

## SPORTS

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## Trinity Catholic claims Division IV golf title

## Staff report

WATERTOWN — The Trinity Catholic High School boys golf team kept a promise and made history Monday as the Crusaders captured the Division IV state championship at Crestbrook Park.

It was the first state boys golf crown in school history for Trinity Catholic. Trinity Catholic finished the 18-hole day over the demanding par -71 layout with a score of 330.

Defending champ Northwest

Catholic and St. Paul Catholic of Bristol tied for second at 334.

Immaculate High of Danbury took fourth place at 335.

Peter Ballo, one of three seniors on the Trinity Catholic squad, earned medalist honors after shooting an even-par 71. Ballo will join his brother Mike Ballo Jr. on the St. John's golf team in the fall.

Trinity Catholic was runnerup by four strokes to Northwest Catholic in last year's Division IV Cham-

ionship. The long ride home wasn't a happy one for the Crusaders.

"Our three seniors this year (Ballo, Brian Muller and Shaun Prunotto) made a pact on that ride home that they would come back this year and win the state title," Trinity Catholic's sixth-year coach Chris Gerwig said.

"And they made it happen today. The tough competition we faced all season long in the FCIAC prepared us for this."

Besides Ballo's 71, the other Trinity golfers were Mike Rubino (83), Steve Custardo (86), Prunotto (90) and Muller (93).

The conditions at Crestbrook Park didn't make it an easy journey for the Crusaders.

"The greens were lightning fast all day," Gerwig said. "That was the main reason for the high scores."

However, nothing was going to stop Trinity from making history. "The guys got a taste of how

close they were to the title last year. They made the state title the No. 1 goal for this season and they accomplished it," Gerwig said. "I'm so proud of this group. They displayed all their character and all of their drive today and were rewarded for their efforts."

Trinity Catholic, Westhill and Stamford High boys will compete at the Fitzpatrick Memorial Golf Tourney June 10 at Woodway Country Club at 1:30 p.m.



KERRY SHERCK FOR THE ADVOCATE

New Canaan's Margaret Boland, left, attempts to maneuver around Brien McMahon's Angelique Cruz during the Class I state quarterfinals on Monday. Boland, a senior, scored a game-high five goals in a 14-10 victory.

## New Canaan girls advance to semis

Boland's 5 goals lead Rams

By Matt Norlander  
STAFF WRITER

NEW CANAAN — It's widely believed that beating the same opponent three times in one season is almost always a difficult task.

The New Canaan girls lacrosse team had to do it three times in three weeks.

They achieved that goal, against Brien McMahon, in physical fashion Monday. The Rams defeated the Senators 14-10 Monday afternoon on their home turf to advance to the semifinals of the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference Division I tournament. Eighth-seeded New Canaan (17-4) will now face No. 4 Glastonbury, 20-10 winners over Newtown, in Wednesday's 5 p.m. semifinal at Trumbull.

Senior Meg Boland, who had a game-high five goals, led the Rams and did it in dramatic fashion — Boland went down late in the first half when the blunt end of a McMahon lacrosse stick met her eye, causing her to leave the game. At that point, Boland had two goals, and it wasn't entirely certain she would return.

"I was going for a crease roll and then the stick hit me in the eye, when my goggles were up," Boland said.

But at the start of the second half, with New Canaan leading 8-6, Boland was on the field and leading her team in transition to put some separation on the scoreboard.

"Meg stepped up on attack when we needed her to," NCHS coach Kristin Wood said. "Defensively, she's a big part of our communication back there. She really brought our team together when we needed her to."

Boland added three more goals in the second half, with assists coming from Jenny Simpson and Kacie Pippitt, two players who helped the Rams tremendously.

Simpson had three goals, while Pippitt had four assists and a score.

The game, however, started slowly — just the way McMahon wanted it. Boland admitted New Canaan was a bit sluggish early on.

"I think they came out fired up, and I think we came out a little flat," Boland said. "But we definitely picked it up. Our transition game looked a lot better in the second half than it did in the first. I think when we got those openings they had a hard time sliding to the ball on our transition. I think that's what created those fast breaks."

