

photo link: White Clay Creek State Park

# TOWN SQUARE LIVE

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February 15, 2024  
Vol. 5, Issue 7





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Tariah Hyland Wins Youth Award for Activism



Most School Referendums in 14 Years



St. Elizabeth Holds Off Middletown Run



photo link: Delaware Museum of Nature & Science

*Community*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**





# WILMINGTON'S TARIAH HYLAND WINS JOHN LEWIS YOUTH AWARD FOR ACTIVISM



BY JAREK RUTZ

A 20-year-old college student from Wilmington, who pushed for Black history to be included in the Delaware school curriculum, has received an

award named for a Civil Rights leader. Tariah Hyland, a junior at [Howard University](#) in Washington, DC, was given the 2023 [John Lewis Youth Leadership Award](#) by Delaware Secretary of State Jeff Bullock.

The award honors the accomplishments of Congressman John Lewis, specifically those rooted in activism and courage during the Civil Rights Movement and his long tenure of public service. Hyland’s inspiration to give back to the community stems from her belief that students and young people need to have a voice.

“I knew the work was being done, but I didn’t really see it being done at the pace or in the way that I felt that it needed to be done,” she said. “I didn’t feel like students were being mobilized enough or being put at the forefront enough especially within the education space, when a lot of decisions are being made on behalf of students, but you don’t see any students at the decision-making table.”

That frustrated her and she chose to put action behind those feelings. “Not only was I able to begin to do

this work, but I was able to bring other students to the source with me because I knew that my voice wasn’t enough,” she said. “It wasn’t enough to be the only voice in a lot of the conversations that were happening.”

Hyland said she was shocked to win the award mainly because the winner was supposed to be announced in December, but she was notified in January. When she received the email of her recognition, she was on the phone with her cousin and immediately broke down in tears. “I was very surprised, thinking and assuming they already notified the winner, and so I was very shocked,” she said.

As any young adult experiences, Hyland said she was at a point where she was talking to her cousin about being frustrated with the current place in life she was at, looking for clarity and purpose. “So I think the timing was just so divine,” she said.

Hyland won the award due to her role in legislative change, specifically [House Bill 198](#), which required the inclusion of Black history and culture in Delaware’s K-12 school curriculum. Collaborating with legislators and other young students during her time at St. Georges Technical High School, Hyland’s efforts helped push the state to take steps towards addressing historical inaccuracies and promoting diversity in education.

Sponsored by Rep. Sherry Dorsey Walker, D-Wilm-

ington, HB198 was signed into law by Gov. John Carney in 2021.

The John Lewis Youth Leadership Award was established in February 2021 by the [National Association of Secretaries of State](#), as a way for association members to recognize a gifted, civic-minded young person in their state each year. The recipient should demonstrate leadership abilities, have a passion for social justice and be motivated to improve the quality of life in their community, much like the namesake of the award.

Some of Lewis’s accomplishments include:

- In 1961, at the age of 21, Lewis was one of the original 13 Freedom Riders.
- In 1963, Lewis was the youngest speaker at the March on Washington and also one of the “Big Six” leaders that organized the march.
- In 1965, Lewis helped lead the Selma to Montgomery marches. The first march took place on March 7, 1965 at the Edmund Pettus Bridge where unarmed marchers were attacked by state troopers. The event later became known as “Bloody Sunday” and was a turning point in the Civil Rights Movement.
- His activism at an early age continued throughout his life and he served as a U.S. Congressman for 33 years for Georgia until he passed away in 2020.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)





# NO TV, BUT STILL BIG WINS AT PLAYHOUSE 'PRICE IS RIGHT LIVE'

BY KATIE KAZIMIR

Contestants don't need an audience ticket for a chance to "come on down" and play "The Price is Right Live" April 16 at The Playhouse on Rodney Square in Wilmington. That's good news for fans of the popular game show, as tickets are quickly selling out, said Daniel Palmieri, director of sales and marketing for The Playhouse.

"Two hours before the show, people can come register to participate, no purchase necessary," Palmieri said. He said non-ticket holders would have to wait in the lobby. If selected, show staff will bring them on stage. Participants who are not in the audience will have to leave the auditorium once their game is completed.

"The show tries to keep it as fast as possible," Palmieri said. Palmieri noted that the live show is not taped for


television, but offers the audience and contestants the same experience. It will be hosted by Todd Newton, a game show host for television shows like "Whammy," "Hollywood Showdown" and "Press Your Luck."

### STILL 'PRICE IS RIGHT'

"It's still 'The Price is Right' that everyone knows and loves," he said. The Big Wheel and the fabulous Showcase can also be expected during the live game show. Palmieri said he personally cannot wait for the show's Plinko game.

"That, or the guy who climbs up the mountain," he said, referring to the popular Cliffhangers segment.

Prizes will be similar to those viewers see on the television version of the show, such as appliances, vacations and cars. "Lucky audience members can even win prizes

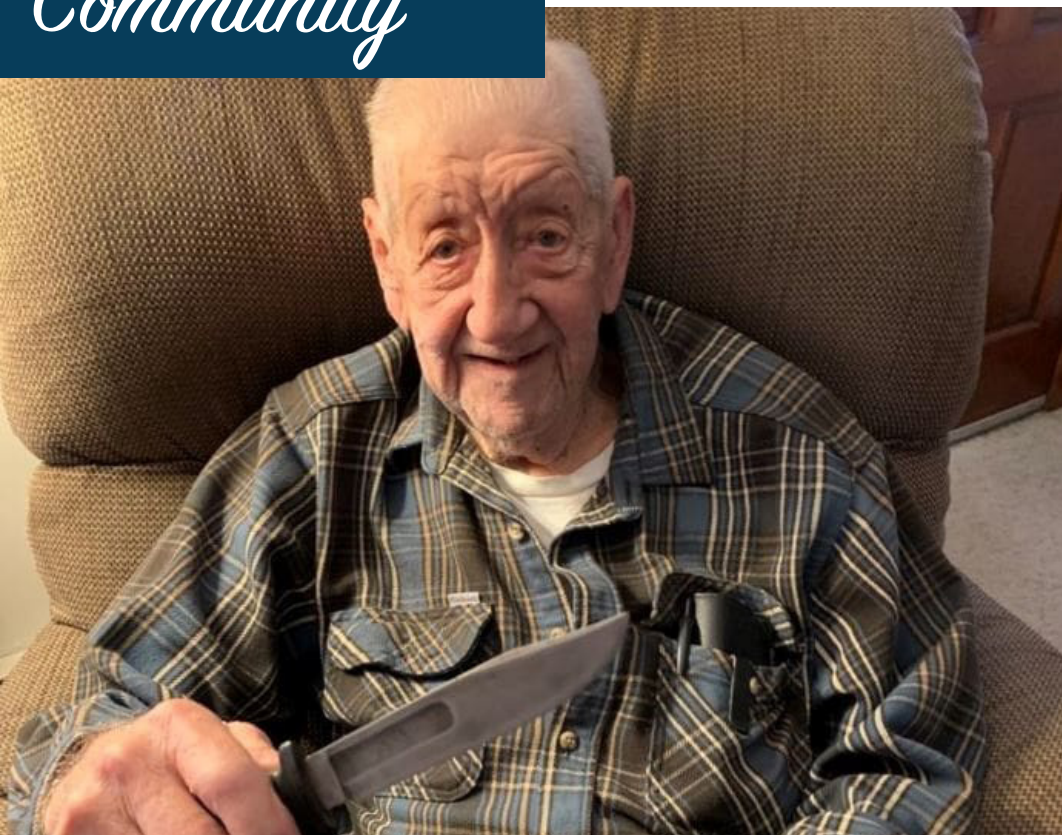
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# MILFORD MAN'S SERVICE TOOK HIM AROUND WORLD

