



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Dallas High School tight end standout Jason Simonovich has signed a letter of intent to play football for the University of Maine, Orono, main campus, earning a full four-year scholarship to the school. From left, seated, are Sarah Simonovich, sister; Terri Simonovich, mother; Jason Simonovich and Bernie Simonovich, father. Standing, Jeff Shaffer, Dallas High School principal; Ed Radzinski, assistant football coach; Nancy Roberts, athletic director; Paul DuMond, assistant football coach; Bob Roper, assistant football coach; Bob Zaruta, head football coach; Rich DuMond, assistant football coach; and Greg Miller, assistant football coach.



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Dallas High School field hockey standout Evonna Ackourey has been voted to the National Field Hockey Coaches All-American Hockey Association and earned a four-year scholarship to Quinnipiac University in Connecticut. From left, first row, are Margia Ackourey, mother; Evonna Ackourey and Dan Ackourey, father. Standing, are Amanada Jez, assistant field hockey coach; Kylie Fischer, head field hockey coach; Jeff Shaffer, high school principal; and Nancy Roberts, athletic director.

## Two Dallas High School athletes are Division I-bound

By TOM ROBINSON  
For The Dallas Post

Evonna Ackourey made sure to assess other options, but the field hockey player knew from the start that Quinnipiac University was where she wanted to continue her academic and athletic careers.

Jason Simonovich was closing in on a final decision between two other schools when the University of Maine entered the mix and persuaded the football player to head there.

The two Dallas High School athletes took different paths to their final decisions before celebrating the landing of Division I athletic scholarships with signing ceremonies in the school's gymnasium Wednesday afternoon on the first day of the latest NCAA Letter of Intent signing period.

"I tried to look everywhere and

keep my options open, but it really came down to Quinnipiac was the number-one choice all along," said Ackourey, who has headed to the Connecticut school for clinics and camps since her sophomore year. "No one else could compare. It was a perfect fit."

Simonovich preferred playing defense in college when the Maine coaches convinced him to consider coming there as an offensive recruit at tight end.

"A couple of months ago, I was down to Ursinus and Monmouth as my two college choices," he said. "Then, I got an e-mail from one of the Maine coaches that they were really interested and wanted me to play tight end."

Ackourey is likely to play forward in college but both Dallas athletes were attractive to college recruiters because of their versatility.

"She's little in size, but she's quick with her feet and has great

"I always wanted to get a scholarship. Probably my sophomore year when I started taking academics very seriously, I realized that I have the size and I think I have the speed and ability to play college ball."

Jason Simonovich  
DHS football player

stick skills," Dallas coach Kylie Fisher said. "We moved her around to all positions in her four years."

"She has an all-around general skill level and she can be a great utility player. They can put her anywhere they need to."

Ackourey generally moved between midfield and forward during her career at Dallas. She played left midfield much of her senior year, in which she served as the only captain on an 11-4

team, but moved to the forward line when the Lady Mountaineers needed more scoring punch.

Simonovich excelled at tight end and defensive end. He was an all-star in his first season after moving from defensive back and continued to show skills he had used as a wide receiver earlier in his career.

"He's got the physical size and strength," Dallas coach Bob Zaruta said of the 6-foot-4, 230-pounder. "He combines that with agil-

ity, speed and versatility.

"You can look at what we did with him. He not only played wide receiver. He played tight end. We had him in motion as a lead blocker."

Simonovich finished with 25 catches for 567 yards and eight touchdowns. He also made 24 tackles for losses, including 13 sacks.

"I'm going to miss defense a lot," he said. "It was a lot of fun."

Maine plays on the Football Subdivision Championship level, which was formerly known as Division I-AA. The Black Bears went 4-4 in the Colonial Athletic Association and 5-6 overall.

Quarterback Marcus Wasilewski, a Mount Carmel graduate, hosted the recruiting visit that convinced Simonovich the school was the right fit for him.

"I always wanted to get a scholarship," said Simonovich, who plans to study business. "Prob-

ably my sophomore year when I started taking academics very seriously, I realized that I have the size and I think I have the speed and ability to play college ball."

It was a week of accomplishments for Ackourey.

Before formally accepting her scholarship offer, Ackourey learned she had been named to the National Field Hockey Coaches Association Academic All-American team.

"I felt at home at Quinnipiac," said Ackourey, who will major in biology. "It had everything that I wanted—the great academics and great athletics."

Ackourey scored five goals and assisted on four others as a senior while earning second-team Class AA all-state honors.

Dallas graduate Lauren Zimniski was a team captain last season as a fifth-year senior, helping Quinnipiac go 5-2 in the Northeast Conference and 12-7 overall.

## LL wrestling streak halted at 17 victories

By TOM ROBINSON  
For The Dallas Post

Lake-Lehman extended its winning streak all the way to 17 before falling, 38-28, to Western Wayne in the District 2 Class AA Dual Meet Wrestling Championships final on Feb. 2 at Pittston Area.

