

QuEd up for Education

People and programs impacting our QCSD community

May 30, 2019



The 14 student-athletes committing to colleges this week are, front row left to right, Ashton Herd, Adria Retter, Cameron Cronk, Justin Flor, MacKenzie Mahler, Nathan Spak and Alyssa Lamberson. In the second row, left to right, are Justin Bennett, Will Chenoweth, Brad Bryan, Riley Davis, Jeff Royall, Matt Lucas and Corey Cope.

Coaches praise college-bound students

"I'm proud to be part of that little glimpse in your life."

By Gary Weckselblatt

During Wednesday's College Signing Ceremony for the Class of 2019 student-athletes, the special bonds that have developed between coach and player, teacher and student radiated throughout the Quakertown Community High School Media Center.

As 14 of the school's top student-athletes announced their college choices, the passionate and prideful words of district educators were there to help lift their students, as they had been during years of competition.

Girls track & field coach Jason Anderson, speaking about Swarthmore-bound Adria Retter, said "The opportunity to be part of her life for the last three years has been a gift. As a student she has no equal, literally first in her class."

Adria, a track & field star, is a National Merit Scholar. She has set school records in the discus and shot put that Mr. Anderson described as "insurmountable."

Perhaps what the coach will remember most about his

Justin Bennett, football, Alvernia University

Brad Bryan, football, Lebanon Valley College

Will Chenoweth, football, Ursinus College

Corey Cope, wrestling, Western New England University

Cameron Cronk, volleyball, Cairn University

Riley Davis, football, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Justin Flor, volleyball, Eastern University

Ashton Herd, football, Ithaca College

Alyssa Lamberson, cheerleading, Temple University

Matt Lucas, basketball, Cairn University

MacKenzie Mahler, volleyball, Penn College of Technology

Adria Retter, track & field, Swarthmore College

Jeff Royall, lacrosse, Lycoming College

Nathan Spak, swimming, University of Scranton

prized student, is "How perceptive and thoughtful she is." Indeed. When the students were asked what type of career they'd like to pursue, Adria responded: "A

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career helping others."

That's how it went for the nearly hour-long event in the room packed with families, fellow students and teammates.

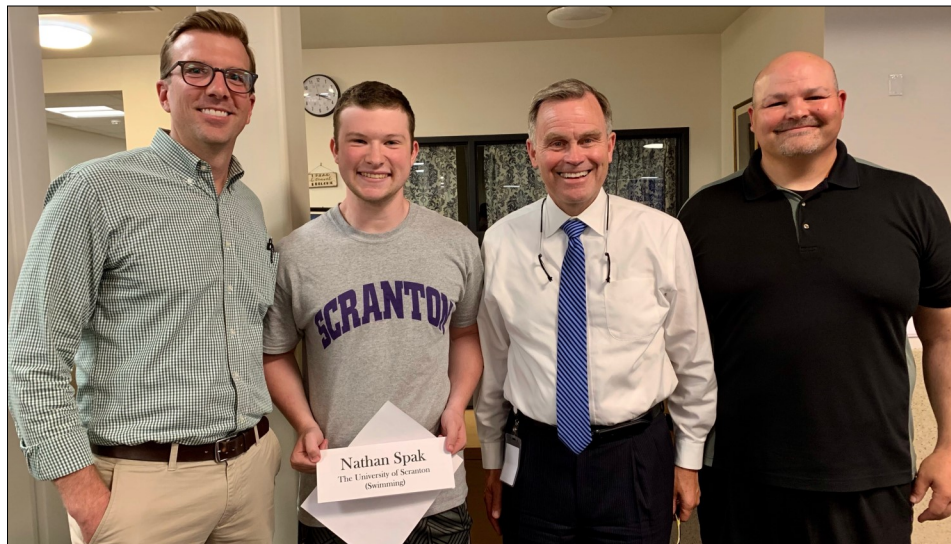
Wrestler Corey Cope, headed to Western New England University as a finance major, has made the state's All-Academic team for three straight years. He's been all-league all four years at QCHS. Corey is 15th on the Panthers all-time win list with a 107-51 record; eighth on the all-time pin list with 57. "I can't believe four years are here already," coach Kurt Handel said. "His records are going to hang in the room for quite some time."

Football coach George Banas told his five players it was a "privilege and honor" to watch them "wear the Blue and White on Friday nights. I'm proud to be part of that little glimpse in your life."

The players are Ashton Herd, set to be a physical therapy major at Ithaca College; Justin Bennett, a criminal justice major at Alvernia University (he plans to become a State Trooper); Brad Bryan, who will study actuarial science at Lebanon Valley College; Will Chenoweth, headed to Ursinus College; and Riley Davis, majoring in mechanical engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

"The door is always open," Mr. Banas said. He also cautioned his players that they have a tradition to uphold as 31 of his Panthers have played in college. Only one hasn't graduated. He expects these five to make it 35 of 36.

Coach Tony Carty and Michael Peters spoke of Nathan Spak like proud parents. Nathan is on his way to the University of Scranton to study kinesiology. His coaches talked about his "focus, leadership and drive." Nathan recalled a meet where he knocked 15 seconds off his 500 freestyle time (5:14.96). Mr. Peters said all of the opposing coaches went up to Nathan and



Scranton University-bound swimmer Nathan Spak is all smiles, along with his supporters, from left, Michael Peters, Superintendent Dr. Bill Harner and Tony Carty following Wednesday's College Signing Ceremony in the Media Center.

congratulated his superior effort.

Geena Close, assistant high school volleyball coach and longtime club coach for MacKenzie Mahler (Penn College of Technology) was out of state and couldn't get to the ceremony, but in a letter read by athletic director Sylvia Kalazs, she described MacKenzie as a player who "excelled as a setter" and is a "dynamic player."

Boys volleyball coach Andy Snyder called the students the "cream of the crop," and praised Cameron Cronk (Cairn University) and Justin Flor (Eastern University). "I'm glad we had this experience together and I wish you guys the best," Mr. Snyder said. Cameron said he's looking forward to studying youth ministry.

Quakertown's impressive growth as a cheerleading program coincides with Alyssa Lamberson's three years on the squad. With Alyssa as captain, the Panthers finished sixth in the state. They also captured their first district crown and have been Suburban One League champs two years in a row. "She's always welcome back as one of our cheerleader alumni," said coach Carrie Maha, who has helped build the program with students like Alyssa.

Basketball player Matt Lucas plans to be a 1,000-point scorer at Cairn University. Panthers coach Mike

DeCarolis believes he can do it.

"I'm super excited to see what he does at the next level," Mr. DeCarolis said. "As a player, Matt's always the first one in the gym, and the last one to leave. I'm really fortunate to coach him."

Losing Jeff Royall is certain to create a void on the boys lacrosse team. Jeff, who plans to study criminology at Lycoming College, scored 29 goals and had nine assists for the Panthers.

"That's 34 percent of the team's point production," coach Jay Donis said. "Jeff is a tremendous team leader and has spent a lot of his time helping the rest of the team."

The ceremony was the second the district held for student-athletes committing to college. Earlier this year, 10 announced their college choices. That's 24 in one school year, a record according to Ms. Kalazs, the athletic director.

She said the students have selected a diverse group of schools and added that it shows "if you want to compete you will find a place to go to continue your athletic career."

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