

THE GAZETTE

A full-page background image of a football player in a blue Kennedy jersey with the number 8, running with the ball. He is wearing a white helmet with blue and red accents. In the background, other players in grey jerseys are visible, one with the number 15 and the word 'NAZ' on it.

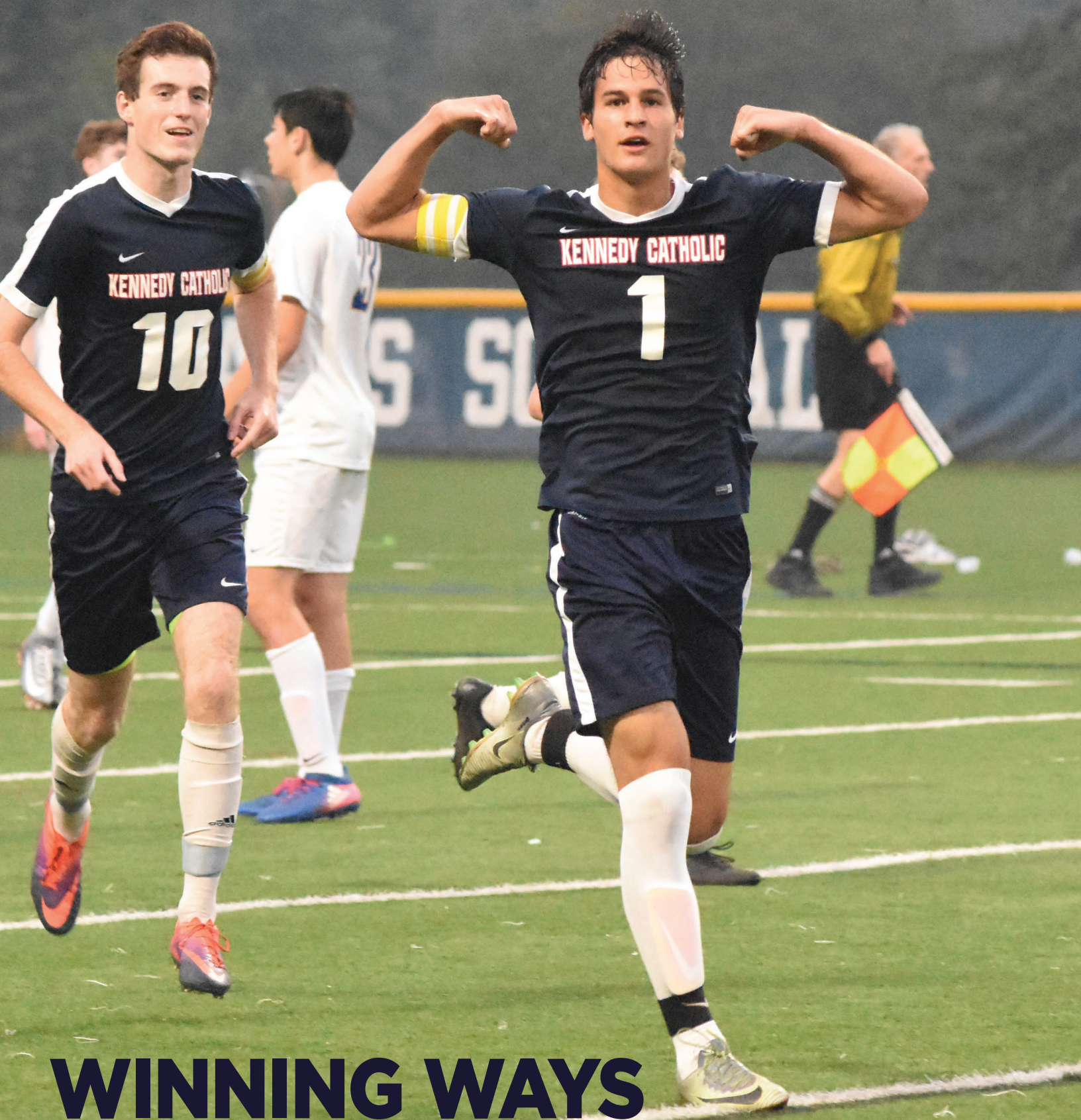
The Magazine for
Volume 28 - Winter 20

/Kennedy Catholic

IN THIS EDITION

***MUSIC TAKES TEAMWORK AT KENNEDY
DIGITAL LEARNING AND INSTRUCTION
FALL SPORTS WIN BIG IN 2018
FAITH AND DISCIPLINE***





WINNING WAYS

“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.” ~1 Corinthians 9:24



Members of the Class of 2019 who participated in Siena College's Instant Decision Day. Students were accepted and are awaiting their scholarship awards.

Attend a Kennedy Event

Spring Musical - February 28 - March 3

Spring Concert - May 1, 2019

President's Dinner - May 23, 2019

Annual All-Classes Alumni Evening - June 22, 2019

To learn about these events and more, visit our website:

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The Gael is produced by the Office of Advancement at John F. Kennedy Catholic High School. If you have any questions, comments or news you would like to share with us, please call (914) 232-5061 ext. 110 or write to Advancement@KennedyCatholic.org.