Maloney carried was a hunting knife his daddy had given him before he left for war. He didn't fret.

"You're always going to find somebody dead and he would have rations and stuff," the 98-year-old Milford resident said. "And I knew guns and stuff like that were plentiful."

Participating in D-Day is one of many dramatic memories that Thomas Andrew Maloney has of his three years overseas during World War II as a member of the 295 Combat Engineers. His crew built roads and bridges for troops to pass over. He can still reel off his serial number: "32. 75. 48. 48. You never forget that."

Maloney was 19 when he was drafted in 1942. Raised on a farm in Milford Neck, a few miles east of Milford, he had dropped out of high school in 11th grade and was working at a bomber factory in Baltimore, fitting ball turrets into planes on an assembly line.

The oldest of six boys, he was the first of five to go to war. His war would take him to Africa, Italy, the British Isles, Belgium, France and Germany. He'd help burn wool uniforms in Africa, suffer through the Battle of the Bulge without winter clothes, single-handedly shoot down a strafing German plane on Utah beach, blow up a bunny he thought was a Nazi, hunt deer for fresh meat with a Native American sergeant who called him "country boy," ...

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

BY BETSY PRICE

*Editor's Note: Tom Maloney died Sunday after a devastating fall at his home at the age of 100. Funeral arrangements are pending. It's not hard to tell from this 2021 article what a character he was.*

Tom Maloney and his commanding officer were the first off their landing craft at Utah Beach during the 1944 D-Day invasion of Normandy. They dropped into 10 feet of water. Both were forced to ditch their packs and guns to reach the surface again. Able to climb back on the transport, Maloney's enraged captain grabbed a gun off one of his men and put it to the head of the sailor who had landed the boat.

"I'll blow your damn head off," the captain told the sailor. "You back this boat up. Next time she stops, she better be high and dry." She was and the troops raced across the sand amid bullets and bombs. The only thing

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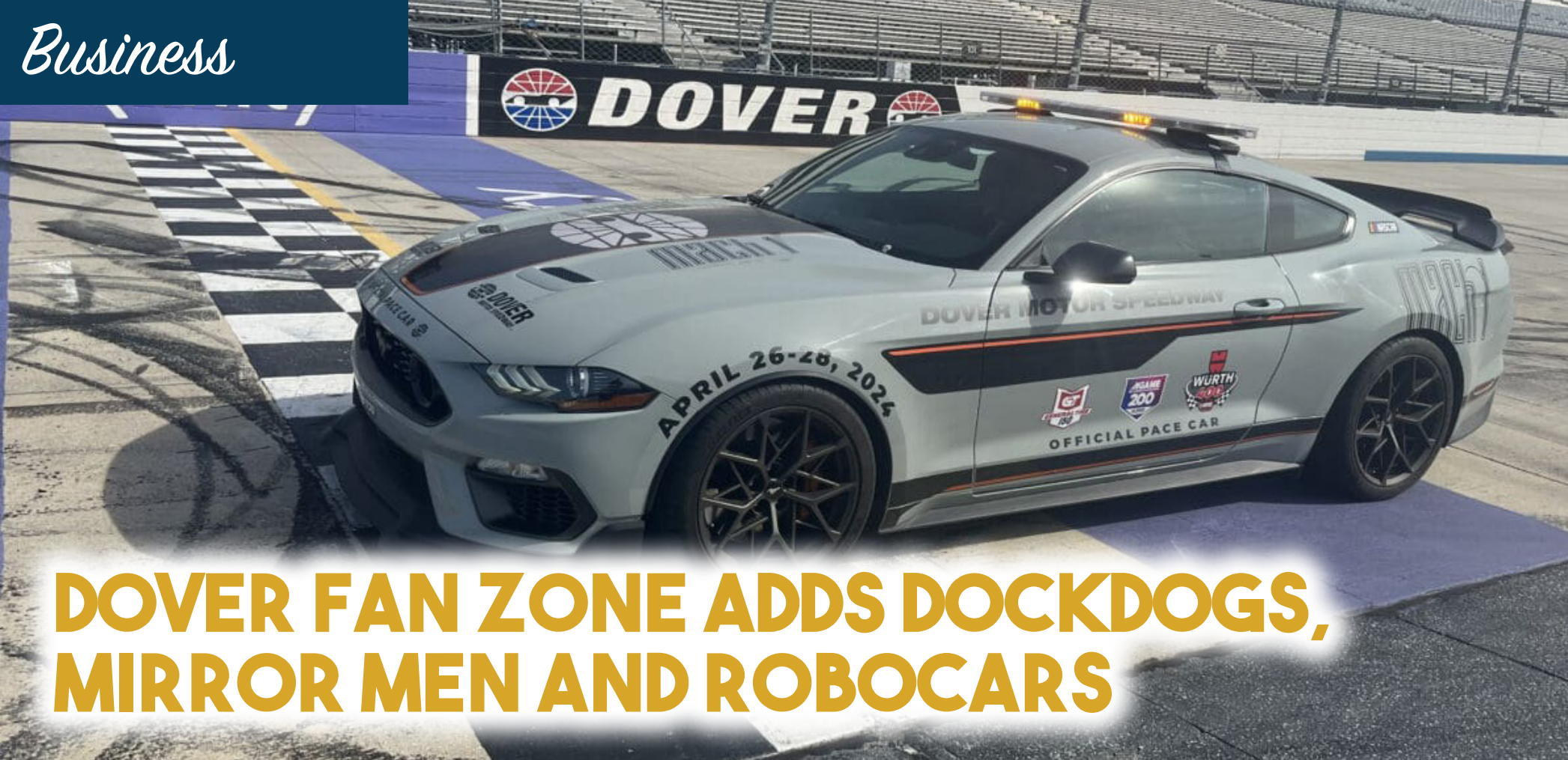




*Business*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**





# DOVER FAN ZONE ADDS DOCKDOGS, MIRROR MEN AND ROBOCARS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Team mascots, diving dogs, bumper cars and a giant rubber duck will add to the merriment at the Dover Speedway’s Fan Zone April 26-28. Best part: It’s all free as the speedway hosts a NASCAR tripleheader weekend.

