

Sports



OV QUARTERBACK CALEB Whitney fakes a handoff on a keeper in which he ran for a first down (barely) on a must have possession in the fourth period. That gave the Otters the chance to go ahead and score to take the lead 35-28 late in the fourth period. Woodstock went on to score in the last two minutes to tie it up, but the Otters prevailed, 41-35, in overtime.

Reporter photos/Angelo Lynn

OV boys soccer blank Fair Haven

PROCTOR — In a Saturday game played as part of a three-game fundraising tournament at Proctor, the Otter Valley boys' soccer team blanked Fair Haven, 2-0, improving to 3-8-2 by doing so.

Drew Pelkey, from Aiden Decker, gave the Otters an early lead, and Kieran Williams added a second-half insurance goal on a direct kick.

Goalie Hayden Bernhardt worked the shutout, and defender Max Derby was awarded a game MVP jersey by tournament organizers.

The Otters close out their regular season by hosting White River Valley on Friday.

Otters edged by Springfield, 1-0

WOODSTOCK — On Monday, visiting Springfield (5-5-2) edged OV, 1-0. The goal came on an Ari Cioffi direct kick in the second half.

The Otters' best chance came in the first half, when Elena Politano shot just high on a cross from Mal-lee Richardson. Springfield keeper Megan Stagner also twice came off her line to beat Richardson to the ball in the second half.

Stagner made eight saves, and OV goalie Linnea Faulkner stopped 12 shots. OV stands at 1-12 heading into Thursday's regular-season finale at Fair Haven.

Otters FH best Cosmos, 10-0

SPRINGFIELD — This past Saturday, the Otter Valley field hockey team beat Springfield, 10-0, to improve to 9-2-1.

Leading the attack for the Otters were Brittney Jackson (three goals), Ryleigh Laporte (two goals, one assist), Taylor Lampman (two goals), and Riley Keith (a goal and three assists). Sydney Gallo, Elizabeth Atherton and Mackenzie McKay, chipped in a goal apiece, with McKay adding an assist.

In goal for OV, Lily Morgan and Madison Colburn each had three saves.

The Otters will wrap up their regular season by hosting Fair Haven on Thursday and visiting Windsor on Saturday.

Otters football nips Woodstock in overtime, 41-35

BRANDON — The Otter game when QB Greg Whitney reached the end zone on a 2-yard keeper.

*The Otters forced a fourth-down incomple-
tion from Wasp quarterback Colby Eaton, and then won the game when QB Greg Whitney reached the end zone on a 2-yard keeper.*

Valley football team picked up a huge win on Saturday, knocking off visiting Woodstock, 41-35, in overtime to leapfrog the Wasps in the D-III standings.

In overtime both teams started on the other's 10-yard line. The Otters forced a fourth-down incomple-
tion from Wasp quarterback Colby Eaton, and then won the

Wasps are scheduled to face (See OV football, Page 17)



OV #51 IS pumped up after making a key block of a Wasp punt in the fourth quarter to give Otter Valley the ball deep in their own territory

OV Football

(Continued from Page 16)

undefeated first-place Windsor this weekend.

In this past Saturday's back-and-forth game Whitney rushed for 86 yards and three scores and tossed two TD passes to Brady Diaz, one for 21 and the other for 63 yards.