Wood said her team may have underestimated McMahon at first. Perhaps you can't blame the Rams for it: New Canaan defeated the Senators by a combined score of 40-17 in its past two meetings.

"They played 100 percent with heart and played well," Wood said. "They took our girls for a surprise."

McMahon head coach Tory Sullivan knew slowing down the pace was the only way to have a chance to win.

"We've played them enough that we knew we'd have to throw some interesting stuff at them," Sullivan said.

Please see RAMS on C3

## Worthy honor

## Nichols to be inducted into FCIAC Hall

By Dave Ruden  
STAFF WRITER

STAMFORD — It is entirely fitting that on the night he is entering the Fairfield County Interscholastic Athletic Conference's Hall of Fame, Tracy Nichols, who abhors pomp and circumstance the way Brett Favre does retirement, will be making an early exit from the ceremony this evening because his Trinity Catholic High School baseball team has a CIAC Class S Tournament semifinal game to play two hours later.

"What a great thing to have," Nichols said. "An induction, then to do what you really love doing, coaching kids and hopefully getting to the state final."

Nichols is being honored for the work he has done to help what many feel is the premier scholastic sports conference in the state continue to grow into a model for innovation and excellence.

"He has been one of our long-time leaders," said John Kuczo, the FCIAC's executive secretary. "He constantly has a lot of good information to impart. He knows everything."

Nichols could just as easily be recognized for his 32 years as an athletic director at the institution that was once known as Stamford Catholic, and has successfully competed against schools with anywhere from four to six times the enrollment.

Or, for that matter, his 10 years as the Crusaders' head baseball coach. Nichols will attempt this week to win his second state title, to go with his pair of FCIAC championships.

"He was a Godsend," said Mike Walsh, Trinity's boys basketball coach and Nichols' assistant in baseball, who predates Nichols' arrival at the school by a year. "He's very organized. I had to do a lot of things I don't have to do anymore. I just have to coach. All the coaches feel that way."

At a school with a population that for the most part has wavered between 500-600 students during his tenure, Nichols has had to wear many hats. He could be in his small office adorned with sports memorabilia arranging buses for a team one minute, then out on his ubiquitous golf cart the next, heading to spread clay so a wet field will be playable.

"If someone says there is a hole in the football field, guess who has to fill it?" said Nichols, traces of the biting sarcasm that has become a trademark in his voice. "There are a lot of people at the league meetings from large schools that have secretaries and five turf fields on their campus that I would love to have. But they also have

Please see NICHOLS on C3



KERRY SHERCK FOR THE ADVOCATE

Trinity Catholic athletic director Tracy Nichols stands outside his office. He is to be inducted into the FCIAC Hall of Fame tonight.

## Homer barrage powers Yankees over Rays

By Ronald Blum  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Andy Pettitte and another barrage of home runs at the new Yankee Stadium carried New York to a win that started what figures to be a challenging week.

Pettitte recovered from two wild outings, Johnny Damon hit a tiebreaking home run in the sixth inning and the Yankees defeated the Tampa Bay Rays 5-3 Monday night.

Mark Teixeira, Nick Swisher and Derek Jeter also homered for the Yan-

kees, who got all their runs on longballs as Andy Sonnanstine allowed a career-high four. Tampa Bay's Gabe Kapler hit his first home run of the season.

There have been 105 homers in 29 games at the \$1.5 billion ballpark, a sharp increase from the 160 last season at the original Yankee Stadium. It was the 10th five-homer game at the new ballpark.

Damon broke a 3-3 tie in the sixth with a drive to right off Sonnanstine (4-6), and Jeter chased him with a leadoff drive in the eighth. Nine of Damon's 12 home runs this season and six of Jeter's eight have come at home.

The Yankees improved the AL's best record to 24-23 and are 21-0 when allowing three runs or fewer. They headed to Boston after the game for a three-game series against the Red Sox, who are 5-0 against New York this year. The Yankees then return home for a weekend Subway Series against the Mets.

Pettitte (6-2) allowed three runs — two earned — and five hits in six innings, striking out a season-high seven.

Phil Hughes, in his first major league relief outing, threw a 1-2-3 seventh, Phil Coke pitched a hitless eighth and Mariano Rivera finished with a perfect ninth for his 14th save in 15 chances.