

# Narraguagus girls seek 2nd title this year

BY LARRY MAHONEY  
BDN STAFF

The Narraguagus High School girls won the school's first state basketball championship in February. They captured the **HIGH SCHOOL REPORT**

Now the softball team is looking to supply the Harrington-based school with another state championship. The Knights are 14-0 and atop the Class C North Heal Points standings. They are seeking their first state softball crown since 2002.

There are 10 members of the basketball team now playing softball and their combined record between the two teams is 33-2. Ninth-year head coach Tracie Martin said this is her best team but noted that "we don't play any of the top teams in Class C" and that is a concern for her. Only one of their opponents had a winning record, as Washington Academy of East Machias improved to 7-6 after beating Calais on Wednesday. The Knights have outscored their opponents 209-22. "We have good pitching, good

catching and we've done a pretty good job hitting the ball," said Martin. "I thought we would be decent but we've done a lot better than I thought." Freshman Lanie Perry has been doing the pitching and has three no-hitters so far. She has also had "two or three games where she's given up just two or three hits." "She has been going to a pitching coach for three or four years now," said Martin. Perry throws hard and also has a nice variety of pitches, according to Martin. Senior Kelli Kennedy, who scored 20 points in the 33-25 state champi-

onship game victory over Boothbay Region, handles the catching and is one of the team's best hitters. Junior Hannah Alley is the first baseman, senior Beth Wallace plays second, sophomore Madison Leighton is the shortstop and senior Britny Look is at third. Freshman Haley Dinsmore is the left fielder, senior Cassidy Osgood is in right, and center field has been patrolled by either freshman Kylee Joyce or sophomore Sophia DeSchiffart. Senior Emily Reid has been the designated hitter. Alley, Joyce, Leighton, Look, Perry

and Osgood were all on the basketball team, along with Kennedy. Wallace and Alley have been the table setters at the top of the order before Perry, Leighton and Kennedy supply the punch in the middle of the order. But Martin said the bottom of the order also has come through with some production. The Knights have two regular-season games remaining. They play Machias at Coffin Field in Brewer at 7 Friday night before concluding the regular season at Washington Academy on Tuesday.



Orono High School's Tia Tardy (center) hugs her teammates before the 1,600-meter run during a track meet last week at the University of Maine in Orono.

## Tardy

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Tardy plays the flute and the ukulele and is teaching herself guitar and piano. "Music is just as important as running is to me," she said. "It's good for me to have that balance."

The move meant leaving her friends in Lincoln, adapting to a different school and meshing with new classmates and teammates.

"I was a little nervous about fitting in and stuff, but once I got here everyone was really welcoming," Tardy said.

She spends a lot of time on the road, but the 45-minute trip from Lincoln to Orono gives her a chance to think, mostly about running.

"I take a look at some of my upcoming goals, what I want to do at meets," Tardy said.

### Big fish in a bigger pond

Tardy was far and away the most outstanding runner at Mattanawcook, which fielded a small squad and has a gravel track.

At Orono, she is on a much larger team, one that motivates her further. She grew up with Cassidy Dill and had competed against classmates Becky Lopez Anido and Hannah Steelman.

"It's a wonderful group of people. Everyone's very like team and like family," Tardy said. "It's good to be able to come here and like kind of

feel like I'm a part of something big."

Orono's talented, deep roster enables the athletes to chase personal goals while contributing to the team's goals. Tardy won the 800, the mile and the 2-mile in February to help Orono capture the Class B indoor state title.

"We listen to Tia and find out what her goals are and what she would like to attain by the end of the season," Libby said, "and we have the team dynamic where we're trying to experience success."

Tardy said the competition with her Orono teammates has been beneficial.

"They always gave me a run for my money. Now to be able to call them teammates is really something special," she said.

### A better, structured plan

Tardy has been blessed with good coaches during her young career. She credited middle school Dave Cox with having an early impact on her career.

Most recently, she has benefited from the help of her cousin, David Nantkes, who was a standout runner at Mattanawcook in the early 1980s. He was an assistant cross-country coach at MA in 2014.

The two have since trained extensively together.

"I was kind of a little discouraged with what I had been getting [for times] and didn't really know what to do," Tardy said. "He came in and was trying to push me

and motivate me and show me a path."

Tardy began to focus more on the 800 and the mile and more refined training including the philosophy from nationally renowned coach Jack Daniels' philosophy that uses set distances, times and paces for runs.

"I kind of helped get her on a training plan that made sense. We found something that really clicked for her," Nantkes said.

Nantkes said Tardy also benefited from working with Portland personal trainer Adam Hanrahan.

### Building toward future

Tardy already has won 11 individual state titles in track and cross-country during her first three years of high school. She is hungry for bigger and better things, in the short term and down the road.

