

LONG ISLAND

**THURSDAY
APRIL 6, 2006**

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THE WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS



Inspirational

**Michael Powers is back on the field
for Massapequa lacrosse, Pages 4-5**

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STARTING LINE

2 Minute Drill



No matter what happens on the field of play this season, *the* feel good story of the boys lacrosse season is **Michael Powers**.

The Massapequa standout is back on the field competing after missing last season because of treatment for a form of bone cancer. Powers, who will attend national power John Hopkins in the fall, made his return on March 21, netting a goal and an assist in the Chiefs' 11-2 victory over **Carey**. Powers had a cancerous tumor removed from his left hip in March, 2005, two months after earning All-Long Island honors at quarterback. He was an inspiration for his lacrosse teammates, who captured the school's first Nassau Class A title since 2001.

Now Powers is looking forward to being an integral part in Massapequa's bid to not only repeat as county champs but capture a state title. Getting the latter would be the perfect ending to Powers' high school career.

- John Myers

NOTEBOOKS

Two to tango

Holy Trinity girls lacrosse is counting on facing a familiar foe in this year's playoffs. - Page 11

Conference jump

Roslyn's success last spring puts it in line for a leap up to Conference I, which has the team simultaneously excited and nervous. - Page 12

Experience counts

Hampton Bays girls track is counting a senior class full of talent to bring about a successful season. - Page 13

Cleared path

A Nassau realignment in boys volleyball this season and experienced players should help Wantagh make the playoffs. - Page 14

To Our Readers:

Newsday's hive! is taking a break and will not publish April 13 or April 20. Newsday's hive! will resume regular publication on April 27.

- John Myers

FEATURE

BOYS LACROSSE

Uniformly unfazed

Mt. Sinai boys lax takes coaching carousel in stride

When you consider that **Mount Sinai** senior **Chris Ritchie** has endured three coaching changes in four seasons, you'd expect confusion instead of confidence. You might think the Mount Sinai boys lacrosse team is a program in turmoil instead of one on the rise.

Jason Sanders stepped in to take over as coach after Mike Hoppey left to share coaching duties with Joe Cuzzo at his alma mater **Ward Melville**. And while the transition wasn't seamless, it has been positive.

"We've had three different coaches - that's tough," said Ritchie, an All-American attack. "But coach Sanders has worked with us before so we're used to him. It is two different styles of play but you get used it. It can be confusing for the younger kids. But it's always good to have different experiences to fall back on."

Mount Sinai dropped an 8-7 decision in overtime to **Shoreham-Wading River** in the Suffolk Class C title game last May. It was the third straight trip to the final for the Mustangs, which finished the season at 15-4.

Yet from defeat comes hope. From another coaching change comes renewed focus. Sanders, the varsity assistant in 2003 and junior varsity coach in 2004, was a familiar face to Mount Sinai players. He took last season off to spend time with family. But now he's back and the fifth-year program is on track for another extended playoff journey.

"It was an easy transition," said Sanders, who owns his own busi-

ness and has a holdover in the form of junior varsity coach Jim Droge. "I've known the kids a while."



Jason Molinet

"I like the way he pushes us," senior goalie **Dave Erdman** said. "He's always looking toward the big picture."

The Mustangs made the playoffs in 2002, their first season as a varsity program. Mount Sinai has gotten better with each season, although the

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— Chris Ritchie, Mt. Sinai senior

final result has been the same - a crushing loss in the Class C title game.

