



# Flag football program shines brightly under lights in finale

By TODD SLISS

The lights at Butler Field were glowing Friday evening, Nov. 6, and so were the faces of more than 200

Massaroni," Philipps said. "He must have spent 20 hours getting, printing and collating all the permission slips for the kids to play. Rich came to virtually every practice and he was there



To culminate the season, which was run by the Scarsdale Recreation Department, Scarsdale Youth Football and the Scarsdale High School varsity program, each of the four grade groupings got in two 20-minute 5-on-5 games on the turf under the newly installed lights at the high school.

"It was a heck of a night," said Rip-ppy Philipps of Scarsdale Youth Football. "Kids were ecstatic, parents were ecstatic. The lights were phenomenal. The parents were so gracious in thanking the coaches and so pleased that we had a program in the fall. It gave the kids something to do and gave them some hope, some normalcy."

The varsity players who were helping out as coaches, quarterbacks and referees were a little jealous.

"My kids were like, 'These kids get to play on the turf under the lights before we do,'" Verboys said. "We had 220 of the kids on Friday night, kindergarten through eighth grade, from 5 to 9. The kids had a blast and the high school kids enjoyed it as much as the kids that were playing."

Philipps and Verboys had plenty of help consistently from team manager Aaron Zoland, former player and coach Andrew Verboys Jr. and players like captains Brendan Knopp, Ben Miller and Noah Ebner Borst, plus Michael Jamesley, Will Bunzel, Patrick Cantor, Ed Eforo, Jason Shyu, Harry Pontone and Ryan Cahaly, who helped out despite being on crutches.

"We had all of them come and act like coaches/quarterbacks/referees," Philipps said. "Their enthusiasm fueled the fire and made it special. Coach Verboys was there as a volunteer every day, which brings a lot of credibility to the program."

Behind the scenes was Rich Masaroni, a recreation assistant for the Scarsdale rec department.

"None of this happens without Rich

Friday mauling out shirts from 4 to 9. He's amazing. With him it's all for one reason, the kids."

With other sports shut down or with limited opportunities, flag attracted many first-time football players.

"We had a lot of kids who play other things who finally had a chance to do it and they loved it," Verboys said.

The coed program attracted more girls than ever this year. "This year, which was fabulous, we also had a lot of girls play," Philipps said. "We probably had eight or nine girls this year, which is a real nice number. They did great and they competed and they had fun."

Flag usually brings in about 150 players. This year there were 250.

"Quite frankly if we could have figured out a way to offer it a little bit earlier we could have had more," Philipps said.

While Scarsdale offers this program normally for grades K-6, tackle football is not permitted in New York State for grades 3 and up due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so flag was offered for a broader audience.

The program ran for about two months this fall with an hour a week for grades K-2, 3-4, 5-6 and 7-8. Normally on Sunday mornings, flag was split up over four days this fall.

For the seventh and eighth graders it was definitely a bonus as they otherwise wouldn't have had a chance to play.

"The excitement of the older kids playing flag football was beyond anything I could imagine," Philipps said. "Numerous kids that have never even played football before have now said they want to come out for tackle. They're kids that play other sports such as soccer, baseball, lacrosse, basketball and they had a blast playing flag football. They asked if we could offer the program if there's no tackle in March, which we're hopeful if we



JON THALER PHOTOS

The co-ed youth flag football clinic was a big hit in Scarsdale.

can get the turf field we would try to have it and try to do our regular schedule of flag in March or April as long as we don't interfere with any other sport."

For Verboys, working with the youngest group was a fun challenge.

"I spent my time on Saturdays with the kindergarten for an hour and I focused on catching and throwing and how to run routes, teaching the kids to use their hands to catch the ball, and it was absolutely incredible," he said. "We had five stations and they would rotate through the different stations every few minutes learning a different skill. As the year went on we kept adding a different skill."

With flag football in the books, the program looks forward to more events down the line as there were no issues with COVID-19 during the fall.

"The kids felt important because they were on the high school field," Philipps said. "They felt special because it was under lights. The kids absolutely had the best time."

