

SUBMISSIONS

Many of you have high school players that competed in their favorite sport at a young age. Maybe you have photos from those days. Would you like to share them with us? It would be even better if you had current pictures that you could also send so we can place the photos side-by-side. Send the photos as separate .jpg attachments to baumuller@northjersey.com.

Questions or story suggestions? Contact Sports Editor J.C. Baumuller at baumuller@northjersey.com or call 201-894-6702.

QUICK HITS



TRACK AND FIELD

Babbini is flying off to Rowan University

Next year will be very different for Rowan-bound Jason Babbini because he will be focusing on only one sport - track and field - for the first time in his life.

SEE 'JASON,' PAGE 40



BASEBALL

Kaminsky traded to Cleveland Indians

Rob Kaminsky, the 20-year-old south-paw out of St. Joseph and a top-prospect in the Cardinals' organization was traded to the Cleveland Indians for slugger Brandon Moss.

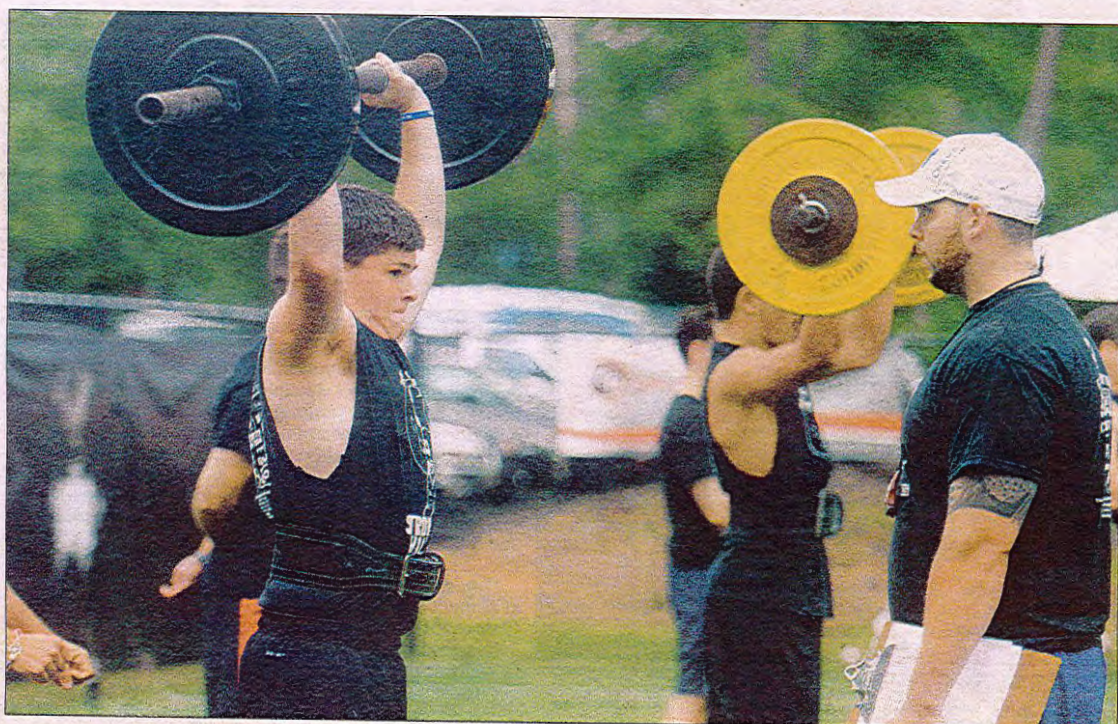
SEE 'ROB,' PAGE 42



NEXT WEEK

College bound

Continuing next week and running throughout the summer will be stories of local athletes who are talented enough to continue to play their favorite sport at the college level. Read about how the athletes got their start and what they plan to do in the future.



BERNADETTE MARCINIAK/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Mark Stevens of Closter, under the watchful eye of coach Lew Morris, right, hoists the Olympic barbell over his head during the Strongman Challenge.

FUNDRAISER

Strong men lift for a good cause

Donations pour into Michael LaViola Foundation for cancer research

BY J.C. BAUMULLER
Sports Editor

ORANGEBURG, N.Y. - The 7th Annual Varsity House Strongman Challenge had some new faces, new events and a new location.

But the purpose of the event remained the same - to raise funds for the Michael LaViola Foundation.

Michael LaViola was a varsity football player, volunteer firefighter and car enthusiast who died of a rare form of cancer, synovial sarcoma, in 2008 at age 20. His parents, Mike and Mary, along with sister Katie formed the Michael LaViola Foundation.

The foundation teamed up with Varsity House in 2009 to host the Strongman Challenges and last year alone they raised nearly \$23,000.

The foundation donates to the National Cancer Institute in Maryland, where Michael's oncologist, Dr. Melinda Merchant, is based and provides two

scholarships to graduating seniors at Northern Valley High School at Old Tappan.

'FOR THE CAUSE'

"I love lifting and I love competing," said John Tringali, a competitor who was back after a hiatus from the challenge. "But it's mainly to raise money for this. I used my company to sponsor money for the cause. You have to give back. It's for kids."

Tringali is a 2004 Northern Valley/Old Tappan graduate who started his own construction company about four years ago.

"The competition is there but it's also for a cause," he said. "I went to high school with Mike, I played high school football with Mike. I'm close to the family."

A veteran of the Strongman Challenge who brought along an unexpected donation is Jordan Migliore, who was hired by the Watchung Police Department this past January.

"This event is really important," he said. "I got my police

department's PBA to donate \$100 to the cancer fund. It really meant a lot to me especially because I'm the new guy and they didn't have to give me anything.

