

# Senators roll over Crusaders

From A9

her two goals with 10:22 left in the first half.

"Playing in the FCIAC gave us good competition," Kuchta said. "Playing against teams like Greenwich and New Canaan and Darien got us ready for whatever was coming at us. I think we're pretty prepared for what comes at us in the states."

The Crusaders had a few things working against them. Lauralton is only in its fourth season as a varsity program, it had two key players out of the lineup, its last game was May 17 and the seniors were also coming off graduation ceremonies on Sunday.

But head coach Brinker Higgins wasn't making excuses. She knew McMahon's experience playing against powerful Division I teams like Greenwich, Darien, New Canaan and Wilton would give them a decided advantage.

"I've seen the teams they were playing against and the teams we played against," Higgins said. "I knew where they were coming from, so I knew it wasn't going to be easy."

McMahon will face the winner of today's first-round game between No. 4 North Branford and No. 13 Amity in the Division II semifinals at 5 p.m. Wednesday at the site of the highest-seeded team.

The way the offense is performing, getting balanced scoring from Kuchta, Wadolowski, Delia, Rachel Ramsey (two



Brien McMahon sophomore Mady Everett, right, takes a faceoff from Lauralton Hall's Erin Daley during Monday's Division II state tournament game. McMahon advanced with a 15-2 victory.

goals) and freshman Katie Hammer (one goal, two assists), the Senators feel as if they have the potential to go on quite a run.

"If we keep playing like we're playing, and if we stay healthy, I think if we can get through our bracket, which I think we have a very good shot of getting through, then we're up against teams we've seen before," Sullivan said. "I don't know, I'd like to see us get to the championship."

A deep trip into the states would put every other school-related activity on the back burner. Even the prom.

"I've been playing for four years and we've never made the states," Kuchta said. "If we make it all the way, we have prom on Friday and the state championship on Saturday. But if we make it, who cares about the prom. We'd be going to the states. So, it's pretty exciting."

McMahon's offense was humming, but the Senators also looked pretty good on the other side of the field. Goal-tenders Kelly McFarlin, a freshman, and senior Molly Clingenpeel combined to make eight saves. Michelle Avery (one goal) won the first five faceoffs, allowing the Senators to maintain possession and build a 5-0 lead just five minutes into the game.

The defense, led by sophomores Melissa Rotante and Mady Everett, never gave the Crusaders room to move. Four minutes passed before Lauralton's offense got set up on McMahon's side of the field. The Crusaders didn't get a shot off until Daley missed wide left with 14:04 left in the first half.

"My defense was so strong in there," Sullivan said. "Every time someone came down with the ball, there would be four or

five girls on them, so that was nice to see."

Getting off to such a quick lead, bolstered by a goal by Leia Cadotte off a groundball pick-up to make it 5-0 with 18:38 left in the first half, didn't hurt in the least.

"The attack was on fire," Sullivan said. "It was kind of nice to be in a position where you had to settle the ball and take safer opportunities."

McMahon scored the first four goals of the second half to take a 15-1 lead before Daley scored with 11 seconds left for the Crusaders.

"They had some good players, but we were able to shut them down," Sullivan said. "They had a few interceptions on us, but we stuck together as a team, we played as a team. We moved the ball well and looked for each other, so it was really nice to watch."

# VFW, Hardware holding late leads

NORWALK  
LITTLE LEAGUE

## Merritt tosses perfect game in BR contest

Last Saturday was a day Andrew Merritt will never forget. The Norwalk High School sophomore threw a perfect game playing for All-Star Carting in the Norwalk Athletic Association's 14-15 year-old Babe Ruth Baseball league.

Merritt struck out 17 batters and got the other four outs on groundouts, two of which he assisted on himself in Carting's 1-0 victory over Darien.

Merritt threw just 89 pitches over seven innings and reached three-ball counts on just two batters. He also had one of Norwalk's two hits, a double.

Going into the final week of the regular season, VFW leads the Ben Whone Majors Division, while Rowayton Hardware leads the Spinola Division.

At 9-4 on the season, VFW holds a game-and-a-half lead over Kiwanis (9-7) and Monker Grotto (8-6).