“It’s not only the action on the track that makes a Dover NASCAR weekend a one-of-a-kind experience, but also all the entertainment outside the grandstands that truly makes the Monster Mile a must-see stop for all fans,” said Gary Camp, Dover Motor Speedway’s vice president of marketing and communications.

**The Fan Zone**, which opens at noon Friday, April 26, and 9 a.m. on Saturday, April 27, and Sunday, April 28, will have four new attractions this year:

**DOCKDOGS:** The world’s premier canine aquatics

company will have multiple performances with leaping dogs.

**MIRROR MEN:** A performance with shimmering outfits and fancy moves, as well as comedic antics.

**ROBOCARS:** Transforming performers are cars one minute and life-sized action figures the next, with highly skilled operators bringing brightly colored, unique and innovative costumes to life, with amazing driving skills and crowd interaction.

**STROLLING PLANT:** The leafy favorite adapts humor and ‘plant-related banter’ for all ages and plays well with the whole family. He can be seen standing or sitting in his flowerpot or driving around, standing on a mini-segway to engage with guests.

Some of the previously **announced** attractions this year include a 60-foot-tall rubber duck, bumper cars, a fearless floes thrill show, micro-professional wrestling stilt walkers, and an appearance from MTV legend Riki Rachtman, who will be emceeding several events. There’s also a large display of the country’s finest military assets called the USO Military Village.

There will be an autograph signing session on Friday, April 26 and Saturday, April 27. Friday’s starts at 2:15 p.m. and features the next generation of top drivers, while Saturday’s starts at 9:45 a.m. and features the stars of the NASCAR Xfinity Series.

- Mascots and cheer squads include:
- University of Delaware: **YoUDee**, Baby Blue
  - Wilmington Blue Rocks: Rocky Bluewinkle
  - Towson University: Doc the Tiger
  - West Chester University: Rammy
  - Pocono Raceway: Tricky
  - New Hampshire Motor Speedway: Milo the Moose

- The full 2024 race schedule includes:
- Friday, April 26: General Tire 150 ARCA Menards Series race (5 p.m., broadcasted on FS1)
  - Saturday, April 27: A-GAME 200 NASCAR Xfinity Series race (1:30 p.m., broadcasted on FS1, PRN, SiriusXM)
  - Sunday, April 28: Würth 400 NASCAR Cup Series race (2 p.m., broadcasted on FS1, PRN, SiriusXM)

“The Dover Fan Zone has become known as the best on the circuit, and we take a lot of pride in delivering unexpected experiences and free fun all weekend long,” Camp said.







# DE RANKED 49TH FOR PASSENGER FATALITIES IN CAR CRASHES

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Delaware ranks 49th — and it’s better to be at the bottom of this list — of the most dangerous states to be a car passenger. The ranking comes from looking at data on fatal crashes from 2017 to 2021 from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, specifically the number of passengers involved in fatal crashes and the number of those who suffered fatal injuries.

Delaware ranked 49th, with a fatality rate of 23.23%, with 82 passengers killed out of 353 involved in fatal crashes. Nevada ranked 50th, at 20.94%. Hawaii, New Jersey and Florida round out the bottom five.

New England and Midwest states topped the list and the announcement offered no suggestions why. Vermont reported the highest fatality rate (38.67%), followed by New Hampshire, Nebraska, Rhode Island, South

Dakota, West Virginia, North Dakota, Kansas, Iowa and Maine.

### FATALITIES STATS

In 2022, Delaware tallied a record 165 lives lost on the roads. In 2020, the state announced a five-year **Strategic Highway Safety Plan** that was subtitled “toward zero deaths.” A 2005 federal act requires such plan to get full federal funding.

The plan emphasizes eight areas: intersections, distracted driving, roadway departure, pedestrians, motorcycles, unrestrained motorists, speeding and traffic records. The eight areas account for 94% of fatalities. Seven of the eight were the most prominent factors in 2015-19 crashes, with intersections by far the worst.



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Roadway departures occur when the car leaves the roadway and hits something else, like a tree. Unrestrained motorists are those not using seatbelts or car-seats. Delaware State Police maintains a newsroom **archive** of fatal crashes.

Nationwide, during 2017-21, more than 32,000 passengers were killed in crashes, with a fatality rate of 26.42%. “The data not only reflects the tragic loss of life, but also serves as reminder of the importance of driving with care and caution, whether you’re in the car by yourself or with passengers,” said Matthew Pfau, partner at **H&P Law**, credited with compiling the data.





# STATE PROGRAMS LIKE EDGE HELP WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES GROW

investment on a 3-to-1 basis. Businesses that are less than seven years old and employ less than 10 people are eligible to apply. Five STEM-based companies receive up to \$100,000 for eligible expenses in each cycle while five Entrepreneur Class (non-STEM) businesses receive up to \$50,000. This month, the program awarded hundreds of thousands in grants.

Droneversity is using its 2023 \$50,000 grant to find an indoor training facility. “There are few available and affordable buildings in and around Wilmington with ceilings high enough for drones to fly safely indoors,” Cooper says. “Weather and temporary flight restrictions caused by how often President Biden is in Delaware often make outdoor flying problematic for teaching purposes.”

The pandemic led Brianna Westover and her husband to open **Studio B** in Milford, a print shop, gallery and creative coworking space. She didn’t love her job selling cars, and she kept thinking about a honeymoon trip to Seattle that included a visit to a small-town print shop where the couple fell in love with the idea of a print shop with other bells and whistles. Westover and husband Ben Kepler used their nearly \$50,000 EDGE grant to open Studio B in the former Delaware Eye Center, which had examination rooms the couple converted into rentable studio space.