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Dear Friend of Kennedy Catholic,

When I sit down every few months with the crack editorial team here at *The Gael* to plan out the next issue, I make it a point to get a healthy mix of what we call “Body-Mind-Spirit.” That is, stories about how Kennedy students, alumni and others in our community are contributing – and excelling – in sports, academics and in community service.

We threw that all away with this issue, because our fall sports teams were just so good!

So welcome to the “Body Issue” of *The Gael*, in which you will be regaled with tales of our varsity basketball team, who advanced undefeated through the state tournament bracket to reach the semi-finals in Albany, and the football team, also undefeated in their league until they lost a heartbreaker in the CHSFL “A” championship. Our boys varsity soccer team capped their excellent season winning the CHSAA “A” championship. Amazing teams, all.

Many of our students play multiple sports. Luke Rossiter played basketball, baseball and on our championship soccer team. Zach Selinger and Eric Volpi, who will both be playing Division I baseball in college, also played on this year’s football team. All-League varsity softball player Alexis Suarez recently signed a National Letter of Intent to play Division II basketball at Dominican College. And Brendan Lebitsch, who was the leading scorer on this year’s champion varsity soccer team, was named the NYCHSFL’s Special Teams Player of the Year for his work as a place-kicker on our football team. Just as importantly, Brendan was named to the President’s Academic Honor Roll here at Kennedy.

Just before the start of the football season four alumni from the classes of 2017 and 2018, all football stand-outs during their time as students, came to watch the new team practice and wish them well. We took advantage of that time to both catch up with them and try to understand, from the player’s perspective, what makes athletics – football in particular – such a crucial part of the Kennedy identity.

Two other recent grads, both now studying at the University of Notre Dame, dropped by in September to meet with students and provide some insights into the college prep process. Along the way we learned that the Gaels and the Fighting Irish have a lot more in common than just pugnacious-looking mascots.

As important as teamwork is for our very successful sports program, it is equally vital to the success of our efforts in the arts as well. We spoke with Mr. Melito, Kennedy’s new concert band director, and his two captains about what it takes to turn a stage full of superstar soloists into an ensemble.

Sports and arts are only a fraction of the activities Kennedy provides students, and we hope you can get a sense of that from this issue’s pictorial on our many clubs and extra-curricular activities. Of course, we have extra-curricular activities for our alumni and parents as well, and hope that this issue’s photographs taken at our recent auction and golf tournament, as well as the Spirit Week leading up to the homecoming game, bring back fond memories.

Next issue we’ll bring back a little more “mind” and “spirit,” I promise, but for now please enjoy hearing about the accomplishments of our tremendous athletes. I certainly have.

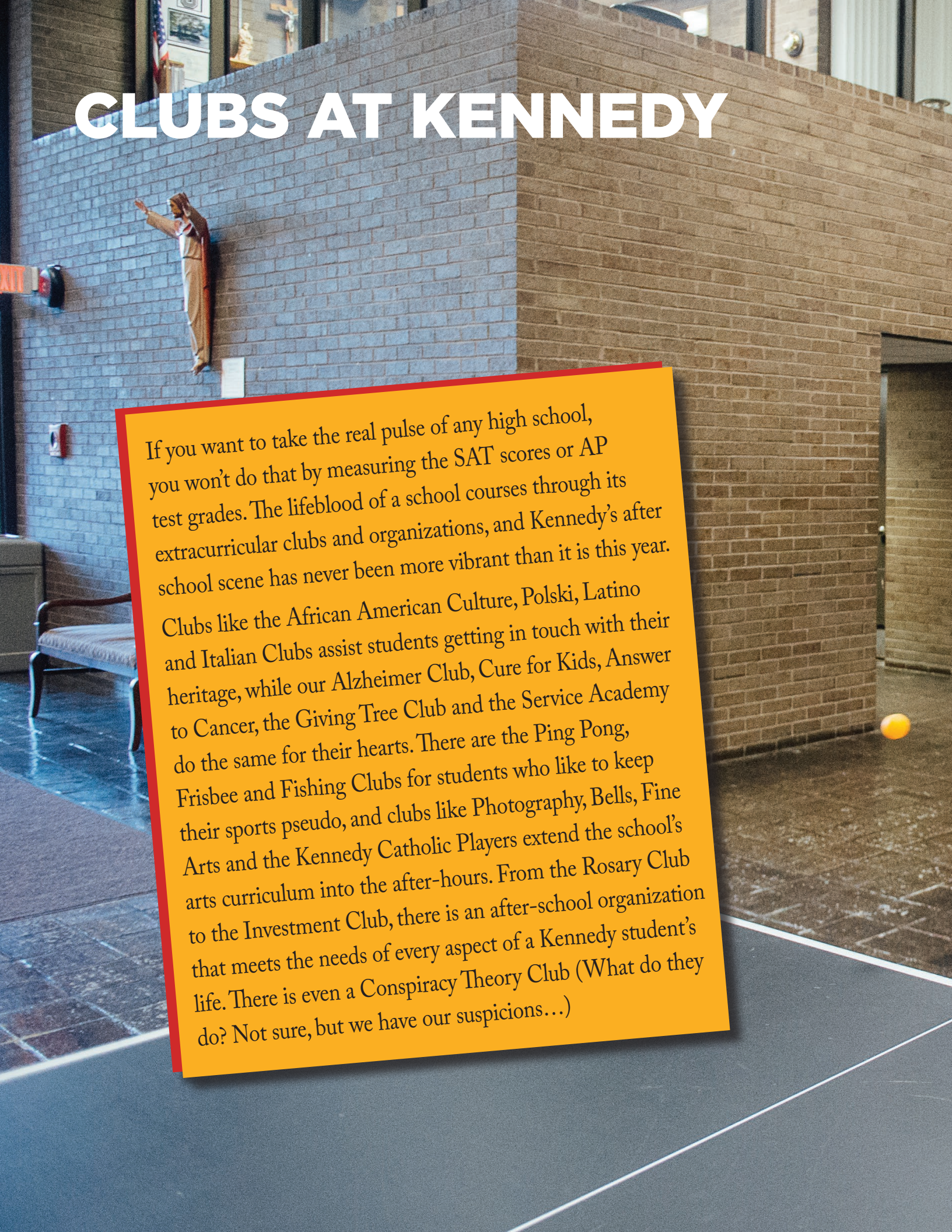
Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Vaillancourt', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rev. Mark Vaillancourt, Ph.D.