In Spinola play, Rowayton Hardware (11-1) leads Rotary (7-5) by four games, the Jaycees (8-7) by four-and-a-half and the Eagles (7-6) by five games.

In the Triple AAA East, C&C Landscaping (14-3) leads Hatch and Bailey (10-6) by three-and-a-half games while in the Triple AAA West, Heritage Carpentry (15-2-1) leads Matarese Service Station (11-4-1) by three games.

### Majors

Monker Grotto jumped out to a 5-0 lead and held on to defeat the Eagles, 5-4.

Winning pitcher Nick Lampman started and struck out six in 4-2/3 innings. Jordan McDonald pitched 1-1/3 innings with two strikeouts to earn the save.

Lampman helped his cause with a double and two RBI, Pete Ferguson had two hits and an RBI, Jack Hefferan had a hit and RBI, Tristan Opdahl doubled and Eric Freeman also had a hit.

For the Eagles, Jordan Bellairs celebrated his birthday with a long home run over the flagpole in center. Tom Modugno and Trey Newcomb each had a double and scored a run. Harold Garcia had a single and two RBI while RJ Serrano, Dan Porelli and Joe Cox each had a hit.

VFW blew a big lead but came back for a 15-13 win over the Laurel AC.

VFW led 11-1 in the fifth but the Laurels came back to earn a 13-13 tie in sixth. Vfw rebounded with two in the top of the seventh to take the win.

Keegan Roberts started for VFW and pitched four innings, striking out six giving up seven hits and three runs. Mike Sornatale got the win for VFW. Getting hits for VFW were Kevin Cronin, Dallas Blue, Derick Edwards, Roberts, Mike Bottex, Sornatale and Pete Romsky. For the Laurels, Thomas Clyne, Mark Salvioli, William Clyne, Tyler Singewald, Peter Ostasiewicz, Ricky Mydland and Thomas Arduino got hits.

Monker Grotto scored six runs in the bottom of the fifth to overcome a 7-4 deficit and propel the team to a 10-8 comeback victory against Kiwanis.

For the Grotto, Tristan Opdahl had two hits, a double, an RBI and three runs scored, Tyler Annunziata had a double and an RBI, Jack Hefferan had two RBI, Peter Ferguson scored twice, RBI, Nick Lampman had a hit, James McQuillan had an RBI, Jordan McDonald scored twice, and Brad Zaremski and Will Ayles each scored a run. Tyler Annunziata got the win in relief, pitching five strong innings with 11 strikeouts.

For Kiwanis, Blake Stroman, Chris Winthrop, and Kevin Mossop had strong offensive games and Johnny Anzalone pitched four innings with 9 strikeouts but got a no-decision. He also scored three runs.

The Lions beat Monker Grotto, 8-3. Pitchers Aaron Correau and Teddy Faroni combined for five shutout innings while giving up four hits to pace the Lions to their second win of season. Faroni also had two hits including a long triple to center. Dan Molina also tripled, and Benny Whitmore and Peter Garcia had doubles. Jacob Henny added a single.

For Monker Grotto, Nick Lampman had two hits including a double and two RBI, Tyler Annunziata and Peter Ferguson each had two hits, Will Ayles and Matt Savona each had a hit. Tristan Opdahl started and had three strikeouts. He was followed by Tyler Annunziata (four Ks), Pete Ferguson (four Ks) and Nick Lampman (three Ks).

### Triple AAA

A five-run rally earned Snellman a 9-4 win over Norwalk Pizza & Pasta.

Snellman's offense was led by Drew Pace, Ryan Restivo and Matt Crowley, who had two

RBI apiece. Alex Barone, B.J. Buckle, Harrison Hefferan, Connor Madden and James Campbell also had timely hits. Hefferan, Barone and Crowley combined to hold the opposition to two hits.

For Norwalk Pizza and Pasta, Brendan Hanzlik and Justin Jimenez singled and scored. Jimenez also pitched the first three innings allowing two earned runs and four strikeouts. Joey Benincaso pitched the final inning of scoreless no hit ball.

Hatch and Bailey beat Heritage Carpentry, 17-12.