"Myself, and Mr. [Patrick] Grady, who is a firefighter in Bloomfield, both came here straight off a night shift for this event. It's a good cause and you try to raise as much as you can. You give up a little sleep for the greater good."

Migliore played college football at SUNY-Albany and got his degree in four years. Each June he competed in the Strongman Challenge, winning one time.

"I was fortunate that I earned a partial athletic scholarship and a partial academic scholarship," he said. "I turned that into five years at school playing Division 1 football and graduating with and under-grad and a graduate degree in Criminal Justice."

"I got my Masters of Arts and I don't know if I would have been able to do that without the

work ethic that I learned here. Quite honestly I wouldn't be anywhere where I am now physically, mentally, completing college without Joe [Riggio], Dan [Goodman] and all the trainers here."

'RETIRED MEATHEAD'

But it is Migliore's competitive nature that has him coming back year after year.

"I come back every year because it's a fun event," he said. "It's for a good purpose and obviously I'm very competitive. I knew Michael LaViola, I know his parents; his mom worked with my mom for a very long time. My older friends, like Dan (Goodman), knew him."

One thing that has benefitted Migliore, who finished second in the College/Professional category, is all the working out he has done over the years.

"If you can survive here from the workouts with Dan (Goodman) and Joe (Riggio) you can



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRIAN HYDE

The first place finishers and coaches gather at the end of the Strongman Challenge. From left are Dillon Policastro, coach Joe Riggio, Nick Meighan, coach Mike Capriiglione, coach Dan Goodman, Daniel Giangrande and Matt Goodman.

STRONG

FROM PAGE 39

pretty much survive anything," he said. "The [police] academy was cake compared to what I dealt with here.

"I always refer to myself as a 'Retired Meathead,' but you never really retire, you're always a meathead. It's a lifestyle."

Grady, 48, who lives in Hillsdale, was the oldest competitor who was participating in his first Strongman Challenge.

"I've always wanted to do something like this," he said. "I started working out here and I enjoy it. The opportunity came up and I started working out with Big Mike [Capriiglione] and some of his guys. I figured I can do this, so I'm doing it."

"Being a fireman I train at work - it's a physical job so I have to stay in shape. This helps with a lot of stuff I do on the job."

NEW LOCATION

For the first time in the seven years of the Strongman Challenge the event is just over the border of New Jersey on DeWolf Road.

"The new place is about double the size," said Goodman. "We were able to build something that suited our needs exactly. We stayed true to our facility in terms of the equipment - still no machines, it's mostly free weights. High level, high gauge, steel metal racks. It's built for the collegiate athlete."

The major improvement is that the outdoor turf field mirrors an indoor turf field. So as rain threatened during the challenge the staff was ready to move the strongman events indoors if necessary.

"The biggest difference is last year we had the beat-up pavement and the outdoor grass field," said Goodman. "We've replaced that with a totally level pavement and an outdoor field turf field that has the feel to give our athletes the experience of what they're going to see on game day."

NFL BOUND

One person who is utilizing the

new facility is former Golden Knights football star Mike Reilly, who although not competing in the day's event, has been there working out between his rookie camp and training camp for the Cleveland Browns.

Reilly won the Strongman Challenge a couple of times while he was with the Golden Knights and when he was attending William & Mary College.

"I've had him since he was a junior in high school," said Goodman. "We've been consistently training five days a week for six and a half years. He could have gone anywhere in the world to train for the NFL and he stayed with us because he felt it worked this long - why would it change now?"

Reilly is at Browns camp now trying to catch on as an outside linebacker.

"I said a long time ago," said Goodman, "I'm not going to wear a sports jersey until one of our guys from team VH is proudly representing a team and I'll wear his jersey. You better believe I ordered my Mike Reilly No. 91 Cleveland Browns jersey and I'll be wearing that thing training people in the gym."

BOBSLEDDER

A young woman training for the Olympics has recently begun working out at Varsity House.

Sineaid Corley, a bobsledder, got to the gym at 7 a.m. to get in her workout before the challenge began.

"She trains hard," said Goodman. "She's here every day and overcomes the adversity of having to have a job while she's continuing to train. It's unlike [professional athletes] who are paid well for what they do and don't need off-season jobs. She's an Olympic athlete and she needs to make ends meet. She still finds the time."

"She works at a bar and she trains in the day time where it can be a little rough around the edges in here. She takes it all in stride and is a pretty awesome person, a great story. She's another great addition to our team."

Top 3 Strongmen College over 220 pounds:

Daniel Giangrande - Belleville

Jordan Migliore - Closter

James Mc Nerney - Old Tappan

College under 220 pounds:

Matt Goodman - Closter

Thomas Lent - New City, N.Y.

Thomas Hayes - Lyndhurst

Varsity:

Nicholas Meighan - Closter

Jacob Lewinson - Demarest

Ryan Rizzo - Demarest

Junior Varsity:

Dillon Policastro - Old Tappan

Mike Mancuso - Northvale

Connor Scaglione - Closter

THE WINNERS

Daniel Giangrande of Belleville, Matt Goodman of Closter, Nicholas Meighan of Closter and Dillon Policastro of Old Tappan were the winners in the four categories of the challenge. Tringali and Grady finished "out of the money" but enjoyed the experience.

"It's a blast - I love doing this stuff," Tringali said. "I decided to take the 6-Week Challenge and get myself back in shape. I saw it pop up in my Instagram account and I said, 'I gotta get back at it.' This just rolled right into it. My brother is here, my friends, my parents, my girl friend. It's great, everybody is laughing and having a good time."

"I played football in high school," Grady said, "but I think I'm actually a lot stronger now than when I was younger. It's a lot of fun. I see these [younger] guys work out and it motivates me to be better."

Email:

baumuller@northjersey.com