President and Principal

CLUBS AT KENNEDY

The background of the page is a photograph of a brick building. On the left, there is a statue of a religious figure, possibly Jesus, mounted on the wall. Below the statue is a wooden bench. The building has a mix of light and dark brickwork. A yellow ball is visible on the ground to the right.

If you want to take the real pulse of any high school, you won't do that by measuring the SAT scores or AP test grades. The lifeblood of a school courses through its extracurricular clubs and organizations, and Kennedy's after school scene has never been more vibrant than it is this year. Clubs like the African American Culture, Polski, Latino and Italian Clubs assist students getting in touch with their heritage, while our Alzheimer Club, Cure for Kids, Answer to Cancer, the Giving Tree Club and the Service Academy do the same for their hearts. There are the Ping Pong, Frisbee and Fishing Clubs for students who like to keep their sports pseudo, and clubs like Photography, Bells, Fine Arts and the Kennedy Catholic Players extend the school's arts curriculum into the after-hours. From the Rosary Club to the Investment Club, there is an after-school organization that meets the needs of every aspect of a Kennedy student's life. There is even a Conspiracy Theory Club (What do they do? Not sure, but we have our suspicions...)



TEAMWORK

Musicians Need It, Too

by Rich Kirby

Mr. Christopher Melito, who directs the concert band at Kennedy Catholic, has a problem that high school sports or theater coaches do not. His charges usually come to him after years of tutoring in an instrument that has effectively groomed and conditioned them to be soloists. Kennedy concert band is often the first time they must play, well or otherwise, with others.

“A lot of it is balancing the band,” Melito said. “For example, if you play the saxophone, and you have a part that accompanies the melody, which might be in the flute section, even though your part may tell you to play loudly, that’s only relative to whatever else is going on around you.”

Band co-captain Liam Flynn *does* play the saxophone, and he says it’s tough to sound good as a team unless everyone takes responsibility to practice their parts on their own time. Flynn tries to practice from sixty to ninety minutes each night, although Melito says he is looking for thirty.

“In a group, if you mess up, you can drag everyone down,” agrees co-captain senior and trumpeter Michael Abbamont. “It can almost sound off-key. If I were to play a flat when I was supposed to play a sharp, you can notice it. Even one person playing a wrong note is noticeable.”

For those musicians who regularly fail to hit the right notes, or need some insight into how a difficult passage is played, there is no shortage of extra coaching.

“One of the nice things about the band program here is that if you have a free period and Mr. Melito has a free period, he is more than happy to go over the piece with you in the auditorium, and that is immensely helpful,” Flynn said.

Sometimes you make the team in concert band, and sometimes the team makes you.

“We had a beginning tuba player this year, from China,” Melito said. “The question was, ‘how do you challenge the highly-skilled kids and keep it interesting for them while at the same time not making the student who might not be at the same level feel as though they are still contributing?’ So I try to rotate parts: not everyone plays the first trumpet part all the time. And I also try to give the students a little bit more of a voice in the parts they would want to play. Second clarinet part? Maybe it’s a little too challenging, so the student will opt for the third one.”

There’s a lot to track, but Melito, who retired from teaching full-time in New York State after 30 years before joining Kennedy in 2017, falls back on the basics. That’s what he teaches, as well.

“The key component in any ensemble is listening. Listening skills are above and beyond all else just in terms of balancing and blending.”

But that doesn’t mean he’s above bolstering those basics with some state-of-the-industry music education software.

“We also use a platform called SmartMusic which lets me write an exercise on my computer, and I can load it into SmartMusic, and the students play it into SmartMusic and get graded,” Melito said. “That would be their homework.”

Part of Melito’s own homework is expanding the concert band’s repertoire. He says he tries to “pick something that is very challenging, something that is fun, and something with some religious connotation to it” for each concert.

