach of the Year.

Lacrosse

Boys (3-3 section/9-5 overall)

Second-year head coach Chris McCrady said great senior leadership, experience at almost every position, and extreme dedication from players and the coaching staff helped lead the lacrosse team to the WPIAL playoffs again this season. Voted all-section first team were junior midfielder Levi McCrady and junior attackman Tucker Root. Levi also was named to the all-WPIAL team and voted All-America. With the bulk of the offense returning next year, Coach McCrady is optimistic about what they will accomplish.

Girls (6-6 section/8-7 overall)

The team had a great year with exceptionally strong play from the entire field, including very good performances from rookie junior goalies Nicole Susi and Maddie Wateska. Their efforts paid off with a return to the WPIAL Division I playoffs. Sophomore Megan McCrady led the team with 57 goals and set a new school record when she scored her 100th career goal halfway through the season and in only two years with the team. Junior Nikki Stumpf and Megan were named all-section first team, while Megan also received all-WPIAL honors. With 10 out of 12 starters returning, including the three top scorers, Coach Jen McCrady thinks the team will be well-

prepared to vie for the section title next season and advance even further in the playoffs. As a nice finish to the season, Coach McCrady, who heads both the field hockey and lacrosse teams, was voted one of only two coaches to receive the C Harper Positive Coach of the Year Award.

Softball (10-2 section/11-6 overall)

The softball team had perhaps the biggest turnaround ever in Fox Chapel Area athletics. Last year they won only one game all season; this year the team won more games than any other Fox Chapel Area High School softball team in the past 20 years! In fact, prior to this season, the softball team had only two winning seasons in 11 years. Their resilience and strong senior leadership led them to their first section championship since 2004, and the team advanced to the WPIAL playoffs. Seniors Kelsey Feeney and Megan Walkowski, and sophomores Alyssa Guzzie and Calle Zmenkowski were voted all-section first team. Samantha Olbrich, a junior, was voted to the all-section second team.

Boys' Tennis (6-1 section/10-4 overall)

A young team of talented and eager players advanced to the WPIAL quarterfinals. Individually, senior singles player Sid Rajuput won the section title, advanced to the WPIAL and PIAA championships, and placed fourth in the state. Head coach Dave Prevost says many different players gained experience and should continue to progress well in the next few years. Coach Prevost retired at the end of the season after 35 years of coaching. For many years, he coached both the girls' and boys' teams and had a combined total of more than 600 wins.

Track

Boys (2-4)

The team had good representation at WPIALs this year, with two runners advancing to the PIAA championships. This is the third consecutive year the boys' team had at least one WPIAL champion. Seniors Elias Graca (800), Jacob Halasowski (3200), Kyle Smecker (100 and 200), and Zach Kiehn (200); and junior Mike Bove (800) all qualified for the WPIAL meet. Also qualifying was the 4 x 100 meter relay team of seniors Zach Kiehn and Kyle Smecker; junior Demetri Mele; and freshman Andrew Jeffrey. The 4 x 400 team, which included Elias, Mike, Zach, and sophomore Kyle Breault, also advanced. Elias won the WPIAL championship in the 800-meter run and broke the WPIAL AAA meet record. He and Mike advanced to the PIAA qualifier. Elias placed fourth at the PIAA finals. This season Elias also broke a 35-year-old school record in the 800, placed second in the 800 at the state indoor championship, and was ranked second in the country in the same event.

Girls (1-5)

The girls' team sent four individuals to the WPIAL qualifiers this season. Representing the Foxes were seniors Jenny Mountz (pole vault), who set a new school record this season, and Alanna Palumbo (shot put); junior Mary Humphrey (1600 and 3200); and freshman Caelan Miller (1600). Caelan also qualified for the PIAA individual championship in the 1600.

Boys' Volleyball (14-1 section/17-2)

The Foxes had a spectacular year culminated by a trip to the PIAA AAA boys' volleyball finals match, where they ended the season as the state runner-up and ranked second in Pennsylvania. Along the way, the team became the WPIAL AAA champions for the first time since 2006, and earned the WPIAL AAA Section 3 champs title. The year began with high hopes in the pre-season when the Pennsylvania Volleyball Coaches Association ranked the team number one, a title they held throughout the entire season and into the PIAA playoffs. All year, they played with an "X" on their backs as teams sought to knock them off of the leaderboard. Despite everyone else's best efforts, the Foxes won three out of four very important tournaments and twice beat last year's top-ranked team in Pennsylvania, as well as former WPIAL champs, North Allegheny High School. They wracked up victory after victory, and their momentum never let up, minus one loss to a powerful Seneca Valley team in the last game of the regular season. The Foxes got revenge for that loss when the team beat Seneca to win the WPIAL championship. Despite their loss in the state finals, this was a team unlike any other that Coach Phil O'Keeffe had coached in his 13 years at Fox Chapel Area High School. Their achievements far outweighed their loss in the PIAA finals, and they will long be remembered as one of the best teams in school history. Senior Jaysen Zaleski was voted to the WPIAL Class AAA All-WPIAL team for the third consecutive year. Fellow seniors Max DePellegrini and Andrew Tublin were voted to the All-WPIAL squad for the second straight year, and Ben DePellegrini, made the same team for the first time. All-section and all-state sections have yet to be announced.