“We’re developing our creative studio spaces; building a schedule of classes; collaborating with local artists to expand our consignment gallery; offering a selection of high-quality art supplies and stationery; and expanding our in-house printing capabilities,” Westover says.

Beyond the EDGE competition, Delaware offers a range of other services aimed at helping new small businesses build a stronger foundation for success. Recent winners praise business managers from the Delaware Division of Small Business who provide mentoring services through the EDGE application and pitch process and in other areas.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)



BY PETER OSBORNE

When Ashlee Cooper was offered the opportunity to return to the teaching job she lost during the pandemic, she declined because her toddler’s school hadn’t reopened yet. She opted instead to open an event-planning company.

Her “ah-ha” moment came when someone saw her standing on a chair to photograph a balloon sculpture and suggested she use a drone instead. Cooper found an online course and became an FAA-certified drone pilot. That led to her opening **Droneversity** in April 2021 to prepare students who want to make money flying drones pass the FAA test.

## WOMEN-OWNED WINNERS

Cooper is one of 40 women-owned businesses to win an **EDGE grant** from the Delaware Division of Small Business since they began in spring 2019, including five of 10 awarded in the most recent cycle **announced** in early February. Through the EDGE grant, the Delaware Division of Small Business matches a winning business’s



photo link: Alex Munsell / Unsplash



*Food & Dining*

TOWN SQUARE LIVE





# 2024 WILMINGTON BEER WEEK ADDS BREWS OUTSIDE CITY

BY PAM GEORGE

Move over Philly. The craft brew scene in New Castle County is turning the area into a regional destination for beer lovers.

“It’s very important to remind everyone how good the craft beer scene is within our state borders and urge them to enjoy more beers made locally,” said Daniel Sheridan, owner of [Stitch House Brewery](#) in downtown Wilmington. “We really do have some talented brewers around here.”

Find out for yourself during [Greater Wilmington Beer Week](#), which runs from Feb. 27 to March 3. The event features brewpubs, breweries and beer-centric restaurants throughout New Castle County. And if you visit just five, you might win \$200 in gift certificates.

## COVERING THE BEER BASES

The list of local breweries runs from large to small. For instance, [Iron Hill Brewery & Restaurant](#) started in Newark, but currently has 22 locations, including brewpubs in Georgia and South Carolina. Meanwhile, [Autumn Arch Beer Project](#) in Newark is a small-batch brewery known for experimental beers.

This year, organizer Julie Miro Wenger hopes people will venture beyond the familiar and try new places and homegrown products. Pick your town of choice.

For instance, [Wilmington Brew Works](#), Iron Hill and Stitch House are in the city, while [Hangman Brewing](#) is in Claymont. [Bellefonte Brewing](#)’s flagship location near Prices Corner and [Dew Point Brewing Co.](#)

are in the suburbs, and Autumn Arch, [Midnight Oil Brewery](#), [Twisted Irons Craft Brewing](#) and [1937 Brewing Co.](#) are in Newark. [JAKL Beer Works](#) and [Crooked Hammock Brewery](#) are in Middletown.

## SIP AND SAVOR

Some might find the inclusion of restaurants puzzling. But there’s a logic behind the decision.

“Not everyone visits breweries, but everyone goes out to eat,” noted Craig Wensell of Wilmington Brew Works.

“We love seeing our partnering restaurants featuring our colleagues’ products and it’s so much fun to take my production team around town, buy our own beer and chat with people who may just be trying our beer for the first time,” he continued.

The restaurants include [Chelsea Tavern](#) and [Dorcea](#) in the downtown district. Also in the area is [The Chancery Market Food Hall & Bar](#), which has eight restaurants. Trolley Square is well represented by [Kid Shelleen’s Charcoal House & Saloon](#), [Trolley Tap House](#), [Kelly’s Logan House](#) and [Grain Craft Bar + Kitchen](#). [Two Stones Pub](#) in north Wilmington is also participating.

“Brewers hope restaurants will feature their products, and, hopefully, they will create specials and events throughout the week showcasing the local beers and collaborative beers brewed in Greater Wilmington,” Wenger said.

For instance, Grain will feature Midnight Oil Brewery and Crooked Hammock Brewery products. Dorcea will have three local beers — Wilmington Brew Works, Midnight Oil and Twisted Irons — on tap for \$2 off.

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photo link: Town of Middletown, Delaware



*Government*

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**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**





# INCLUSIONARY ZONING COULD BOOST AFFORDABLE HOUSING

go,” Voynak said. Landlords are maximizing profits at the cost of tenants’ safety, health and well-being, Voynak maintained.

Affordable housing is a huge problem in Delaware and across the country and has repeatedly come up in government hearings — including a joint hearing for the state Senate and House housing committee. The problem affects lower-income people and families, whether you’re young and starting a new job, a single parent, a senior who rents or a family with lower-paying jobs. It’s considered one of the triggers for homelessness.

## INCLUSIONARY CODE REFORMS

The city of Newark’s **Planning Commission** believes zoning code reforms could increase affordable housing opportunities. “We’ve done a lot of research for years on this,” said Newark Senior Planner Michael Fortner.

About 50% of Delaware renters and 20% of homeowners are living with housing challenges including cost burden, overcrowding and/or inadequate conditions. That’s in addition to 8% of Delawareans living in their cars, couch surfing or temporarily living with friends. That equates to nearly half of the state’s population facing challenges due to a lack of affordable housing.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

BY KATIE KAZIMIR

Johanna Voynak knows from first-hand experience the pitfalls faced because of a lack of affordable housing. She has been in temporary housing since last September after a flood caused a sewage backup in her Newark rental apartment. The sewage backup was due to the property not being properly maintained by the owner, and resulting mold from the flood was not taken care of, Voynak said.

She and other tenants of the apartment building were faced with health issues from the mold as well as finding new residences, Voynak told Newark city planners during a virtual public workshop on housing issues last week. This has proven to be difficult. Voynak already struggled to find the ill-maintained rental she was forced out of due to the limited housing market.

“The lack of affordable housing enables landlords to not maintain properties when tenants have nowhere to



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# RETIREES TO HEALTH INSURANCE COMMITTEE: THANK YOU

BY BETSY PRICE

A joint meeting of the House and Senate health committees only needed half the time it had allotted to listen to a proposal about changing state employee health-care. Apparently mindful of the deluge of retirees who reacted angrily to news in 2022 that the state was moving retirees to a Medicare Advantage plan, the joint meeting planned to run from 2 to 5 p.m. Monday.