According to his captains, he hasn’t missed yet.

Michael Abbamont: “Since my freshman year (the concert band) has gone above and beyond everything I have ever done. It’s been really good for me to be part of this program. I think Mr. Melito is going to take us a long way.”



EFFECTIVENESS OF DIGITAL LEARNING & INSTRUCTION

By Anthony Corona



What comes to mind when you think back on your own education experience? Sure, we remember the friends and relationships we established and the memories that we created. But do we ever think about the actual educational experience itself? The use of textbooks, paper, pens, pencils, and various other tools come to mind. However, education and the way in which various content is now being taught is no longer what it used to be. Many schools around the country are still utilizing hard-cover textbooks to enhance and guide learners, yet there are still many schools that have implemented new technology into classrooms of all areas of content to further enhance learning. Thus, we have a new issue to try and wrap our heads around. Is the use of new media, technology, and digital learning truly enhancing learning? There are always two sides to every argument. The objective is to look at research and data to help us determine how effective digital learning and instruction can be to continue to find even more effective ways of helping our student's master specific content. Members of the "old-school" way of teaching tend not to agree with the utilization of new types of technology in the classroom; feeling as if it could act as more of a deterrent than something of value to our students. On the other side of the argument, you have innovative educators and teachers that are always looking for new ways to enhance learning in and out of the classroom. There is resounding proof however, that the utilization of digital learning tools and new technologies has not only improved standardized testing scores, but also appears to be creating well-informed and well-rounded

individuals. The implementation of new media literacies, technology and digital learning has overtaken the landscape of every level of education in the United States, and all schools should find a way to implement these new innovative ideas into their own school districts and curriculums. The analysis of data and the written work of professionals within this field show inexplicably that digital learning is the most effective way to enhance learning and instruction in the classroom.

To gain a better understanding of why this issue has emerged as an integral part of modern education we have to take a step back in time. Throughout the history of education in the United States, much has been made of the role of media literacy education. This concept has been at the forefront since the early part of the 1920's when motion pictures and new ways of consuming media were introduced to society (Hobbs & Jensen, 2009). In each of these generations, the perception and attitude of media literacy education has changed from both the public view of the issue as well as from politicians and educators alike. Going all the way back to Ancient Greece where instructional practices developed, we learned that knowledge can be developed through questioning practices that deepen analysis and reflection (Hobbs & Jensen, 2009). In the 1920's, we slowly begin to see the use of motion pictures as a means to teach writing to 8th grade students (Hobbs & Jensen, 2009). By the 1960's the "do it yourself" movement brought about expressive and creative education environments for students with new portable video recorders. Alas, this idea was met with resistance because there were many who felt that these new progressive teaching methods would hinder the development of reading skills (Hobbs & Jensen, 2009). Fast forward to the 2000's and you will see an overwhelming emergence of new technologies and the promotion of digital learning in the classroom, thanks in part to the scramble of large technology companies all vying for school contracts. Companies like Verizon, Dell, Apple and Microsoft were sending technology specialists to schools all over the country to sell this concept of digital learning (Hobbs & Jensen, 2009). Never has there been more hype and debate over the use of digital learning and technology in the classroom in the present day. There is one major obstacle however, that prevents all students from having the same opportunities that technology has to offer in the classroom: socioeconomic status. This creates what we now know as participatory culture.

"However, simply passing out technology is not enough. Expanding access to computers will help bridge some of the gaps between digital haves and have nots, but only in a context in which free Wi-Fi is coupled with new educational initiatives to help youth and adults learn how to use those tools effectively." (Jenkins, 2006, 13). This issue has come

directly to the forefront in recent years, especially in low-income areas. The larger issue here is also the ability of school districts to be able to afford and install new types of technology within their school districts. For instance, according to a report by Henry Becker in 1999, a lowly 6 percent of students from all levels of education utilized the internet for beyond-classroom projects and publishing (Becker, 1999). Again, this is taken from a survey conducted in 1998. However, we can't ignore these findings simply because we assume that these numbers have greatly increased in the 2000's. As an example, it was discovered that only 50 percent of students who utilized the internet for an array of purposes, only used it for educational or academic purposes in 2007 (thejournal.com, Nagel, 2007). It appears that even in today's participatory culture, educators still don't quite understand the large discrepancy. "Some scholars and educators don't yet fully realize that young people's online media use is entertainment-centered." (Hobbs & Jensen, 2009) With all of this information and research, it is evident that due to the aforementioned factors, digital learning and educational technology use in education may still be in its infant stages. The possibilities of extended technology and media use in the classroom are endless. What we now must do is determine where and how far we can go to make technology and digital learning available to all of our students at every level of education. To think that the majority of colleges and universities all over the nation are utilizing some form or forms of technology is important to also understand. We must expose students to these new technologies at both the elementary and high school levels in order for them to get a handle on what is to come at the next level of their education.