Tardy plans to compete in college, where some coaches already have suggested she become a "multi" athlete so she can pursue the pentathlon and the heptathlon. It is more likely she will wind up running the 800 and/or the 1,600.

She has some lofty long-term goals.

"I would like to see myself at least qualify for the [U.S. Olympic] Trials. I think that I'm very capable of it," Tardy said. "It's going to take a lot of work, clearly, but I'm really dedicated and it's something that I've always dreamed of."

Tardy hopes to follow in

the footsteps of two former Maine high school stars, Carsyn Koch of Washburn and Casco's Kate Hall, both of whom have qualified for the Trials. Koch did so in the 800 (2:02.39) and Hall qualified in the long jump (21 feet, 5½ inches).

"It's cool to know them and be like, this could be me, hopefully," Tardy said.

Nantkes, who has run more than 1,000 miles alongside Tardy, said mastering the mental part of racing is key for her. Participating in the New England Championships and the New Balance Indoor Nationals, where she won the Emerging Elite mile in March, helped build confidence.

"Tia has come out of nowhere in the matter of a year and a half," Nantkes said.

"She's always believed in herself, but there's different levels," he added. "As you get better, the competition gets better."

Libby's aim is to keep Tardy and all of his athletes focused on short-term pursuits, but he praised her overall makeup as she moves forward.

"She certainly holds herself to super high standards," he said. "As coaches, there are times that some of our efforts are spent trying to bring her down to earth a little bit so she doesn't expect too much all at once. We just have to keep her eyes on the goal she has set with herself and provide her the workouts that are going to help get her there."

## UM pitcher comes through for team with superb outing

BY LARRY MAHONEY  
BDN STAFF

John Arel noticed that some of his University of Maine baseball teammates were dejected after a heart-breaking 1-0 loss to Stony Brook in their America East baseball tournament opener in Lowell, Massachusetts, on Wednesday night.

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The 6-foot-7, 275-pound right-hander was going to pitch against one of the conference's best-hitting teams, the University of Maryland-Baltimore County, in an elimination game 45 minutes later. With the pressure of an elimination game on his right arm, the sophomore went out and tossed a gem. He allowed just two hits and one unearned run over eight innings with a career-high 11 strikeouts and three walks as they triumphed 11-1.

"Some of the guys were down after the Stony Brook game and that got me fired up," said Arel, who threw 128 pitches, 81 for strikes. "It motivated me to do well. When I walked out onto the field, I felt pretty confident. I told [senior catcher] Jon Salcedo that this wouldn't be his last game."

He said that in terms of "accuracy and the execution of my pitches, I felt more like a

pitcher than I had in my entire career."

"He was lights out," said UMaine coach Steve Trimper. "He really kept them at bay."

The run support was unusual for Arel.

In his 10 previous starts, his Black Bears had mustered only 21 runs for him, but he doesn't dwell on it and just concentrates on doing his job.

"Every time I go out there, my goal is to not allow any runs. If I get run support, it's great," he said.

And he admits that he would rather pitch in a 1-0 or 2-1 game than a lopsided affair.

"The 1-0, 2-1 games are a lot more fun," said Arel. "When you're pitching in a close game, every pitch matters."

Arel has made a dramatic turnaround in a year after throwing just five innings as a freshman.

The Burlington, Connecticut, native has thrown 75½ innings this season and has allowed 76 hits with 77 strikeouts, 20 walks and a 3.94 ERA.

"After last season, I went home and told my parents that I wasn't going to have another season like that," Arel said. "So I worked on a lot of things. I got in shape and worked on my mechanics."

He said the adjustments he made to his mechanics has "been the most important aspect of my success." He features a fastball, changeup and slider.

## Baylor

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the tone and culture within Baylor's football program as it relates to accountability for all forms of athlete misconduct," the university said in a statement.

Baylor asked for an independent investigation of its handling of sexual assault accusations after the 2015 conviction of football player Sam Ukwuachu, who was sentenced last year by a Texas judge to six months in jail for sexually assaulting a student in 2013. The judge deemed the school's investigation of the case so insufficient that he barred defense from citing it.

In March, a former student at Baylor brought a negligence lawsuit in federal court against the school, accusing it of acting callous-

ly and indifferently after she was raped by football player Tevin Elliott, who was sentenced to 20 years in 2014.

In April, defensive end Shawn Oakman was arrested for allegedly assaulting a woman.

Richard Willis, chair of the Baylor Board of Regents, said he was outraged by the results of the investigation.

"We were horrified by the extent of these acts of sexual violence on our campus," he said in the school's statement. "This investigation revealed the university's mishandling of reports in what should have been a supportive, responsive and caring environment for students."

Before hiring Briles in 2008, the Baylor Bears had endured 12 straight losing seasons. Under him, they won two Big 12 Conference titles and compiled a 65-37 record.