The Black Knights reached the district championship match for the second straight year with two comfortable wins on their home mat the night before. The Wyoming Valley Conference Division 2 champions lost to Western Wayne in the final for the second straight year.

"They have a great team," Lake-Lehman coach Tom Williams said of the Lackawanna League Division 2 champions.

Derek Dragon had pins in all three bouts to lead the Black Knights in the tournament. He put away two opponents in under a minute and managed to rally from behind to stop Thomas Bogarowski of Hanover Area in 3:52 at 182 pounds of the semifinal victory over Hanover Area.

"As soon as I rolled through, I really felt like I was going to be able to get him," said Dragon, who posted the pin shortly after a reversal.

Austin Harry and Brady Butler each had two pins and a forfeit victory. Zeb McMillan went 3-0 with a pin, a major decision and a forfeit.

The Black Knights handled Lackawanna Trail, 52-21, in the quarterfinals and Hanover Area, 48-18, in the semifinals on Feb. 1.

## Mountaineers cage coach looking ahead

Move to Division 1, loss of graduates double blow to Dallas basketball program.

By TOM ROBINSON  
For The Dallas Post

Timing was not kind to the Dallas boys basketball team this season.

The Mountaineers moved up from Division 2 to Division 1 as part of Wyoming Valley Conference realignment just as graduation forced them to replace the entire starting lineup from a championship team.

That combination has made for a difficult season, but one in which coach Doug Miller has seen the promise of better times ahead.

"We are so young this year," Miller said. "There have been times when we've played our best basketball with four sophomores and a freshman on the court."

"That's a good thing for down the line, but it's not always the best for right now."

With District 2's return to open tournaments this year, Dallas moved into playoff action after completing the regular season Thursday night at Wyoming Valley West.

District playoffs will be a new experience for all but leading scorer Matt Ross, the only Mountaineer remaining who appeared in a tournament game last year.

"It's going to be a totally new experience for pretty much the entire team," Miller said.

It will also be an important

experience if the Mountaineers eventually make the improvement their coach anticipates.

"We're talking next year that we're going to be much more competitive," he said, "and I think we're looking two years from now where we really want to compete for league and district titles."

"Everything we're doing this year, we're trying to help with that."

The Mountaineers entered Friday night just 1-10 in the division and 2-17 overall.

Their youngest player, 14-year-old freshman Suk Mathon, played a big role in one of those wins with 12 points and 13 rebounds in a holiday tournament game against Wyoming Area.

"He's 14 years old and he's playing against 17 and 18 year olds," Miller said of the 6-foot-7 center. "That's a huge maturity and experience difference."

"There's a very high ceiling for his talent."

Mathon leads the team with 7.5 rebounds per game while also averaging 5.5 points.

Ross, a sophomore, leads in scoring with 14.5 points.

Allen Fell, another sophomore who has been sidelined by a leg injury, is second in both categories with 8.7 points and 5.6 rebounds per game.

They are three of the reasons Miller is hopeful about the future.

"We spend a lot of time talking about the future," Miller said. "Other coaches and people who have been



BILL TARUTIS FILE PHOTOS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Sukmail Mathon, right, drives the baseline as his brother Gurmail defends during a Dallas boys basketball practice.

### SPORTS BRIEFS

#### LL Little League sign-ups set

Harveys Lake Little League will hold its final sign up day from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 16 at the Harveys Lake Borough Building.

Children between the ages of 5 and 16 who reside with the league's borders may sign up. They must provide a birth certificate at the time of registration.

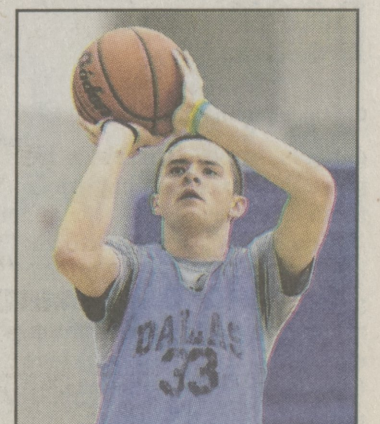
For more information, call league president Mark Wallace at 690-4026.

#### Bandits lacrosse team accepting registration

Registrations are now being accepted via the web site at [www.laxteams.net/bmylax](http://www.laxteams.net/bmylax) for the Back Mountain Bandits lacrosse team.

Boys and girls in grades 1-3 may sign up for intramurals. Boys age groups are U-9, U-11, U-13 & U-15. Girls age groups are third and fourth grade, fifth and sixth grade and seventh and eighth grades.

Participants should print the form and mail it, along with applicable fee, to BMYL, P.O. Box 1746, Shavertown, PA 18708.



Dallas' Matt Ross practices free throws.