In April 2014, a survey was created by a national education nonprofit that researches technological resources for K-12 students. Called "Project Tomorrow," it was discovered that "63 percent of teachers use tablets; 58 percent of principals have implemented technology in the classroom: 63 percent of students in grades 6-12 prefer a blended learning environment; and 51 percent of parents want their children in a blended learning environment." (Liberty Journal, Skinner, 2015) It not only appears that technology has made its way into the majority of classrooms, but there also appears to be a strong desire from administrators, teachers, parents and students to implement and keep digital learning in the classroom. The only obstacle now is what to do with the technology presented to us and how to get the most out of this technology. We must be able to quantify student success with the utilization of technology in the classroom.

As we continue to promote a more progressive means of teaching with the implementation of technology and digital learning in the classroom, we must also consider the effect that not only technology has on student performance and results, but the manner in which students are assessed. For example, in 1995 a technical high school in Worcester, Massachusetts conducted an experiment in which the objective was to determine if administering tests on a computer versus on paper would improve students' scores. At the conclusion of the experiment, it was discovered that only 30 percent of the students who took the

exam on paper received a "passing" score. In contrast, students that took the same exam on the computer "passed" at 67 percent. (bc.edu, Russell & Haney, 2000). The results are hard to ignore here. Not only are students clearly performing much more successfully on a computer, but there seems to be a desire to take exams and other assessments electronically. Still not convinced? DreamBox Learning was established as an online learning tool to enhance student learning by "adapting to the individual learner, personalize instruction, integrate assessment with instruction and align with state and regional standards." (DreamBox.com) In 2016, professionals from Harvard University's Personalized Learning Collaborative at the Center for Education Policy Research conducted a survey in which students from various levels of education were introduced through the DreamBox program (Forbes, Kurshan, 2016). The results of their research showed several things. The first was that "students who spent more time on DreamBox software saw larger gains in achievement." (Harvard.edu, Center for Education Policy Research) The second was "students who followed the DreamBox lesson recommendations, as opposed to going back and repeating content, saw faster gains." (Harvard.edu, Center for Education Policy Research).

The results of various types of digital learning have shown inexplicably that digital learning is the most effective way to enhance learning and instruction in the classroom. With that said, and just like anything else, there is always room for continued improvement and growth in this field. Our students are entering a period of history in which they will be required to have knowledge and familiarity with new types of technology in order to work in essentially every field of the workforce. It is our duty as educators to continue to utilize digital learning and new technologies to best prepare this generation and future generations of students for life after education. The expansion of this field is crucial, and the results and data have shown that we can only improve upon what we have achieved thus far.

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VOLLEYBALL GAELS SEASON ENDS AT STATE SEMI-FINAL

by Brendan Sullivan '21

The Kennedy Catholic Varsity Volleyball team put together a wonderful 2018 season, where they reached the CHSAA "AA" State Semifinals, after advancing through the State Tournament Bracket. The Gaels stayed strong throughout the entire season, with an undefeated regular season.

The path that Kennedy took to the State Tournament was one of pure domination. The Gaels went 22-0 in the regular season, where they won 66 sets and only lost 3 sets total. Kennedy was able to beat all of their opponents with ease, except their rival Maria Regina in the second game of the year. According to Head Coach Tony Santora, "This game defined our team and season." Kennedy went down early 2-1 in sets, but was able to rally back and win the match, after two of their top setters went out of the game with injury. The Gaels showed that they have the determination to win anything, no matter what situation gets thrown at them.

Santora felt that the off-season preparation greatly influenced the way Kennedy's season played out. He stated, "The amount of time we put in on the off-season and in workouts all paid off in the playoffs and with our undefeated regular season record." The way that he presents drills is for more of a learning experience to help in the games, not just the regular, monotonous

way of getting through practice. Typically, Coach Santora uses the captains to explain the drills and show their teammates how to complete the drills, in the best way possible. Santora has called the seniors "the backbone" of the team, for they keep everything together and calm during high-pressure moments.

Although Kennedy was the shortest team in the league, their positioning and knowledge of the game has transcended their abilities on the court. Every player knows their limits and are very skillful, where they cover for their teammate defensively to ensure no errors occur. It is important to get the players comfortable being uncomfortable. Santora achieves this by putting the starters in different positions and playing on the same line with different teammates than they usually do. Everyone is able to play with each other and they're used to it, so they can play optimally during the game. Also, the coach believes it is important to keep all players fresh by rotating every player into the game. Kennedy's depth gave them an advantage over their opponents, since the Gaels didn't have to worry about wavering their lead through substitutions. All players on the team are able to compete at the highest level, due to their preparation and commitment to the team.

For the entire season, junior Julia Costa led the Gaels in assists and aces, while sophomore Grace Tompkins led the team in serve points. Senior captain Eileen Cooney led Kennedy in digs and senior Kristen Quarless led the team in kills. Also, freshman Anna Cascapera was the team leader in blocks.

The priorities for the Gaels are always to win the League, Division, City, and State Championships. Kennedy was able to stay focused on the goals throughout the entire season by winning both the League and Division Championships. Although their first loss came in the City Championship, they had an automatic qualification bid into the State Tournament because of their undefeated regular season record. The Gaels ended their season in the CHSAA "AA" State Semifinals. Each year, the Gaels get closer and closer to winning all games straight through the State Championship. Their time will come and it's exciting to watch their journey!



