



Courtesy photo
Isabella Scarpetti flips through the air during a routine on the beam. She is ranked No. 2 nationally on the beam among Level 9 gymnasts.

SCARPETTI

■ Continued from Page 9

And there is something else. Scarpetti, who trained and competed briefly in Florida when her father was involved in a construction project there, is not one to brag. “She’s a perfect teammate and very humble,” said Pinkerton coach Chelsie Burland. “It’s hard for anyone not to love her.” Burland knows Scarpetti as well as anyone because she trains her at the New Hampshire Academy Artistics Gymnastics in North Hampton, and the Pinkerton coach is thrilled she decided to compete for the Astros this year. As a home schooler, it gives her another opportunity to train and compete, which she thrives on. “She is always working, even when others stop,” said Burland, who has led Pinkerton to seven state titles since 2010, including the last two. “That’s part of why she has gotten as far as she has in the last year and a half.” In fact, one of the reasons Scarpetti enjoys being home schooled is that it affords her more time to train, which she does at least 22 hours a week at the New Hampshire Academy. “I really do like being home schooled and it’s been helpful for gymnastics,” she said. “A lot of days, I’ll go in early, about 2, and practice until 4. Then I’ll take a break and come back at night for the regular session. And two days a week, I also train with the Pinkerton team.” The 5-foot-3 Scarpetti has always been energetic, according to her mother Jackie, which is how she became involved in gymnastics at a young age. “She was always an active child and, since I was home schooling her, I wanted her to get out

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every day even when she was very young,” said Jackie. “She’d have gymnastics one day, then dance, horseback riding, piano and swimming. As gymnastics got more intense, she had to start giving up things.” But Scarpetti, who scored in the 96 percentile of the math section of the PSAT’s, has continued with piano lessons and practices about an hour per day. In competition, she has scored Superior (the highest level) in solos eight straight years. “She has a great aptitude for learning,” said Jackie. “It’s her nature to try to be good in everything she does.” With that drive, Scarpetti has two goals — to reach Level 10 as soon as she can and then to compete in college gymnastics, preferably in Division 1. “I want to have that team atmosphere like I’m getting now (with Pinkerton),” she said. “I’ve already looked into some colleges.” Burland, who has coached her share of top gymnasts, has no doubt that Scarpetti will reach her goals. “She’s just an amazing kid and she’s the caliber of (UNH’s and former Astro star) Brittany Capozzi,” said Burland. “They both had similar difficulty on vault, beam and floor. However, Isabella is more advanced on bars making her the most competitive gymnast I have yet to coach at Pinkerton.” Which means that Scarpetti will be far well known in the very near future.



Courtesy photo
Pinkerton’s Isabella Scarpetti shows her joy while competing in the floor exercise.

High School Hockey

David Willis

METHUEN — Megan Forbes has revenge on her mind. For more than a month, the Methuen-Tewksbury girls hockey tri-captain has waited to avenge the lone loss on her squad’s record this winter. On Wednesday, Forbes will have her chance,

when her Red Rangers welcome archrival Andover to Methuen High (5 p.m.) “That loss to Andover was rough,” said Forbes of the Golden Warriors’ 3-0 victory on Dec. 22. “All any team wants after being beat is revenge. And luckily, we have the opportunity to get some revenge. You could say I’m extremely excited.” When Methuen/Tewksbury (11-1-1) and Andover (12-0-1) face off, it will be a battle of two of the state’s premier girls hockey teams. The Golden Warriors are ranked No. 3 in Massachusetts in Hockey Night in Boston’s state-wide polls. The defending Division 1 finalist Red Rangers are No. 4. And no one wants a win on Wednesday more than Methuen High senior Forbes. “I wouldn’t say we’ve put the Andover loss behind us,” she said. “We’ve used it as a basis for motivation. A win over Andover would help prove to ourselves that all of the hard work is worth it” Now in her sixth season with the Methuen/Tewksbury varsity team, Forbes has been a major reason why the Red Rangers have emerged as a state championship favorite. “Meg always supports her teammates and shows her tremendous desire to



STAFF FILE PHOTO
Methuen/Tewksbury’s Megan Forbes looks to make a move against an HPNA defender. Forbes has done it all for the Red Rangers, who are out for revenge this week.

DEJA VU

Methuen/Tewksbury girls hockey’s only loss this winter is a 3-0 setback to Andover on Dec. 22. The Red Rangers’ only regular season loss last winter was ... a 3-0 setback to Andover on Dec. 30. Methuen then surged to the Division 1 state title game, before falling 1-0 to Woburn.

win,” said Red Rangers head coach Sarah Oteri, a former Andover star. “She is very strong in front of the net and on one-on-ones. Meg loves being on the ice and being a member of our team.” Primarily a defenseman, who has taken shifts at forward this winter when called upon, Forbes has already matched her career-high with four goals and added four assists. She has 10 goals and 15 assists for her career. “My role on this team is to make my teammates want to be better on and off the ice,” said Forbes. “I think it’s clear to the rest of the team how much I care and I believe that encourages them to play their best and make us the best team we can be.” Forbes began seeing varsity shifts as a seventh grader in 2013-14, playing alongside record-setting Eagle-Tribune MVP