Only nine retirees asked to address the hearing and most of them thanked the Retiree Healthcare Benefits Advisory Subcommittee exploring insurance options for going above and beyond and seeking to find long-term solutions. All of them said thank you to the committee.

Garry Bodine, a school custodian, testified that he worked three jobs and stayed with the state even though he could have made more money elsewhere because he valued the benefits. Rebecca Scarborough, a member of

the retiree activist group **RISE Delaware**, said she had something to confess to the health committees.

“When the committee was first formed and talked about, I wrote in opposition to it,” she said. “It was a way I felt to appease the more than 30,000 retirees. And I was wrong. Because the committee was fantastic.”

The retiree committee met throughout much of 2023 and in early January issued its recommendations. Number one: Never put Delaware state employees on a Medicare Advantage plan.

Lt. Gov. Bethany Hall-Long, a public health nurse who is running for governor, described the committee’s processes and its reasons for its recommendations, many of which have to be approved by the General Assembly. She didn’t want the study to just sit on a shelf, she said, and the committee would be holding several public meetings...

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# PUBLIC HEALTH SEEKS \$3.5 MILLION MORE IN 2025 STATE BUDGET

BY JAREK RUTZ

The Delaware Division of Public Health wants a 2025 budget of \$167.4 million, but about \$3.5 million of that is not in the governor’s recommended budget. That puzzled the chair of the state Joint Finance Committee, which writes the state budget. It’s in the middle of hearings about state budget requests and listened to Public Health’s appeal Tuesday.

Among the things not listed in Gov. John Carney’s \$6.1 billion budget are a \$230,000 allocation for the Delaware Public Health Laboratory support additional operating costs as a result of a new, bigger facility.

“These seem like really worthy items and some of them are some pretty big ticket items,” said Sen. Trey Paradee, D-Dover. “I’m a little exasperated because some of these seem really important.” He said the state is trying to keep budget growth in check this year because of a leveling-off in state revenues.

It’s already on the hook for nearly \$95 million in additional Medicaid costs, a program overseen by Public Health, which is in the Department of Health and Social Services. The biggest chunk of that is a \$230,000 allocation for the Delaware Public Health Laboratory operating fund, to support additional operating costs as a result of the increased square-footage and workload of the new facility.

The 2025 budget goes into effect July 1.

Public Health isn’t the only division to seek money not allotted in Carney’s **Fiscal Year 2025 Recommended Budget**. This includes:

- \$359,600 for Marijuana Control Act annualization
- \$598,000 for animal welfare funding
- \$850,000 for My Healthy Community maintenance costs

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# FISH V. ELECTRICITY: COULD SALEM NUCLEAR PLANT BE SHUT DOWN?

BY KARL BAKER

A judge in an obscure administrative court in Trenton, NJ, is set to hand down a ruling that could end a challenge to the **Salem nuclear plant**'s ability to pump billions of gallons of water out of the Delaware River each day. The case, which strikes at the heart of the mid-Atlantic electricity ecosystem, pits a tenacious environmental group against one of the region's largest energy companies, and its ultimate resolution could impact electricity prices for Delawareans, the health of birds and fish in the Delaware estuary, and President Joe Biden's most ambitious energy initiative to date.

In short, it's the region's biggest environmental battle that you've probably never heard of.

At issue is the way in which the Salem Nuclear Generating Station's two reactors cool steam created by the heat of nuclear fission. Currently, the plant pumps cold water from the Delaware River through a system of

pipes that lead it to the steam, which is then cooled back to a liquid form. The river water then returns to the estuary, but at far higher temperatures than when it was pumped in. In all, the process kills large numbers of fish and fish larvae, though the exact amounts are disputed.

In late 2016, the **Delaware Riverkeeper Network** — an environmental group and active critic of heavy industry in the region — petitioned New Jersey to rescind a permit that allows the plant to pump water out of the river. When filed, the challenge was the latest of more than a decade of petitions, disputes and complaints brought against the Salem facility by the environmental group and its outspoken leader **Maya van Rossum**, who calls the power plant the largest "predator" in the Delaware estuary.

Van Rossum claims that three billion adult fish are killed on average each year by the plant's cooling oper-

ations, plus billions more eggs and larvae. Those include the bay anchovy, a species that has suffered a declining local population even as larger fish, eagles, herons, and even whales rely on it for food.

"The cause of the problem for the fish is that the Salem Nuclear Generating Station is sucking them in, cooking them, ripping them apart, destroying them," she said.

The **New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection**, which declined to comment for this story, suggested in their permit issued to Salem that the mortality figures cited by van Rossum and other critics are overstated. Still, they do not appear to have presented current, counter estimates.

In the legal challenge, the Riverkeeper Network insists that the Salem plant should be retrofitted with what the industry calls closed-cycle cooling, which recirculates water used to chill the plant, consequently reducing the amount pulled from the river by upwards of 95%. Van Rossum said an equivalent reduction in fish kills would result from such a retrofit.

"If you install the closed-cycle cooling, you're reducing the cold water intake," she said "And there's a direct relationship — you're reducing the fish kills."

The Hope Creek Generating Station, a sister nuclear power plant that sits beside the Salem facility, uses closed-cycle cooling.

During the early 2000s, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued new rules mandating that new large power plants use closed-cycle cooling. For existing plants, such as the Salem facility, the agency ruled that the "best technology available" be utilized.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)





**BILLBOARD MOCKS MILFORD MAYOR, COUNCIL AS WANTED FOR THEFT**

**BY KATIE KAZIMIR**

“WANTED – MILFORD CITY COUNCIL – ATTEMPTED THEFT” says a billboard featuring photos of Milford’s mayor and seven council members that went up Friday on Del. 113 at the south end of town. It’s the most recent reaction to the council condemning eight acres belonging to Annette Billings and then using eminent domain to take her property for \$20,000.

That’s the “theft” referred to by the billboard. The city wants to use it to complete a park so it can put in a bike and walking trail to connect its four wards. Billings previously had the property, appraised and valued at about \$50,000 an acre.

“Sounds like a steal,” wrote James Weller on a Facebook post picturing the billboard. Weller said Billings was an easy target because she is a widow and cancer

survivor of a certain age and limited income. She raises chickens for a poultry company.

The billboard directs those wishing to share thoughts on the matter to call City Manager Mark Whitfield at 302-422-6166, ext. 1304.

“I think the people are exercising their first amendment right of free speech regarding government overreach,” said Billings’ lawyer, Ronald Poliquin.

Poliquin said he is amazed at how far interest in the eminent domain case has spread and he doesn’t foresee a stop to the public taking issue with Milford council’s actions any time soon. “There’s going to be consequences for their actions,” he said.