FOOTBALL GAELS HAVE SPECTACULAR SEASON

by Brendan Sullivan '21

The Kennedy Catholic Varsity Football team has had a very successful 2018 season. They went undefeated in regular season league play for the first time in school history. Thus, they received the number one seed for the CHSFL "A" Playoffs. Although the Gaels didn't win the championship this year, they were able to display the key values of brotherhood and diligence on the football field.

The leadership from the senior class played a vital role in bringing this squad together for a memorable season. The seniors have undeniably led the team by example. It has helped the underclassmen learn from the seniors, while getting better in practice for game time. Head Coach Dominick Tassone stated, "Our freshmen have contributed in all aspects this season whether it be starting defense, offense, special teams, or scout teams and our seniors realize that, which has created a mutual respect among the guys."

The captains have created a sense of family and camaraderie among the players. Senior captain Myles Proctor said, "The underclassmen are the future of Kennedy Catholic Football and we, as seniors, must push them to be the best players they can be." Everyone must be prepared for that time when their number is called, while being comfortable with their teammates. It is important to be ready for anything that can happen on the

field. With all players contributing for the greater good of the team, it explains why the Gaels were so successful.

The Gaels were able to complete their season with an 8-2 record. Their notable victories over Cardinal Spellman and St. Joe's-by-the-Sea exhibited their hard work and commitment to their season. Specifically, the overtime win over St. Joe's-by-the-Sea displayed that the Gaels can compete at a high level and still succeed.

The Kennedy Football program defeated Cardinal Spellman for the first time this season. Head Coach Dominick Tassone attributes his team's success to the off-season work that the team has put in and their relentless effort at practices on a day-to-day basis. He said, "It takes buying into a program and working hard every day to truly pursue a goal." After all, the Gaels have excelled this season and were able to accomplish an undefeated regular season league record, with their only blemish coming from Out of Door Academy in Kennedy's Battle at the Beach, an out-of-league game played down in Sarasota, Florida.

Seniors Myles Proctor and Seth Surret led Kennedy in rushing yards and touchdowns, while seniors Eric Volpi, Seth Surret, and Brandon

Gibson led the team in receiving touchdowns. The defense has stayed strong through the entire season, which has been exhibited in their opponents points per game. Seniors Wyatt Rumpf and Cole Esposito each tallied over 100 tackles this season, while sophomore Clayton Proctor had two interceptions on the season. Altogether, Kennedy's linebackers had over 100 tackles each and the senior running back core of Myles Proctor and Seth Surret have combined for over 2,000 yards of scrimmage.

The Kennedy Catholic Varsity Football team had a great season, even though they weren't able to cap it off with a championship title. They showed great accomplishments on the field, which have been accentuated by the excellent support from the administration, cheerleading squad, teachers, and sponsor Crystal Blue. The football program can only continue to move forward in a positive direction and the Kennedy community is excited for what next season has in store for the Gaels!



2018 Kennedy Catholic Golf Classic
Centennial Golf Course, October 4, 2018



2018 Kennedy Catholic Auction
November 10, 2018



THAT CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON!

Boys Varsity Soccer Triumphant

by Brendan Sullivan '21



The Kennedy Catholic Boys Varsity Soccer team capped off an excellent season with a CHSAA "A" City Championship Title. They beat St. John's Prep 1-0 in regular time, with an amazing goal from Senior captain Brendan Lebitsch. The Gaels changed their fate in the City Championship, a year after losing it.

However, Kennedy didn't get straight to the City Championship with ease. It took a lot of work, mentally and athletically. The Gaels had a strong season opener against the defending champions St. Peter's, who beat Kennedy last year in the title game. St. Peter's had 7 returning starters from the previous year, where Kennedy lost 7 starters to graduation. This didn't hold the Gaels back, where they were able to shut out St. Peter's on their home turf. As Head Coach Jim Shapiro stated, "We left with a 2-0 victory and I realized then that the boys had what it takes, mentally, to be champions." It was a statement that held true for the rest of the season.

Kennedy finished the 2018 season with an 11-3-3 record, where key changes to the lineup and

formation on the field were pivotal in the way the Gaels have played. It was important to have all players on the team able to play all positions on the field. Doing so gave Coach Shapiro the ability to make perfect in-game adjustments to win more games and it made the players comfortable being uncomfortable. When Coach Shapiro changed Kennedy's formation from a 4-3-3 system into a 4-5-1 system, they went undefeated and became, eventually, champions.

The soccer season became very exciting, when the playoffs came around with two overtime wins that led up to the City Championship win. In the quarterfinals, they defeated defending champions, St. Peter's, in overtime on a goal scored by senior captain Luke Ferrari and assisted by junior Zach Gertsner. In the semifinals, the Gaels beat Cardinal Spellman on a finish from sophomore Paul Wu. These two overtime victories showed that the Gaels would fight to the absolute end and gave them the determination to finish the season with a championship.