Amanda Conway for two seasons. For the past five seasons, she and Eagle-Tribune All-Star Brenna Greene have helped lead a dominant defensive unit that has allowed just 19 goals this season and 29 all of last winter on the way to the Division 1 state title game before falling to Woburn 1-0. “Playing with Meg the last few years has been amazing,” said Greene. “She’s an awesome teammate and a great defenseman.” Forbes, an assistant captain last winter, loves her role on the Red Rangers’ blue line. “I love playing defense,” she said. “It takes a lot to be a successful defenseman. You have to understand every part of the game, communicate well, and most importantly you need to have confidence. “I enjoy every part of the

game no matter where I’m playing as long as I know I’m helping my team. So I am fine with playing forward too when they need me.” With Forbes doing it all, Methuen/Tewksbury has gone 8-0-1 since the loss to Andover, outscoring opponents 54-12. The lone blemish is a 0-0 tie with Boston Latin (10-3-2) on Jan. 16. “I’m really proud of the way my team has been playing lately,” said Forbes. “We went through a rough streak, but we shook it off and showed up ready to work. The team chemistry we have is a huge advantage for our team. Without that energy everyone provides, I don’t think we would ever be as successful as we are.” And Forbes’ intends to end her high school career with a return trip to the TD Garden for the state title game. “Our team goal remains the same each year,” she said, “to make it to the Boston Garden and ride the bus home as champions.”

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Girls basketball

Bramanti, Andover hold off Masco

By JEAN DEPLACIDO
Correspondent

BOXFORD — Masconomet coach Bob Romeo knows his team is on the verge of winning tight games, but the young Lady Chieftains are not quite there yet. His team suffered a heartbreaking 45-41 non-league loss to Andover Sunday.

While it wasn’t a W, the home team did a lot of things right, and stymied the Golden Warriors with tenacious defense. They fought hard the entire way, and it came down to the final possession. Masconomet had a chance to send the game into overtime, trailing a talented Andover squad, 44-41 with 27 seconds remaining but the shot didn’t fall, and after Taylor Landry made a foul shot at the other end the visitors able to hang on for the victory. “We are getting so close, but in all four losses we played well but didn’t finish,” said Romeo (10-4). “In all of them we’ve played great for a half or three quarters; this one came down to the final possession. It was so close, but I’m very optimistic going forward. Games like this are all about learning what we need to do better to get ready for the state tournament.” Andover coach Alan Hibino said he loved playing Masco, but hopes he doesn’t see them again in the states. “We were lucky to come out of here with a win, and unless it’s in the North finals I don’t want to have to play them again,” said Hibino (13-2). “This is an



CARL RUSSO/Staff photo
Andover senior Gia Bramanti, taking a shot earlier in the year, had two pivotal 3-pointers in Sunday’s win over Masconomet.

unbelievable atmosphere, and coach Romeo has those kids playing so hard. It’s not just Mak (Graves) and Morgan (Bovardi) but the role players around them are fantastic. “We want to face strong Division 1 teams so we’ll be battle tested. This one could have gone either way; we just made a couple more shots than they did. I looked up in the stands and saw players from our league (Merrimack Valley Conference) here scouting us and Masconomet.” The game was tied seven different times, the last at 29-29 at the end of the third quarter. Masco had a 6-0 run to open the final frame with baskets by Cally

McSweeney, Bovardi, and Paige Richardson. Bovardi led her team in points with 17 and assists with five while McSweeney had a team high nine rebounds. Bovardi and Marissa DeLucia both had two steals. Midway through the fourth quarter Andover hit back-to-back 3-pointers by Tatum Shaw (8 points) and Gia Bramanti (19) to pull ahead for good. Bramanti had 14 points in the second half, and 10 with the game on the line in the last eight minutes. “When they hit those back to back 3’s, it changed the game,” said Romeo. “That was the turning point. Gia is special; that’s why she’s a scholarship player. Great

“We want to face strong Division 1 teams so we’ll be battle tested. This one could have gone either way.”

Andover coach Alan Hibino

ones find ways to make big plays, and I can only tip my hat. “Andover had been scoring in the high 60s, and we held them way below their average. Everything was contested either way all game; it was a battle for every inch of the floor. We had a couple of good looks and the players we wanted shooting at the end, but didn’t knock our shots down. I have no regrets over the execution or effort.” Defense was the name of the game right from the start. Andover had a one-point lead after the first eight minutes, but Masco was on top, 21-16 at halftime after outscoring the Golden Warriors, 11-5 in the second quarter. The Lady Chieftains were able to hang onto the lead for most of the third quarter until Bramanti’s trey knotted it up. “When they went to a zone their length was an issue for us. Both Mak and Morgan need a little space for their shots, and it was tough getting it. The reason why we schedule games like this is to prepare for what’s ahead at states. It was a good test.”

Andover 45, Masconomet 41

Andover (45): Krekorian 1-1-4; Landry 4-2-10; Shaw 3-0-8; Pacy 0-0-0; Bramanti 5-6-19; Sullivan 0-2-2; Hardock 0-0-0; Zalanskas 1-0-2. Totals: 14-11-45
Masconomet (41): Palmer 0-0-0; Graves 3-0-8; Richardson 3-2-8; Bovardi 5-5-17; DiPietro 0-4-4; Fogarty 0-0-0; DeLucia 0-0-0; McSweeney 2-0-4; Zepaj 0-0-0; Filmore 0-0-0. Totals: 13-11-41
3-pointers: 3-pointers: Andover: Bramanti 3, Shaw 2, Krekorian; Masconomet: Graves 2, Bovardi 2
Andover (13-2): 16 29 — 45
Masconomet (10-4): 21 20 — 41