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Sports



MATTHEW DORAN

City continues to upgrade playing fields

The city of Norwalk has always prided itself on the quality of its sporting facilities.

The baseball field at City Hall has long been regarded as one of the nicest places to play a game in Fairfield County. Calf Pasture has been a bastion for slow-pitch softball players for years, and no one could ever complain about Vets Park. On warm summer afternoons, that place is like a United Nations of athletic endeavor. Take a ride down there some time. You'll see people playing everything from lacrosse to rugby, soccer and basketball.

However, as good as things have been, there's always room for improvement. The Norwalk Recreation & Parks Department certainly thought so, and is now hard at work taking its facilities to the next level.

Norwalk is in the middle of a city-wide upgrade on three of its most important playing fields, including the long-awaited installation of lights on the baseball field at Brien McMahon High School, the addition of a third softball field at Calf Pasture Beach and the construction of two adjoining Little League fields at Vets Park.

Add in Malmquist Field, which received a nice overhaul two years ago, including new turf and a nicer looking fence in the outfield, and the city of Norwalk can consider itself pretty lucky.

"I think when everything is said and done, we're going to have four great facilities," said Gerald Anastasia, the Athletic Director for the Rec Department. "Things are getting better and better all the time."

The lights are going up at McMahon this week, putting an end to Norwalk's five-year quest for night baseball and a facility that has the potential to host major events. After failing to get approval to upgrade the City Hall field with lights, the Rec department targeted McMahon. With the help of athletic director Joe Madafari, things started happening. Now the city's focus for a premier baseball facility is shifting toward Highland Avenue.

Along with the lights, McMahon's field is getting a complete \$230,000 overhaul — in addition to the improvements made when the school was rebuilt a few years ago.

The infield will be torn up and done over from scratch. New sod will be added to the infield and outfield and that rusty old eye sore of a backstop will finally be cleaned and fixed.

Eventually, McMahon's field will be fitted with bleachers, from which fans might actually be able to see the action. My suggestion would be to put seating in a nice long row down the right field line where the ground is level. I've always said that's the best place to watch a game at McMahon. Others can stand along the fence along the left-field line if they want or watch from the school's veranda in left-center field.

With two premier baseball fields in Norwalk, including one with lights, the Norwalk Babe Ruth Baseball League is already drawing up a proposal to host a Regional or World Series event.

"This is something we've been shooting for since I've been here the last 20 years," Anastasia said. "City Hall was always the target, but there was always something standing in the way. But McMahon might be the better spot any-

See CITY, A14

Wreckers splash Bears

Staples took advantage of its depth and a lack of Norwalk divers to post the FCIAC victory in Westport

By GEORGE ALBANO
Hour Staff Writer

The No. 1 road show in water this fall — better known as the Norwalk High/Brien McMahon co-op girls swim team — hit a detour in Westport Wednesday afternoon.

Staples High, powered by another outstanding effort by Molly Hennessy and plenty of

HS GIRLS SWIMMING

STAPLES	106
NORWALK	77

depth, outpointed the Norwalkers 106-77 at the SHS pool.

That dropped the Bears' record to 5-4 on the season, which also just happens to be their record away from home.

You see, due to the construction going on at NHS, the pool is unavailable and the swim team is forced to have all its dual meets on the road. The Bears have one more regular-

season meet left at Darien next Wednesday before heading into the championship meets.

So getting on a bus and competing in an opposing school's pool — as it did on Wednesday — has become a common occurrence for the local co-op team this season.

They've almost become a high school version of a travel team.

"It's actually not too bad," said head coach Becky Rubin, whose team also has to practice at the Norwalk YMCA pool. "It would be an advantage to use our home pool, but this gives us

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Hour photo/MATTHEW VINCI

Norwalk's Sarah Suchoff competes in the butterfly during Wednesday's FCIAC girls swim meet against Staples. The Wreckers scored a 106-77 victory against the Bears.



Hour photo/MATTHEW VINCI

Brien McMahon's Rachel Ramsey takes a shot during Wednesday night's game against Norwalk at McMahon's Casagrande Field. Ramsey scored one of the McMahon goals as the Senators scored a 3-0 victory against their intracity rival.