The court order sent to Billings by the city demanded she be in court Feb. 13. Poliquin said he filed for a con-

tinuance asking for time to give the case due diligence, but he expects that request to be denied. One reason for that, he said, is because city officials are upset about the public outcry against them. The action comes as the city is getting ready for an April 27 election.

“People, remember these faces on Election Day,” said Weller on his Facebook post. “They are the ones responsible for the taking of Annette Billings land by eminent domain.”

Not featured on the billboard was Todd Culotta, the only council member to vote against taking Billings property. The council discussed the move in executive session and then came back into public session to vote.

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photo credit: Cab Calloway School of the Arts



*Education*

TOWN SQUARE LIVE





# WLC NEEDS THREE MORE MONTHS TO SET PERFORMANCE REQs

BY JAREK RUTZ

The Wilmington Learning Collaborative says it needs three extra months to set performance requirements for the schools it's overseeing. That means the organization will have to go back to the Brandywine, Christina and Red Clay districts for permission to move the deadline from March 31 to June 30.

The performance requirements include setting goals through written agreements with the three districts to ensure the collaborative is accountable to each district for improving student outcomes. Councilwoman Shanika Dickerson, who's also a Brandywine school board member, pointed out that she didn't think the council could make its agreement deadlines before an upcoming WLC retreat. Because any change requires an adjustment to the memorandum of understanding that authorizes the collaborative, the council's legal counsel and all three school boards have to approve the change.

The collaborative was created in November 2022 . Its goal is to improve social and academic outcomes for students at nine Wilmington elementary schools through creative programming and student services that involve parents and educators

Council member Dan Shelton, superintendent of Christina, reminded his peers that each district agenda must be updated, and they will have to vote on it in their March meeting in order to have an answer by the March 31 deadline. Christina's March school board meeting is on Tuesday, March 12; Red Clay's is on Wednesday, March 20; and Brandywine's is on Monday, March 18.

Laura Burgos, the collaborative's executive director, said June 30 would be enough time, and pointed out that the group will have received its opportunity scorecard reports by then.

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# WHY DELAWARE IS HAVING THE MOST SCHOOL REFERENDUMS IN 14 YEARS

BY JAREK RUTZ

The largest number of Delaware school districts in 14 years are holding elections in 2024 to ask their residents to agree to raise taxes for education. State and education leaders cite inflation, population growth, state-mandate raises for education, changes in funding and the COVID-19 pandemic as among reasons why six of the state's 19 districts are making the case for more cash.

Appoquinimink, Brandywine, Cape Henlopen, Colonial, Red Clay Consolidated and Smyrna — all among the top 10 largest districts based on the number of students served — are going to the polls in the 2023-2024 school year.

The 2009-2010 academic year was the last time the First State had this many school referendums, when residents of the Appo, Capital, Christina, Indian River, Laurel and Seaford districts hit the polls, per the state [Department of Elections](#). Those votes coincided with the aftermath of the Great Recession of 2007-2009.

### WHAT IS A REFERENDUM?

Districts ask for a referendum when they are trying to

raise local tax money to support operational costs or to match state-funding for capital projects. Operating funding will help the district maintain its day-to-day operations. That can include transportation expenses, supporting extracurricular programs, updating technology, giving teachers raises, hiring constables and more.

A capital referendum typically is tied to state funding for building projects which requires matching funding from a district, usually about one-third. If, for example, a capital project costs \$100 million, the state would

provide \$65 million while the district needs to pony up the remaining \$35 million. If a capital referendum fails, the district can try a second time. If it fails again, the district loses the state money and likely won't be able to complete the project.

But votes on construction aren't easy sells.

Jeff Menzer, superintendent of [Colonial School District](#), said operational referendums are much more likely to succeed than capital ones.

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# SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS: NEWLY ELECTED CAN HAVE SWIFT IMPACT

BY JAREK RUTZ

School board members in their first term say parents who hesitate to run for school board should know that new members can make a difference right away.

Don Patton was one of the drivers of Christina School District establishing a fresh method of evaluation for Superintendent Dan Shelton to hold him accountable for the district goals he sets each year.

“School districts have the charge to hire a superintendent and let the superintendent run the district, but I feel like that’s the mistake,” he said. “That’s what I’m pushing against...you also have a responsibility to monitor and I always used to tell my teachers to ‘inspect what you expect.’”

The deadline to file to run for a board seat in 2024’s election is Friday, March 1 at 4:30 p.m.

Education groups and advocates across the state have long been in unison that public participation in school boards — whether running for a seat, going to meetings, or voting in the election — is crucial for a healthy and successful education system. It’s also a way to help

ensure transparency and accountability between schools, families and the communities they serve.

Here’s a look at how three recently-elected school board members feel they’ve made a difference in Delaware.

*Don Patton, Christina School District*

Patton was elected to the Christina School District Board of Education in 2021 after working for the district for more than 25 years. It’s a way of paying his own education forward, he said.

“I just really felt like I owed, you know, the Biblical saying, ‘to whom much is given, much is required,’” he said. “It took a little poor boy out of projects and allowed me to be able to survive and provide a good life for me and my family, so I just felt like I could give something back.”

He ran because he thought the board was not really focused on the things that it should be and because he believed that as a former educator, he could bring some new ideas to the table.

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photo credit: DMA Athletics Twitter



*Sports*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**





# COURTSIDE VIEW – FINAL GIRLS' BASKETBALL TOP 10 RANKINGS

BY JASON WINCHELL

The girls' basketball season ended on Wednesday (Feb. 21) and the brackets for the state tournament will come out on Friday morning. The seedings come out Friday and there is a lot of intrigue this year as there are many teams on the bubble. I'm looking forward to see where teams will be when they come out on Friday morning.

Here are the final top 10 rankings for the regular season voted on by the Delaware Live crew.

**No. 1 Sanford** (13-5) (LW No. 3) The defending champions finish the season strong including wins over Caravel and Ursuline. They played Tatnall on Wednesday.

**No. 2 Caravel** (16-3) (LW No. 1) The Bucs lost at Sanford to end the season at 16-3.

**No. 3 Ursuline** (14-5) (LW No. 2) The Raiders lost to Caravel and Sanford in the last three weeks. They traveled to face Long Island Lutheran (NY) on Wednesday.

**No. 4 St. Elizabeth** (17-3) (LW No. 4) The Vikings rebounded from a tough season last year to win 17 games this year with their only three losses coming to the top three teams.