Matarese came back to defeat Pizza and Pasta, 16-9

For Norwalk Pizza and Pasta, Mike Dalesio tossed the first three innings allowing one earned run and striking out four. P&P scored all nine of its runs in the first two innings led by Brendan Hanzlik's single, double, two runs and three RBI. Matt Jimenez had two singles, two runs scored and two RBI and Justin Jimenez a single, two runs scored and an RBI.

Hatch & Bailey downed LaJoie's, 15-3. H&B got solid pitching from Tyron Mack, Justin Hufnagel and Sean Geercken, who closed out the last inning for the win. Sam Starkman had an inside-the-park homer and two singles, Seen Geercken had three singles, and Kyle Mossop had two doubles and a single. Matt Diurno, Brian Coffey, Justin Hufnagel and Dan Partida also had hits.

In other games, C&C Landscaping beat Diamond Deli, 12-2, and Heritage Carpentry beat Snellman Construction, 3-1.

Norwalk Pizza & Pasta nipped Stew's, 2-1, in an old-fashioned pitcher's duel. Brendan Hanzlik tossed the first three innings for P&P, striking out eight and allowing one hit. Johnny Swick pitched the final three striking out seven. Swick also had the only hit for P&P, an inside-the-park, two-run homer to right center field.

Diamond Deli defeated Lajoie's again

Deli pitchers Max Lawrence, Malik Massey and Dylan Tyrell combined for a six-hitter with 12 strikeouts. The offense was led by Brendan Brown, Matt Arduino and Kevin Piscarita with two hits each.

For Lajoie's, Pete O'Connor and Tyler Welch had two hits each. Sarah O'Connor and Ben Czaja also had hits.

Strong defense led C&C Landscaping to a win

Michael Stein pitched three innings with five strikeouts, allowed two hits and no runs. He was followed by John Luke Kanzler who went three innings with seven strikeouts, allowed three hits and two runs.

Michael and Jesse Rodriguez each had a single, Scott Brandfellner a double and Evan Viscardi a single and a triple. The defense was led by Ber Evans and Viscardi with timely catches. Daniel Romanello in center field made a game-ending catch in the sixth inning with runners on base.

John Glover beat Hatch and Bailey, 4-2, and Matarese Service Station beat Rowayton Pizza, 18-6.

# NASCAR icon Bill France Jr. dies of cancer

From A9

or not — as he quickly reminded dissenters.

And when the arguing ended, even his harshest critics agreed NASCAR would be the

better for France's efforts.

"I've never seen anyone who could strike the balance that Bill did. He knew exactly what he wanted to accomplish and rarely compromised, yet always made it a point to be fair," said team owner Rick Hendrick. "We've lost a strong leader, a visionary businessman and a truly amazing person."

Monday afternoon, the Nextel Cup series was racing at Dover International Speedway, and officials there lowered the flag to half-staff in Victory Lane in France's memory.

"There's not enough words to describe what he's meant to this sport and what he's done for it," said two-time series champion Tony Stewart. "I guarantee it's the biggest loss in racing since Dale Earnhardt, and it's probably bigger."

Dale Earnhardt Jr., a third-generation NASCAR star, called France's passing a "profound loss for the sport."

"He's the one probably most responsible for the state of our sport today," NASCAR's most popular driver said. "He's one of those giants, very intimidating to me. I didn't know him well, but my dad was close with him. And I know that made my dad very proud to get close to someone that not a lot of others did."

France's last public appearance was Feb. 12 in Daytona Beach, where NASCAR's top names gathered to "Roast and Toast" him at the Bill France Hot Dog Dinner.

Even there, especially there, he called the shots.

His toasters were gently reminded to avoid any harsh roasting. France did not speak during the dinner but received

guests from his seat on the banquet floor.

In between bites of his beloved Pulliams hot dog — he was notorious for his love of the franks from Winston-Salem, N.C., — he uttered his standard response when asked how he was doing.

"I'm on the right side of the grass," the irascible France said, "and there aren't any roots growing out of my (butt)."

That acerbic wit was a staple of his autocratic tenure.