# Always Raiders

Football program supportive in times of need



51

Riddell  
LARGE

By TODD SLISS

**H**arvey Kaplan lived the life Paul Jimenez Jr. never got to.

The former is an 83 year old whose doctors can no longer treat the metastasized melanoma he's been battling since 2000. The latter a Greenacres fifth-grader whose battle with rhabdomyosarcoma, a rare form of soft tissue cancer, lasted only two and a half months before he died Jan. 5.

In both — a 1951 graduate of Scarsdale High School and a Greenacres Elementary School student known as Paulie — lie stories of hope through the common bond of Scarsdale football.

In consecutive Octobers, Paulie and Kaplan were honorary captains for the varsity football team, Paulie for the Oct. 24, 2015, playoff game against Mahopac, Kaplan for the regular season finale at Clarkstown South last Friday.

For Paulie, being honorary captain was his official last hurrah with the Scarsdale football program. Once he fell ill, he was no longer allowed to play the game he loved, and did not return to school once he began his chemotherapy treatments.

"Paul Jr. was a special young man who just started playing a couple of years ago," Scarsdale Youth Football president and 1981 Scarsdale

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EILEEN NICHOLAS PHOTO

Above, Paulie Jimenez led the Raiders to the field last October prior to their playoff win against Mahopac. Below, Harvey Kaplan with 2016 captains Robbie Keith, Nick Leone, Henry Zurkow and Barry Klein at Clarkstown South.



For Paulie, being honorary captain was his official last hurrah with the Scarsdale football program.



Kaplan and 23 members of the class of 1951 celebrated their 65th reunion last week.

## Donna Conkling

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**From:** michael philipps <mphilipps33@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 19, 2021 12:59 PM  
**To:** Mayor; Clerk's Department  
**Subject:** Here is picture of Paulie leading the High School : this was Rippy idea.  
**Attachments:** Scan 2021-1-19 12.52.23.pdf; ATT00001.htm

**CAUTION:** External sender.

## Donna Conkling

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**From:** michael philipps <mphilipps33@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 15, 2021 12:20 AM  
**To:** Mayor  
**Cc:** Clerk's Department  
**Subject:** RIPPY

CAUTION: External sender.

Dear Mayor Samwick and Board of Trustees.

My name is Michael Philipps, I am the proud younger brother of Rippy Philipps.

Rippy is two years older than me and we shared a room at our home at 60 The Crossway, which is directly across the street from the Crossway field that Rippy has made his coaching legacy & his mentorship of boys, young men and has taught a ton of fathers how to coach on. I would like to focus on what it's like to have a brother that coaches for the love of the kids and cherishes the opportunity to be a positive sounding board for all of the players from flag football which is for first and second graders up to the 7th and 8th grade which he's coached for 25 years. Being Rippy's brother is really cool! Over the many years I have been the recipient of so many compliments about Rippy's coaching and his almost surreal way he treats "his kids". Rippy never says NO when it comes to staying on the field for 15 extra minutes to help a player get some extra private time. Rippy never says NO when asked to drive a player home from practice. Rippy never says NO when asked to talk to a player, when the player's parents have asked Rippy to. Rippy gives of himself unconditionally. His dedication to the kids of our town and many kids from Westchester County puts him in a very special category. To see Rippy almost hop out of his car on a weekend afternoon to greet "his kids" with his welcoming smile is a sight to see and I believe it's where the energy for our Football program starts.

Rippy is also always present at other Scarsdale events, kinda the town cheerleader. Rippy has worked with, helped or supported young men, young women get into college, get jobs, deal with issues because people can rely on him. Just spend some time with him and he will share stories of kids he's done things for and he beams as if they were his own kids.

I appreciate you taking a few minutes to hear a small part of who Rippy is.

In closing, Rippy is special, I don't think any of us will cross paths with a more caring, giving human being than Rippy Philipps. I think naming a field in his honor will make a ton of people happy for decades.

I am so proud to be his younger brother. I look forward to being stopped by people for a long time to come to hear "your Rippy's brother, he's awesome" Thank you Michael Philipps