"We've gotten closer each year," the Cornell-bound Ritchie

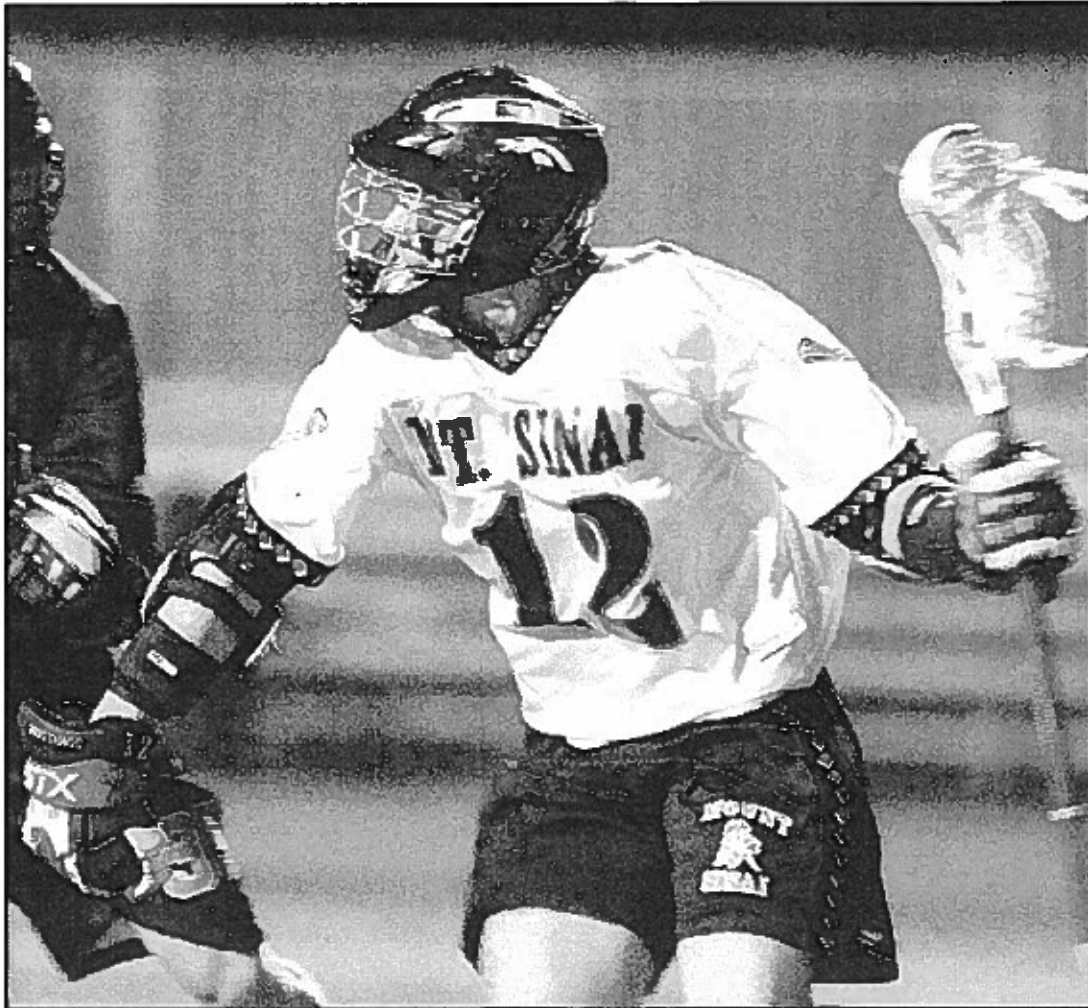


PHOTO BY JAMES A. ESCHER

said. " Hopefully, this year we'll get back there and get a win."

When Sanders, 31, a Ward Melville and North Carolina graduate, landed at Mount Sinai as an assistant, 20 players were with the program. The varsity has 30 players his spring, including 12 seniors.

"Our entire offense is returning and we have a young defense," said Erdman, who owns 600 career saves. "Once we put it all together that's going to get us over the hump. I'd like to say we're going to states."

That kind of depth has allowed Sanders to ask more of his team. When he looks out at them, he thinks back to his playing days at Ward Melville, when the middies

Chris Richie, an All-American attackman, is on his third coach in four years at Mt. Sinai, but he keeps it all in perspective.

on the bench were better than most starters they faced.

"It's good to have that kind of competition," said Sanders, who enlisted the help of former Ward Melville teammate Harold Drumm as a first-year assistant. "It forced the boys to dig deep and play harder."

Mount Sinai might not have star-quality backups, but senior long pole middle **John Attridge** and All-Suffolk juniors **Tyler McCabe** and **Jim Wittpenn** are special. Senior **Michael Hacker** leads the young defense, which includes sophomore defensemen **Connor Fitzgerald** and **Michael Sweeney**. They have the Mustangs off to a promising 2-0 start.

"I like the chemistry," Ritchie said. "From the seniors on down, everyone looks out for each other."

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