**No. 5 Padua** (16-4) (LW No. 5) The Pandas who were 7-13 last year, they improved that by nine wins this year and three of their losses were to No. 3 Ursuline and No. 4 St. Elizabeth twice, once in overtime.

**No. 6 A.I. DuPont** (15-5) (LW No. 6) The Tigers won the Flight B championship and had another great season. Their in-state losses were to Caravel, Ursuline and Padua.

**No. 7 Dover** (16-4) (LW No. 7) The Senators had one of their best seasons, including a pair of wins over Cape Henlopen to win the Henlopen North.

**No. 8 Cape Henlopen** (13-6) (LW No. 8) The Vikings had a solid season against a tough schedule. They played at Polytech on Wednesday.

**No. 9 Delmarva Christian** (17-1) (LW No. 9) Delmava Christian had a solid season that ended with a game against Laurel on Wednesday.

**No. 10 Odessa** (15-5) (LW No. 10). The Ducks crashed into the top 10 at the end of the season. Their first year with seniors and the team will be heading to the tournament next week.







# COURTSIDE VIEW – FINAL BOYS' BASKETBALL TOP 10 RANKINGS

BY JASON WINCHELL

The boys' basketball season ended on Wednesday (Feb. 21) and the brackets for the state tournament will come out on Friday morning. The seedings come out Friday and there is a lot of intrigue this year as there are many teams on the bubble. I'm looking forward to see where teams will be when they come out on Friday morning.

Here are the final top 10 rankings for the regular season voted on by the Delaware Live crew

**No. 1 St. Elizabeth** (19-1)(LW No. 1) The Vikings suffered their first loss of the season to No. 6 Sanford, but went 7-1 against teams ranked in the Delaware Live top 10 this season and deserves the top spot at season's end.

**No. 2 Dover** (17-2)(LW No. 2) The Senators had a great season with their only in-state loss at St. Elizabeth's by a point. They played at Sussex Central on Wednesday night.

**No. 3 Middletown** (15-4)(LW No. 3) The Cavs had a solid season against top 10 teams with its only loss in the state at home to No. 1 St. Elizabeth.

**No. 4 Sallies** (12-8)(LW No. 4) Sallies finished with a winning record with one of the states strongest schedules. They went 5-1 at home and could be tough if they get a couple of home games in the tournament.

**No. 5 Sanford** (15-4)(LW No. 6) The Warriors are one of the hottest teams heading into the tournament in-

cluding a big 58-51 win at No. 1 St. Elizabeth. They are 11-1 in last 12 games and faced Tatnall on Wednesday night.

**No. 6 William Penn** (16-4)(LW No. 5) The Colonials had a great season after a slow start. Their three in-state losses to No. 1 St. Elizabeth, No. 3 Middletown and No. 4 Sallies were all on the road. They were perfect at home this year.

**No. 7 St. Georges Tech** (13-6)(LW No. 7) The Hawks finished the season strong winning eight of their last nine and that was a heartbreaking one point lost to No. 6 William Penn. They finished their season at Smyrna on Wednesday.

**No. 8 Appoquinimink** (12-7)(LW No. 9) The Jags tough schedule gave them some tough losses including overtime losses to No. 3 Middletown and No. 4 Sallies. They travel to Cape Henlopen on Thursday.

**No. 9 Seaford** (17-2)(LW No. 10) Seaford had another great season winning the Henlopen South. They were at Newark Charter on Wednesday

**No. 10 Howard** (12-7)(LW No. 8) Howard had a tough schedule that included a season ending game at Middletown on Wednesday.







# TOP RANKED ST. ELIZABETH HOLDS OFF LATE MIDDLETOWN RUN

BY GLENN FRAZER

There is a saying when a team starts out a game and can't miss a shot, "they were in range when they stepped off the bus!" That's how locked in the St. Elizabeth Vikings basketball team was when they raced out to a 22-12 first quarter lead, and extended the advantage to 45-22 at halftime Tuesday. The Vikings connected on eight 3-point shots in the opening 16 minutes and at one point held a 42-16 lead. Temple commit Aiden Tobiason drained three of the long-range shots and led the Vikings with 18 first half points.

The third ranked Middletown Cavaliers were in jeopardy of being "blown off" their home court, but head coach Azeez Ali had the team come out in full-court pressure to start the third quarter. The press made a difference as the Cavs went on a 15-2 run to slice the

deficit to 11. Zion Mifflin and Clyde Frasier led the Cavaliers in that period, scoring 13 of the team's 19 points. The defensive effort included several blocks by Akendre and Aviyon Matthews. The Viking lead that was as many as 26 points, had dwindled to 12 at the end of the third as the Cav's Jack Murdaugh made a "three" with time running out.

The second half rally continued into the final quarter when Middletown outscored St-E 13-3 with 2:45 to go. The game was 56-54 as Aviyon Matthews continually powered his way to the rim, scoring 10 points including going a perfect 6-for-6 from the foul line. Then came a key moment of the game when coach Mike Cassidy inserted eighth grader DaShuan Holden in at point guard. Holden drove to the rim, scored and drew contact. The

next possession, Holden again was fouled. He made both free throws and pushed the Viking lead to 62-55 with just 1:48 left. Middletown missed a couple of opportunities and was forced to foul. Tobiason made seven of eight free throws giving his team a double digit lead that ended the Cavalier rally.

After the game, coach Cassidy told us his team did a great job of rebounding, "We're not a tall team, Aiden at 6-5 is our tallest player but he's primarily a wing. We talk about rebounding together and crashing the board hard." Referring to his eighth grader (Holden) coach remarked, "He's special, he's a press-breaker and a good ball handler. He's good in the spread offense and setting up other players."

Tobiason led the way for St. Elizabeth, scoring 28 points including going 11 for 14 at the foul line. Caden Harris chipped in with 11 while Kenneth Hunter Jr. and Julius Wright both added 10 points for the Vikings. They completed the regular season with a record of 19-1 and will probably get the top seed when the tournament committee meets Friday.

Middletown had a 13-game winning streak snapped, but is also likely to draw a high seed in the tournament. The Cavaliers were led by Aviyon Matthews and Frasier with 16 points each. Teammate Mifflin added 13. The Cavaliers made three 3s compared to 10 by the Vikings. Middletown faced Howard Wednesday night to complete their regular season, then will meet the Wildcats again Saturday for the Blue Hen Conference title.







# SEAHAWKS PIN THEIR WAY TO SECOND STATE WRESTLING TITLE

BY BENNY MITCHELL

Delaware Military Academy rode six pins enroute to a 38-32 victory over St. Mark's to capture the DIAA Division II state championships. The title was the second for the Seahawks in consecutive years.