Diaz amassed 98 receiving

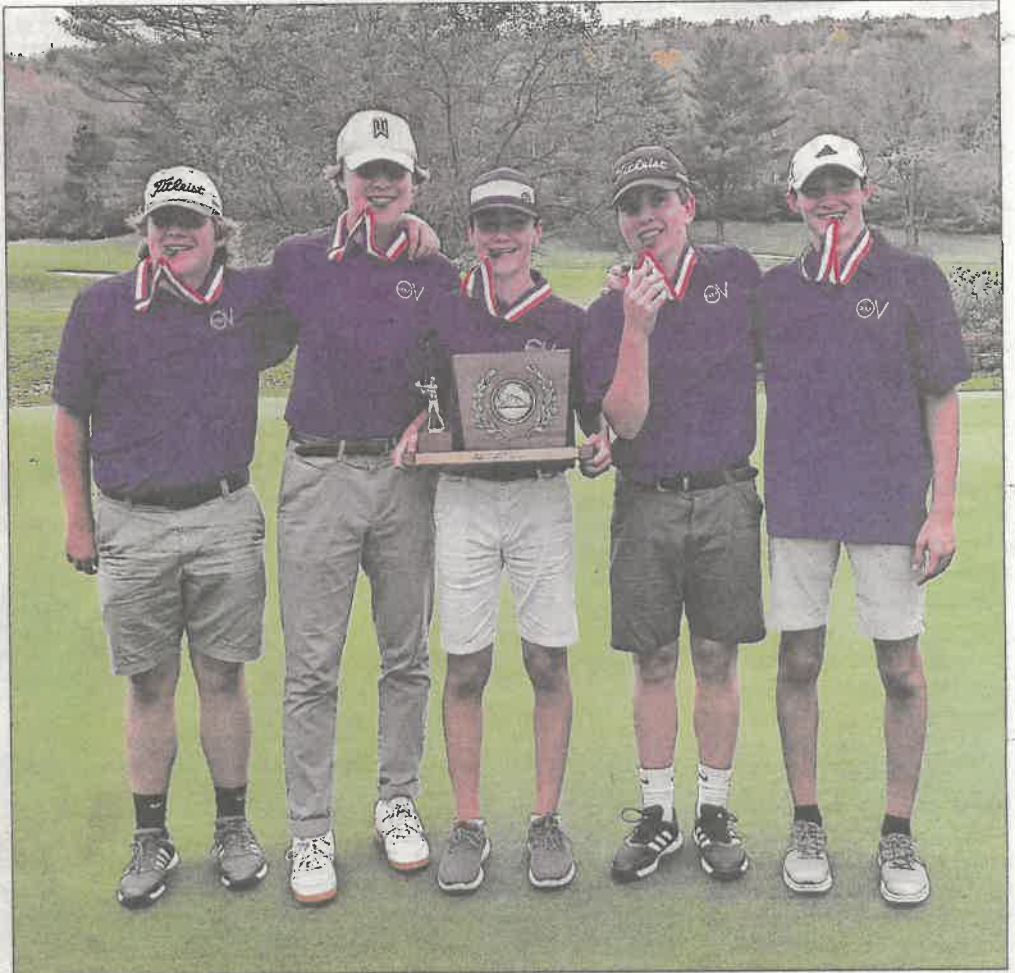
yards and 98 rushing yards, and Luca Polli rushed for the other OV score after the Otters blocked a Woodstock punt in the fourth quarter.

For Woodstock, Corey White rushed for 91 yards and two TDs, Brooks Ruderman and Willy Underwood ran for scores, and Colby Eaton threw one TD pass.



TOP PHOTO: LUCA Polli, a sophomore, finds open running into the end zone late in the fourth period.

BOTTOM PHOTO: SENIOR Brady Diaz finds a big hole on the left side of the Wasp's defense in the Otter's overtime win.



THE OTTER VALLEY boys' golf team dominated the Division II championship match this past Thursday, winning easily. Shown, from left, are team members Jordan Beayon, Hayden Bernhardt, Lucas Politano, Matt Bryant and Thomas Politano.
Reporter photo by Angelo Lynn

OV wins State Championship!

MANCHESTER — The Otter Valley boys' golf team dominated the field at the Manchester Country Club on Thursday, Oct. 10 to win the Division II championship by a 22-stroke margin.

The last time the OV boys won a team championship was 1969, OV golf coach Greg Hughes said.

At the championship meet, the Otters collectively shot a 343, well ahead of runner-up Stowe (365).

Lucas Politano fired a four-over-par 76 to lead the charge. His score was just one stroke behind the medalist, U-32's Riley Richards.

Also scoring for the Otters were Thomas Politano (85), Matthew Bryant (88) and Jordan Beayon (94).

The rest of the field trailed OV and Stowe: 3. Peoples (383); 4. U-32 (384); 5. Harwood (387); and 6. Woodstock

(393).

"The positive teamwork of stringing good shots together and having a good mentality throughout the round was key in their win," said OV coach Greg Hughes of the championship match.

Reflecting back on the season, Hughes said "when I took the coaching position, the first thing the boys said was they were going to win the championship this year.

They were very confident in themselves and each other in being able to put up a score that would win.

"We started the season off as a full team with a win at Woodstock, beating Woodstock and

Rutland, which was a confidence boost. But then," he continued, "we hadn't put together a full team until Southern Valley conferences due to dual sport athletes on the team. We did not win that and we ended

up being fifth at sectionals.

"The boys never lost that vision of winning, though," Hughes added, noting that Matt Bryant and Jordan Beayon were a part of many matches this year, "continually improving as they went and pulling out their best rounds at the state championship," which, he said, was "great timing."

Lucas Politano, Thomas Politano and Hayden Bernhardt, Hughes explained, played soccer and were not able to practice as much, but did a lot of work on their own time in preparation for the title match.

As it turned out, Lucas Politano also qualified to play at the New England high school golf championship meet at the Mohegan Sun Golf in Baltic, Conn., on Nov. 1.

Hughes said he was happy with the way the season turned out.

"It was a fun group to be around and a very motivated group that is looking to come back next year and repeat," he said. "We will lose Hayden next year, but we'll return the four scores counted in winning."