## Tennis

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Serena beat Brazil's Teliana Pereira 6-2, 6-1 before ninth seed Venus produced the same result against fellow American Louisa Chirico to reach the third round for the first time since 2010.

With Maria Sharapova suspended, pending the outcome of a doping hearing, and several leading seeds knocked out early, Serena looms as the overwhelming favorite to claim a fourth title in the French capital.

But others will have something to say about that.

Former champion Ana Ivanovic is a possible last-16 opponent and the Serbian 14th seed looked in good form as she belted 22 forehand winners in a 7-5, 6-1 defeat of Japan's Kurumi Nara.

Prospective last-eight opponent Carla Suarez Navarro of Spain, seeded 12th, beat China's Wang Qiang 6-1, 6-3

while eighth seed Timea Bacsinszky survived a tricky second round against 2014 runner-up Eugenie Bouchard 6-4, 6-4.

Bouchard, who has slumped down the rankings after reaching number five in 2014, led 4-1, then lost 10 games in a row before mounting a late comeback attempt.

"The brain is like a muscle. You got to work it out," Bouchard, tipped as the new queen of tennis not so long ago, said of her ongoing battle to rediscover the mental strength needed to survive in the higher echelons.

Only one women's seed fell on Thursday, number 28 Andrea Petkovic who was beaten by Kazakh Yulia Putintseva.

Five Frenchmen set out to reach the third round on day five but only one succeeded in joining the three already there.

Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, seeded six, did so to the delight of a noisy crowd, although he did it the hard way, coming from two sets down to beat

mercurial Cypriot Marcos Baghdatis 6-7(6), 3-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-2 and notch a 100th grand slam win.

"It's an anecdote, it's a number. The match itself is something I'll remember, because to recover after two sets to zero, it's not something you do daily," Tsonga said.

Seventh seed Tomas Berdych, like Tsonga a former semifinalist here, beat Tunisian Malek Jaziri 6-1, 2-6, 6-2, 6-4 while 12th seed David Goffin and 13th seed Dominic Thiem, both advanced in straight sets.

Borna Coric and Alexander Zverev, two 19-year-olds billed as the next big things, reached the third round with Coric surprising Australia's 20th seed Bernard Tomic 3-6, 6-2, 7-6(4), 7-6(6) and Zverev seeing off Frenchman Stephane Robert.



Tsonga

## Love

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"You could tell he wanted the ball," Cavs guard J.R. Smith said of Love. "As much as I got it, I was trying to look for him for either post-ups or threes. He really got it going. That was big for us."

Kyrie Irving added 23 points in the Cavaliers' most lopsided playoff win in franchise history — surpassing their 31-point victory at home in Game 1 of this series. It was the fifth-largest margin of victory in conference finals history, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

The Cavs have outscored the Raptors by 88 points in their three home games. Cleveland can close out Toronto and return to the NBA Finals for the second consecutive year with a win Friday night in Game 6 at Air Canada Centre.

Game 7, if necessary, would be Sunday night in Cleveland.

The game was effectively over after the first quarter, when the Cavs' 37 points were the most they scored in any

quarter in the series. The Raptors trailed by 18 after one period, and they didn't surpass 37 points until the first two minutes of the third quarter.

Toronto didn't surpass the Cleveland Big Three's total of 71 points until the game's last few minutes — and all three Cavs stars sat the entire fourth quarter. The Raptors trailed 65-34 at halftime, the first time in franchise history they trailed by at least 30 points in any game, regular season or postseason.

"They kicked our butts," Raptors coach Dwane Casey said. "That's the bottom line."

Kyle Lowry had 13 points and six assists, and DeMar DeRozan scored 14 points for the Raptors after they totaled 67 points in Toronto's Game 4 win at home. The backcourt partners shot a combined 7-for-20 in Game 5.

"We lost the game in the first quarter," said Raptors forward DeMarre Carroll, who scored five points. "They scored their first eight points off of offensive rebounds. That's just effort and heart."

Raptors center Jonas Valan-

ciunas appeared for the first time in the series after battling a sprained ankle, and he scored nine points in 19 minutes. Bismack Biyombo had seven points and four rebounds after dominating the paint during the Raptors' two wins in Toronto.

This time, however, the Cavs displayed the type of dominance they flashed in winning 10 straight to open the postseason. The biggest key to the turnaround was Love, who struggled miserably during the two losses at Toronto and compounded matters by twisting his knee during the third quarter of Game 4.

Love made his first six shots Wednesday and finished the night 8-for-10 from the floor, including 3-for-4 from the 3-point arc. He shot 5-for-23 during the two losses at Toronto, prompting Cavs coach Tyronn Lue and a handful of players to keep encouraging Love to shoot.

"These guys told me, 'Always play better when you're aggressive,'" Love said. "That aggression more often than not pays off."