France became chairman in 1972, replacing his father, NASCAR founder William Henry Getty France, who retired 25 years after forming the National Association for Stock Car Racing.

"When they announced he was going to take over NASCAR, I kind of started looking for another job, because I didn't think he could pull it off. I was wrong," said Junior Johnson, one of NASCAR's first stars who won 50 races.

"He did a better job than his father did, and he succeeded in every aspect of it."

France prepped for the job by doing a little bit of everything during his rise through racing's grass roots.

His father put Bill Jr. in charge of crowd control at one of the early 1950s beach races at Daytona Beach.

It was a difficult situation — there seemed to be no way to fence in the beach area and keep people from walking in without buying tickets. But young France had learned some lessons from his dad about ingenuity.

"We put up signs in the scrub areas along the road that

said 'Beware of snakes' and funneled people through out gates. It worked out pretty good," France said.

He also was a flagman, sold concessions, parked cars, scored races, promoted events and even helped in the construction of Daytona International Speedway.

France worked 12 hours a day, seven days a week as he drove a compactor, bulldozer and grader in the 13 months it took to build the track.

He once even tried to use a mule to pull trees out of the swamps, because the motorized equipment kept getting stuck.

When he took over NASCAR, he inherited a sport rich in Southern traditions but mostly unknown everywhere else.

Within six years, France had a deal with CBS Sports to televise the 1979 Daytona 500 from flag to flag. The race received huge ratings, with Richard Petty winning after Donnie Allison and Cale Yarborough crashed on the final lap.

Allison and his brother, Bobby, then fought with Yarborough on live TV.

It led to more coverage, and in 1999, NASCAR finally packaged the entire circuit together in a \$2.4 billion contract that awarded races to Fox, NBC and TNT that began in 2001.

Ailing, France, who had a mild heart attack in 1997, relinquished his role as NASCAR president to Mike Helton and handed off chairman duties to son Brian in 2003.

"The good thing is he built a family-oriented sport that has a lot of depth and a lot of strength to it," Helton said. "It will go on. It will go on non-stop, and that's the greatest tribute to Bill France."

# Donovan wants out of contract with Magic

From A9

getting out of the deal. According to one of the sources, the Magic forced Donovan to make a rash decision.

The Orlando Sentinel reported Monday that Donovan had been released from his contract with the NBA team, and that the Magic had renewed their search to replace Brian Hill.

Florida athletic director Jeremy Foley said he had been advised to not talk about the situation, a possible indication that Donovan was trying to return to Gainesville.

"On advice of counsel, I cannot comment and will not," Foley said.

Donovan did not return repeated calls for comment.

He led the Gators to consecutive national titles the past two seasons and was slated to sign a seven-year deal worth approximately \$3.5 million annually with Florida. The deal was nearly finalized when he agreed to coach the Magic.

Donovan, who played 44 games with the New York Knicks, said last week that he had always been intrigued by the NBA.

He said Orlando was the perfect situation because it was an up-and-coming team and close to home.

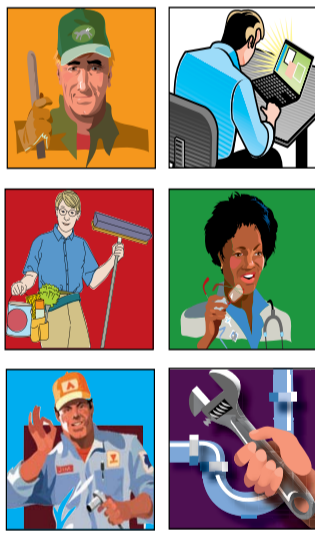
Donovan, 42, agreed to the deal with Orlando on Thursday,

one day after the Magic met with former Miami Heat coach Stan Van Gundy about the job.

Van Gundy, who also interviewed for coaching vacancies in Charlotte, Indiana and Sacramento in recent weeks, might not be available for long; he had a second interview with Sacramento's ownership group in Las Vegas on Saturday.

The Gators contacted Virginia Commonwealth coach Anthony Grant soon after Donovan's decision.

Foley had been scheduled to meet with Grant on Saturday in Richmond, Va., but the meeting never took place, and Grant said Sunday that he hadn't been offered the job.



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