The chemistry between the players and Coach Shapiro has helped the Gaels gel on and off the field. Coach Shapiro used the chemistry between the players for motivation and it helped the team become more successful on the field. As Coach Shapiro said, "The captains, Luke Ferrari and Brendan Lebitsch, brought this team together to its best abilities and we always had each other's back on the field." Senior captain Brendan Lebitsch led Kennedy in goals, while senior captain Luke Ferrari led the team in assists. Also, senior goaltender Luke Rossiter played excellent in the postseason. Whenever Kennedy needed someone to rely on, Brendan Lebitsch or Luke Ferrari were able to deliver. Seniors Luke Ferrari, Brendan Lebitsch, and Luke Rossiter, along with sophomore Liam Mulholland, were all rewarded with All-League selections for their spectacular efforts during the season. The Gaels became an unstoppable force that led them to a City Championship title, while encapsulating all things needed for a successful season.

SHAKING DOWN THUNDER

KENNEDY GRADS EARN HIGH MARKS AT NOTRE DAME

by Rich Kirby

At the start of the school year, Nico Quartironi and Erin Glendon, both Class of 2017, were sent back to their Alma Mater by their current school, Notre Dame, to do some recruiting. We had a lot of catching-up to do.

Quartironi, from Lagrangeville in Dutchess County, is double majoring in finance and applied and computational math and statistics, while minoring in international business. All that seems like he should be drowning in spreadsheets, sigmas and impossible deadlines, but he says he manages to keep his head above water by leaning back on what he learned in high school.

"Deadlines are something that Kennedy stressed and that are so important in college," said Quartironi, who managed playing soccer and lacrosse, as well as being stage manager, into his high school schedule. "Professors will just give you a zero if you don't complete something. At Kennedy, they may have been a little more lenient, but they made sure you got things done on time, whether it was your college application, your homework, essays, et cetera. So coming into college I felt pretty prepared to meet those new deadlines."

Glendon, who played basketball, volleyball and lacrosse as well as the

flute while at Kennedy, agrees: "I do not know if any school can ever really prepare you for the busy-ness of college, but I don't think anyplace else could have prepared me better than Kennedy."

The civil engineering major credits her choice of career to studying AP Physics with Mrs. Ioannou. "I found it very challenging, and I would spend a lot of time after school with 'Mrs. I,' and she is the one who told me, 'you should really think about engineering, I can see you as an engineer.'"

What nobody -- neither her family nor friends growing up in Valhalla -- saw her as, was an army officer. Yet Glendon enlisted in the Reserve Officers Training Corps at ND right away, another decision she attributes to Kennedy.

"In my junior year, there were three kids who went to service academies, and I knew all of them from band, and I thought that was cool! My parents said, 'If you think that it's cool, you should go for it.' Kennedy was very supportive of that." She hopes to join the Army Corps of Engineers before realizing her ultimate goal of building buildings.

There are more than a few Kennedy alumni who also count themselves ND alums as well. So what's the mystical bond between Kennedy and ND? For Quartironi, it was... a mystical bond:

"I will say this -- and it is probably hard to understand -- but the minute I set foot on the campus, something just clicked, and a lot of people here say the same thing. It's a first impression unlike any other one at any other college. Although I visited colleges after that that I liked, nothing matched up to here."

Glendon long knew she wanted to be one of the Fighting Irish, but it took becoming a Gael first for her to realize she had what it takes.

"I always thought of Notre Dame, but it was in a far off way, kind of like a dream. But then two girls ahead of me in school, one a year ahead, the other two years, went there. And that made me realize, 'Oh, wow, people from Kennedy, they actually get in there!' And I never looked back."

Although Glendon had her eye on ND for a while, both students believe that ND keeps its eye on Kennedy as well.

"I loved my four years at Kennedy because of the values that I learned there that made me into what I am, and I am so grateful for that," she said. "Notre Dame says they look for that in their applicants, people who want to give back to the community, which is what Kennedy is all about."

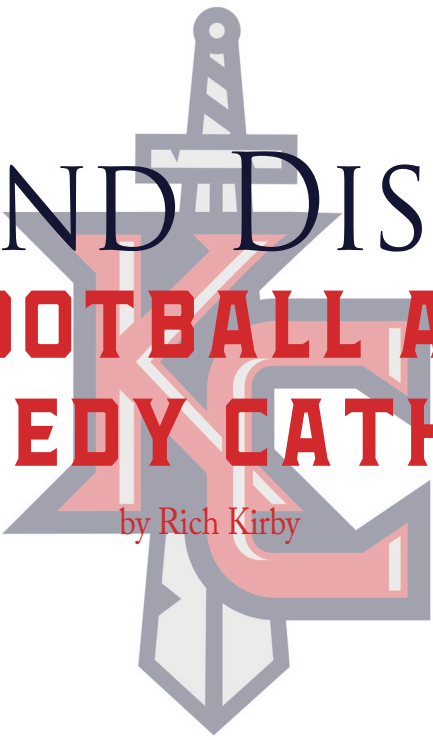


SPIRIT WEEK 2018









FAITH AND DISCIPLINE

FOOTBALL AT KENNEDY CATHOLIC

by Rich Kirby

The first game the Kennedy Catholic Gaels played under their brand new home field lights was Homecoming 2017. It was a perfect night for football, made even better by the return of so many alumni.