The championship match began at 113 pounds, the Seahawks reeled off three straight wins to begin the match all earning bonus points. Cole Perrin got it started pinning Adelynne Till in 45 seconds at 113 pounds. Tyler DelCollo followed at 120 pounds pinning James Holmes in 1:24. Gavin Mundy capped off the fast start at 126 winning a 16-1 technical fall over Aaron Menicella as DMA jumped out to a 17-0 lead.

"We were counting on pins early, we knew the bonus points were going to be huge," DMA head coach L.A. Collier said.

Chris Foster got the Spartans in the win column at

132 winning a 2-0 decision over Dylan DelCollo, but Piero Papili answered quickly for the Seahawks pinning Jack MacDonald in 1:02 at 138 pounds.

St. Mark's cut in the DMA lead winning the next two bouts as Alex Baxley (144) won a 10-5 decision over Jackson Grandel and Ben Ranauto pinned Charles Perrin in 2:11 at 150 pounds narrowing the lead to 23-12 midway through the match.

Then came the big match within the match at 157 pounds where two of the top wrestlers in the state met between DMA's Malcolm Roy and Brayden Raunato. After two periods the match was tied 4-4 when Roy threw Raunato with a lateral drop and the pin in 4:28.

"I was surprised by the pin, Malcolm can be lights out and he was tonight," Collier said.

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The Spartans took the next two bouts with Jacob Ebaugh (165) winning a 9-0 major decision over Ethan MacDonnell and the return of Luke Spoor, who has missed most of the season with an injury, pinning Nathan Wesberry in 1:23 at 175 pounds as St. Mark's trimmed the DMA lead to 29-22.

The two teams traded the next four bouts ending the match. The Seahawks Hayden Moaney (190) pinned Vincent Hurst in 45 seconds, the Spartans Finn Hanna won a 16-2 major decision over Emelio Messina at 215 pounds. DMA clinched the match at 285 pounds where top ranked Cael DiNigris won a 9-0 major decision over Aiden Zellman extending DMA's lead to 38-26.

Clif Bakhsh ended the match for St. Mark's pinning Cyrus Hurley in 3:23.







# SANFORD HANDS ST. ELIZABETH ITS FIRST LOSS OF THE SEASON

BY NICK HALLIDAY

No. 6 Sanford’s boys’ basketball team handed No. 1 St. Elizabeth their first loss of the season at a sold-out St. E Center Feb. 16. The Vikings were on an 18 game winning streak and were the last remaining undefeated team in both boys and girls basketball in the state.

Sanford brought the intensity right from the beginning of the game as they jumped out to an early 7-2 lead. The Vikings then had a run of their own, scoring seven straight points to force a Warriors timeout. After the timeout, Sanford took the lead and held on for a 15-13 lead after one quarter.

In the second quarter, the Warriors were able to hold the lead for most of the quarter. With about 30 seconds left, Juluis Wright stepped to the line hitting one of his two shots to give the Vikings their first lead of the quarter at 22-21. Seconds later Aiden Tobiason stole the ball

and hit a streaking DeShaun Holden down court to push the lead to 24-21 with eight seconds remaining. Sanford’s Nico McNeil sprinted the floor and made the layup while getting fouled, giving the Warriors a chance to tie the game before half. McNeil stepped to the line, but missed the shot as they trailed by one going into the half 24-23.

Sanford trailed by one coming out of the half, but a three-pointer from Jordan Spencer early in the third gave them a 31-26 lead. The Vikings eventually regained the lead on a bucket by Tobiason, but Sanford’s Marquis Newsom answered immediately to put the Warriors back on top with 3:45 to go.

The Warriors added two points to the lead before things got a bit scary inside the building. Spencer and teammate Kareem Hart were going for a loose ball when

they banged heads, sending both players to the floor. The Vikings’ Kenny Hunter Jr. picked up the ball and laid it in for St. Elizabeth while the referees then blew the play dead with 2:39 to go in the quarter.

The game was stopped for nearly 10 minutes as trainers attended to the injured Warriors. Hart was cut, but eventually walked off under his own power with a bandage on his forehead, while Spencer got up and was led out of the St. E Center.

The remaining Warriors did not miss a beat and instead appeared extra-motivated after the collision. Jayden Taylor, who was a force inside all night, scored twice in the paint while Stephen Conway drained a three to grow the lead to 44-36. Julius Wright ended the 7-0 run with a three from the corner, pulling the Vikings to within five points heading into the fourth quarter.

Sanford slowed their pace in the fourth to slow down the prolific Vikings offense. Although they did not make a field goal the entire quarter the strategy worked as St. Elizabeth’s offense was never able to get on track. Sanford scored all 14 of their points from the free throw line, with McNeill making eight for the Warriors.

Sanford was able to hold on to a 58-51 victory. The win gave No. 1 St. Elizabeth its first loss of the season as they enter the state championship, which starts in a week. Sanford improves to 14-4 on the season and will benefit greatly from this win as they too will be competing for a state championship this season.

Taylor had 17 to lead the Warriors. Conway added 14 and McNeill 10. Hunter Jr. had 15 for St. Elizabeth and Tobiason had 13.





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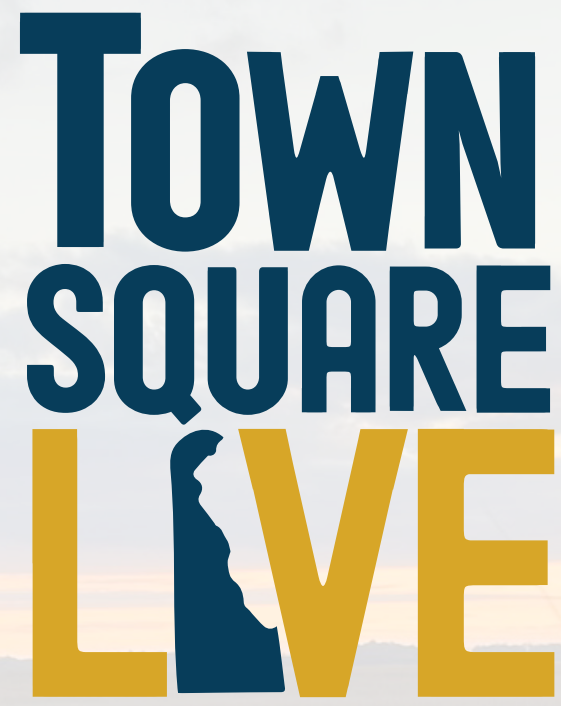


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