

Mt. Sinai lacrosse continues to impress

BY MEREDITH DELISO

Many teams in the beginnings of a varsity career do not complete the year with a winning season, granting a trip to the playoffs. Nor do they foresee any chances at a championship title. For the Mount Sinai varsity boys' lacrosse team, the opposite has proven true, convincingly.

Last year's 6-6 league record put the Mustangs in the Class C playoffs, where they lost in the first round to Shoreham-Wading River. This year, the team improved to an 8-6 finish in Division II. As the second seed, they faced first seed Babylon for the Class C Championship. Both teams played each other previously on May 2 in what proved to be an almost equally contested match that ended in Babylon's favor (10-9). The Mustangs had two weeks between their last home game and their final against Babylon to prepare for the showdown for Class C champion.

In another closely contested and highly anticipated game, the two teams met on May 30 at Ward Melville for the final before a crowd of 500. It was anybody's game from the beginning to the very end. After the first half, the game was at a standstill with the score tied at 3-3. It could have gone either's favor, but the Mustangs were working to make it theirs. In the third quarter though, Babylon took a 6-4 lead. The Mustangs three goals in the fourth only equaled Babylon's effort, and Babylon went on to be the Class C champion with the 9-7 win. The Mustangs ended their season 10-7 overall. Babylon went on to face Manhasset

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on June 3 for the Long Island title, losing 10-6.

Senior midfielder Anthony Poerio was the leading scorer with two goals. With one goal each was senior Steve Schroeder (attack) and juniors Kevin McCabe (attack), Tyler Meyers (attack), and Jack Wittpen (defense). Freshman David Erdman had seven saves in the goal.

Coaching the team this year was Bob Mac Devitt. He concluded his fifth year of involvement in the Mount Sinai lacrosse program, which was also in its fifth year. He began when the program was an intramural program, in which the current seniors on the team played were involved in as eighth graders. Last year, in the team's first varsity season, the Mustangs battled back from a 1-5 league record to win their last five out of six games to reach the playoffs. To make it that far was a big achievement for the young program, whose talent made up for its inexperience at that higher level of competition. This year, the team secured a spot in the playoffs after their game against Islip on April 30. Their remaining league season saw tough competition from such heavyweights as Comsewogue and Shoreham.

Joining Mac Devitt as coach this season was Jason Sanders, last year's head coach at Stony Brook. He was the defensive and face-off coach for the Mustangs this year. Jim Langton volunteered his time for the team, working on an individual level with the athletes.

The team's strength this year was due in part to its large returning team — 10 out of the 13 starters from last season made up this year's roster of 23. Skill-wise, "We are strong all over," said Mac Devitt, "but especially in midfield." Five "excellent midfielders," said to Mac Devitt, were Bernstein, and seniors Tom Bruce, Greg Holt, Sean Hoglund and Anthony Poerio. Bernstein was new to the Mount Sinai lacrosse program this year, proving to be "excellent on face-offs," as well as "adding a scoring punch." He had the most goals at midfield with 43, earned all division honors this season, and will be a big force in the returning squad next season.

Poerio, a team captain, was new to the midfield position this year, but that didn't stop him from becoming one of the best in the county. After finishing last year's season as an all-county defenseman, he was moved to the midfield to bring

strength there. He proved to be a big part of the team there in defense, getting ground balls, and assisting. He got better with each game, said Mac Devitt. Poerio, who earned all county honors, will play at Ohio State next year.

Another captain and high scorer for the team was Schroeder. Last season he ended with 84 points, and earned all county honors this season. He will play lacrosse for the highly competitive United States Naval Academy next year. Steve was joined by freshman Chris Ritchie and McCabe as the team's high scorers. McCabe ended with 43 goals for the season and Ritchie with 34.

Mount Sinai's captains also included seniors Craig Montelbano — who has shown "excellent leadership," said Mac Devitt — and Tom Trapani, who earned all division honors this season and will play at SUNY Albany next year.

On defense, seniors Devin Bing, Charlie Friedmann, and Tristan Tricarico and sophomore Adam Johnson stood out, as well as freshman goalie David Erdman.

The team graduates 10, nearly half the squad, but looks to return strong. The remaining spots will be filled in by members from the junior varsity team that had a squad of 29 this year. With the program only moving forward, Mount Sinai looks to be a common as well as impressive name in Suffolk County lacrosse. No longer an up-and-coming program, Mount Sinai has arrived, and is making a lot of noise.