OV Middle School FH ends season at 10-1-3

BY ANGELO LYNN

BRANDON — Field hockey has taken hold in the Otter Valley community, and a large part of its success has to do with its feeder program at the OV middle school coached by Otter alum Alia Dick. The team just competed its season, finishing 10-1-3.

Acknowledging tournament play earlier this year in South Burlington when they posted the most wins, 3-0-1, Coach Dick said it all when she exclaimed, "yes, I have quite an impressive field hockey team! I was blown away at how well my team played on turf together for the first time. We won all three of our games on turf, and tied our fourth game on grass. There are only two trophies awarded — one for most wins, and one for most goals and we walked away with the most wins! It was a cold and rainy day, but our team really stepped it up!"

They didn't win it all this year, she later said, but the winning season was a good way to celebrate her tenth year coaching the middle school team.

Alia graduated from OVUHS in 1995, and was a standout field hockey player from 7th to 12th grades. Now a 6th grade teacher at Neshobe Elementary School in her 13th year at the school (she has taught for 20 years), she has also run a summer field hockey clinic for 3rd-7th graders for several years through the Brandon and Pittsford recreational programs.

"Unfortunately, I did not run a clinic last summer (due to Covid restrictions) or this past summer due to travel," she said, adding she hopes to in future years. "The goals of this clinic are to introduce kids to the sport and go over fundamentals, and get them hooked on field hockey!"

Alia noted that Otter Valley does not have a youth feeder program at the grade-school level as many towns have, so student athletes come into the OV Middle School not knowing the sport.

"Many are hesitant to play field hockey because it is new and unknown," she said, "so offering a



THE OTTER VALLEY Middle School field hockey team wrapped up its season Monday with a tie against Manchester to end the year 10-1-3. In this photo taken after the home game with Mount Abe on Oct. 11 are: back row, left to right; Nakisha Schaner, Alice Bushee, Hannah Desabrais, Lexi Beaulieu, Ella Otto, and coach Alia Dick; front row: Tayah Cram, Micheala Hobbs, Breanna Bovey, Mariterese Pearsons, and Marissa Dick. Missing: Rachel Kingston, and managers Lydia Keith and Hillary Desabrais.

Reporter photo/Angelo Lynn

clinic helps bring awareness to field hockey with the hopes more middle school students will give the sport a try."

Explaining her passion for the sport, Alia recalled how she got hooked.

"I was kind of an awkward middle-schooler and quiet," she said. "Field hockey was my first team sport. I started in 7th grade at Otter Valley when some friends convinced me to play. Being part of the field hockey team in middle school helped me come out of my shell and find myself socially."

Alia said she had eight 8th-graders, and three 7th-graders on the team this year. Two of the 8th-graders were new to the sport this year, along with all of the 7th-graders, and she had six returning players from last year.

One secret of her success, she said, is that the majority of her

As for this year's team, Alia lamented that she only had enough players to field a team, but with no substitutions, but still they made due.

"I have exactly enough for a field hockey team with 11 total players, however, we never play a full squad on the field," saying that she wanted to make sure they had one substitute ready to get into the game. She added that the one game they played 11-on-11 without any

subs, they lost.

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One secret of her success, she said, is that the majority of her

Otter Valley Middle School team are former 6th grade students.

"I encourage my 6th-graders to try field hockey when they transition to OV as a 7th grader, especially those who have never played a sport before," she said. "I tell them that now is the time because everyone is new to field hockey when they are in 7th grade, so everyone is on an equal playing field."

So far, it's been a successful strategy, adding that she "works closely" with Varsity Coach Jodie Keith "so that we establish a strong field hockey community at Otter Valley."

To wrap up the season, Alia and her team met Middlebury on Oct. 14, and won x-x in what she called a fantastic game.

"Going into the game, Middlebury had been our only loss this season," Alia said, "and Middlebury was undefeated. So, winning that game was a huge success! Not to mention, they brought all three of their teams, while we had only 10 players." In their last game of the season Monday, against Manchester, they tied at x-x.

While Alia hopes the greater Brandon area will some day de-

velop a field hockey feeder program at the grade school level through town rec programs, she's nonetheless excited about this year's success and is looking ahead to the summer and next fall.

"This season has been an exceptional because I have a great group of girls who are passionate about field hockey, and I have such supportive parents and families." Asked to sum up this year's team, she it was an "outstanding team that was small but fierce. They work well together and support and encourage one another. Each and every one of them came to practice to push themselves, learn new things and were open to feedback. And they came to the games ready to work hard and determined not to give up. It's a memorable season that's for sure! I hope the word gets out there that it's time to join field hockey!"

Players on the team were: Marissa Dick, Breanna Bovey, Mariterese Pearsons, Hannah Desabrais, Micheala Hobbs, Lexi Beaulieu, Alice Bushee, Ella Otto, Rachel Kingston, Tayah Cram and Nakisha Schaner. Team managers were Lydia Keith and Hillary Desabrais.