Senators turn back Norwalk

Heather Watson scored twice as McMahon snapped a three-game losing streak against its crosstown rival

By MIKE MADAR
Hour Correspondent

NORWALK — With tailgating in the parking lot and male students arriving in skirts, it was clear that Wednesday night's meeting between city rivals was more than just another field hockey game.

Once the game began, Brien McMahon senior captain Heather Watson scored two goals leading the Senators to a dominating 3-0 win over rival Norwalk at Jack Casagrande Field.

HS FIELD HOCKEY

BRIEN MCMAHON	3
NORWALK	0

With the win McMahon improved to 7-2-0-1 overall, ending a three-game winless streak against the Bears in the process.

"It feels amazing. Words can't describe it," Watson said of the win. "We haven't beaten them the last three years so to come out and do what we did just feels amazing."

Norwalk fell to 6-2-3 overall, 5-2-3 in the FCIAC.

"I thought we created opportunities but you have to hand it to them," Norwalk head coach Kyle Seaburg said. "They played a strong game and passed

the ball really well."

The Senators controlled play from the opening whistle, grabbing an early lead just 6:09 in when Watson, waiting by the far post, tapped in a Madonna Wadolowski free hit.

"I was sitting by the post with my stick down just like we practiced," Watson said. "After I scored I looked up and pointed to coach because that goal was credit to her. She's great."

With just under 20 minutes to play in the half, Norwalk's lethal penalty corner had four chances in a span of three minutes, but was only able to get a single shot on goal which Iliana Begetis (five saves) turned away.

"I've seen them play a few times and know they like that big shot because it

See SENATORS, A14

Torre remains in limbo

After a second day of meetings, the Yankee brass has still not made a decision on the manager's future

By PETE CALDERA
and BOB KLAPISCH
McClatchy Newspapers

TAMPA, Fla. — Ten days after the Yankees bowed out of the division series, George Steinbrenner and sons still are reviewing Joe Torre's resume.

Torre's pros and cons as a field manager — as well as the merits of promoting the inexperienced Don Mattingly — continue to be debated, though the needle finally might have swayed toward the incumbent's side.



Torre

After Wednesday's five-hour meeting of ownership and club executives at Legends Field, general manager Brian Cashman headed back to New York without any resolution on who will be the Yankees' skipper for 2008.

"The decisions that we're talking about (are), obviously, rehiring somebody, and then there's a negotiation if we do so," Cashman said after the meetings. "And these are the decisions we have to come to if that's the direction we choose to go."

"And that takes time. It's as simple as that."

Steinbrenner finally arrived at 12:48 p.m., long after his New York and Tampa execs were in place. The Boss has yet to act on his statement to The Record's Ian O'Connor that "I don't think we'll take (Torre) back if we don't win the series."

Though there's said to be no

See TORRE, A14

Louisville will test UConn 'D'

A consensus preseason Top 5 pick, the Cardinals employ a high-octane, multi-faceted attack

UConn FOOTBALL

Louisville at UConn
8 p.m. Friday (ESPN)

Inside

South Florida, Rutgers tangle tonight
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Saturday by one point, 17-16, at Virginia, in a nonconference game.

The game is a matchup of Louisville's high-powered offense and Connecticut's stingy defense.

A win puts either team in

position to challenge for the conference title.

Connecticut has given up just 12 points per game and is ranked sixth in the nation in total defense, holding opponents to an average of 264 yards, including just 98 through the air.

"I don't think there is any question that to date this is the best defense that we will have played," said Louisville coach Steve Kragthorpe.

There is also no question that this will be the best offense the Huskies have seen.

Louisville, which was ranked as high as No. 8, before losses to Kentucky, Syracuse and Utah, has put up almost 560

See LOUISVILLE, A14



AP photo

Louisville quarterback Brian Brohm, throwing a touchdown pass last week against Cincinnati, is just one of the weapons in a potent attack for the Cardinals, who visit Rentschler Field Friday night for a nationally televised game against Connecticut.