Liam McManus '17, now a sophomore at SUNY Maritime, was there among them, and remembers how the lights gave the game "a whole different atmosphere. It gets the players excited, and it gets the fans to come out."

For David Keogh '17, Gaels' former QB and NYCHSFL Class A Player of the Year, the lights and the bigger crowds they seem to attract are the capstone on what he called "the progression that Coach Tassone is making for the program."

McManus and Keogh journeyed to their alma mater in August 2018 to meet up with their old team mates Aaron Brown '18 and Ed Longest '18, watch an early practice of the 2018-19 varsity team, admire their new uniform designs, and talk about old times.

"In my freshman year, we were 0-7," Longest recalled. "And the feeling in the school was, 'Wait, there's a game? Maybe we should go, some of our friends are playing.' But in the last couple of years, with Coach Tassone turning everything around, people are excited. People are backing the program now."

Brown, who is now playing football for Alfred University, doesn't think a school absolutely needs a winning football team to inspire the student body, but acknowledges that it sure helps. "We don't have to be winners,"

he said, "because really its about school spirit and everything. But the crowd loves to see their team win. You love to make your crowd happy. You love to make yourself happy. At the end of the day, it's for the love of the game."

That's a lot of love, but Brown knows he'll need more than that to shine at Alfred. His new team is very successful and very competitive. "I am going to have to work hard to show what I can do," he said.

McManus knows what it's like to be riding high in May, and come down to earth in September, and had some advice.

"You're at the top of the food chain, and then you are starting over, all within a few months," he told Brown. "The thing that you need to realize is that at college, everyone wants to be there, everyone wants to compete, which is often not the case in high school. Everyone on your college team is in it to win it. And so you have to focus and work that much harder, because everyone is that much better at the next level."

Named NYCHSFL Class 'A' Lineman of the Year in his senior year. Longest was as good as it got on his level, and at 6'2" and 260 pounds, he is bigger than most humans at any level. Now a freshman at Ithaca College, Longest says he used his great size to elucidate rather than intimidate.

"I always figured I had to set the standard," he said. "If I set the standard of laziness, that I don't need to run as much because I am bigger, then the guys who are smaller will say, 'Ed's not doing it, I don't need to do it.'"



Instead I say, 'We're going to run off the field to get water, we're going to *run* from drill to drill, we're going to go to every single weight-lifting session.' I think it is important to set the standard and say, 'Hey, I'm doing this, you should be doing it too, because we are all equal. I might be bigger than you, but we all have a job on the team to do.'

That theme of being personally, continuously, challenged came up again and again as the old friends reminisced.

"Kennedy pushes you to the limit," Keogh, now a sophomore at Curry College, said, laughing. "Coach Tassone is a great example of that. Before my senior year, I couldn't do much wrong, and then he came along, and he was barking at me! But that pushed me, that helped me get unbelievable numbers, almost 2,000 yards – that was unheard of, we barely had 2,000 yards in my sophomore and junior years combined. And that's what the teachers do, too, they push you. They want to see what you can do, and how far they can get you."

The athletics culture at Kennedy may have changed, but the school's claim to fame is still/will always be its rigorous academics. Kennedy even makes a point of referring to their players as "scholar-athletes," and sets the academic qualifying bar very high for students who want to play sports. What does an athlete have to do to stay on the team, book-wise, at Kennedy?

"Everyone's going to tell you, 'hard work' and 'studying,'" Brown said. "I'm going to tell you, 'My mom!' She is always there, she is always on me, and she made me a better person because of it. The same level of work you put in on the field you have to put in inside the classroom. That is how you succeed."

The Gaels had better succeed this year, because there will be a heck of a lot more people watching them play. All of the team's home games are now being streamed live on the internet. The school is hoping that by doing so parents and alumni who can't make it out to the gridiron can still get their Gael on, wherever else they may be.

Aaron Brown, more optimistic still, sees it a little differently: "People are going to watch the game online, realize what they are missing, and then they are going to want to come out and see it in person."

"I know that I will be sitting in my dorm room watching most of the games," Keogh said. "The friends I played with, who were older than me, would always message me after the game, 'Hey I heard it was a great game, wish we could have seen it!' So streaming is definitely going to bring alumni back."

Longest says that he didn't fully appreciate the third leg of the 'mind-body-spirit' stool that Kennedy touts as the school's foundation, until his senior year. But on the eve of his freshman year at college, he realized the school's foundation had become his own.

"Faith has become a cornerstone of my life: Faith. School. Football. And Kennedy does a great job integrating them," he said. "So we say a prayer before every class, we take theology classes, it's woven into the school. Before every single game we go out to the grotto, we pray as a team – that's a really spiritual and powerful moment. We are all together, and we are going to go win this game, we are going to do everything together as a team, with God on our side."

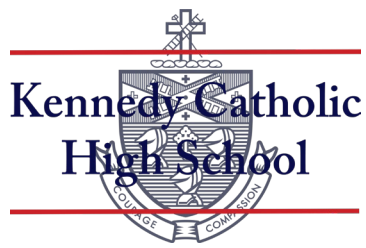


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