

2019 NYCHSFL Communion Breakfast Awards Summary

Awards, News, Uncategorized
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OF METROPOLITAN NEW YORK

By Matt Diano:

Reflecting upon and celebrating the achievement, glory, and blessings of their biggest, brightest, and most treasured competitors, the NYCHSFL community gathered together on Sunday December 8th for the annual ritual of sharing a meal at the 2019 Communion Awards Breakfast.

Hosted once again on the campus of Kellenberg Memorial High school, the festivities commenced with Fr. Albert Bertoni of the Society of Mary providing the congregation with a lesson about preparing ourselves for the coming of Christ this Advent Season.

Then the time arrived to hand out some hardware...

Headlining our collection of 2019 award winners would be **Chaminade** senior lineman, **Liam Brown**, who took home the **Monsignor Peter's Memorial Trophy**, in recognition of being named the top Scholar-Athlete in the NYCHSFL...A young gentleman who carries himself as a living example of all the characteristics and values that we as Christians are called to embody, Brown has selflessly excelled across the board...In the classroom, he has posted a cumulative grade point average of 99.4, is a three-year (soon to be four) Honor Roll student, an active member in the National Honor Society, doubled up as the top student-athlete recipient for both the football and wrestling teams in 2018 (expected to repeat this achievement), received the Louis J. Faerber trophy in 2017 as the owner of the highest grade point average in the Flyer freshman class, and transformed his passion for the sciences (emphasis on Medicine/Biology) into a 1st place ribbon at the 2019 Science Fair, among his many academic accolades...In the community, Brown is a dedicated disciple, serving St. Paul's parish as a volunteer at "Friday Friends", a program which provides companionship and mentorship to special needs children. In addition, he is a devout representative of the Catholic

League and Catholic 4 Life organizations, has given freely of his time as a peer tutor, was repeatedly selected by school administrators to serve as a role model at the Admitted Students Open House, as well as the Catholic High School Entrance examination. Furthermore, he continues to spread the teachings of Christ as a multi-year educator within the PREP program...On the gridiron, the Wantagh resident was recently named to the All-League squad following a 2019 season where he captained the Flyers to their first title since 2014. The anchor of the OL, Brown paved the way for the Flyers to rack up over 3,300 yards of total offense and 38 touchdowns en route to hoisting the hardware...Brown has been appointed to the United States' Naval Academy and is presently awaiting notification of acceptance.



Signifying what may have been the most electric, dynamic, and/or explosive display of offensive prowess in the history of the Metropolitan Catholic League were a group of four extraordinary studs that together amassed totals of 8,084 total yards, 86 touchdowns, and three NYCHSFL team crowns over the course of the past two months...Claiming the **Joseph Riverso Memorial Award** as the Outstanding Offensive Players of the Year in their respective divisions were **Clayton Proctor** (A; **Kennedy Catholic**), **Jordan DeLucia** (AA-1; **Kellenberg Memorial**), **Justin Lacks** (AA-2; **Moore Catholic**), and **Jalen Smith** (AAA; **Cardinal Hayes**).

Proctor, who made it two years in a row that a member of his household emerged as the eventual single-A selection (older brother, Myles, won in 2018) for the Riveros, was nothing short of spectacular during a junior campaign that witnessed the boys from Somers celebrating the first title in program history...A true microcosm of the mind-blowing season he put forth this year, in propelling the Gaels to their aforementioned single-A crown, the 5'10, 170-pound field general out of Yorktown Heights was personally responsible for 420 yards and five touchdowns in earning Offensive MVP status in the championship contest...For the season, Proctor held the distinction of topping the "A" leaderboard in both passing and rushing yardage...Connecting on 69 of 153 attempts in the air, Proctor tossed for 910 yards. On the ground, he was even more potent, calling his own number on 138 occasions for a total of 940 yards. Not surprisingly, his 18 touchdowns in whole (11 rushing, 7 in the air) also bested his counterparts...With his entire senior year still awaiting him, there is no telling what Proctor has in store for the Gael faithful in 2020.



DeLucia, who requires no introduction following one of the most decorated three-year varsity careers in school, league, and Long Island history, became the third consecutive Firebird to have this award bestowed upon him (Matt Sluka was a two-time winner in 2017 and 2018)...Looking beyond the stat sheet (it is an impressive array of numbers) for a quick moment, perhaps the true measure of the legacy the future Harvard student leaves behind is the fact that every season he competed for the Blue & Gold varsity, the team advanced to championship weekend, riding a 22-game streak to titles

in 2017 and 2018 before settling for the runner-up position this past year...A definitive difference-maker from the opening whistle of his sophomore season, the pride of Bellmore has been one of the most diverse and unstoppable forces in the Empire state during this previously cited three-year span...In 2019 alone, the KMHS tailback had a hand in 2,615 yards and 31 touchdowns. The utmost epitome of what it means to be an "all-purpose back," DeLucia's 1,931 yards (6th in NYS) and 23 touchdowns (9th in NYS) on the ground was 1st among all AA-1 ball carriers. To boot, his 603 yards (on 30 receptions) as a pass-catcher ranked 2nd. He even managed to throw for a pair of touchdown passes in his swan song, completing 3 of 4 attempts for 81 yards...A 4th team All-State selection in 2018, it is a foregone conclusion that this special individual will easily be acknowledged again by the New York Sportswriters Association...DeLucia closes out this chapter with the following career statistics: 3,929 yards and 46 TD rushing on 403 carries (9.7/per), 1,077 yards and 10 additional scores on 52 receptions.



Speaking of storied careers that at times seemed to approach the realm of invincibility, you need look no further than the four years of dominance showcased by the Mavericks' gem of a running back, Justin Lacks...Sweeping All-League honors (4-for-4), the 6'1, 215-pound Adonis is a certainty to add his third All-State (5th team as a freshman, 3rd team as a junior) distinction when the 2019 list is unveiled...The catalyst (Offensive MVP each year) behind bookend titles in 2016 (single-A) and 2019 (AA-2) for the Mavs, the 2019 season was a magical one for the Staten Islander, as the

success of his team was complemented by individual glory...Posting the 4th highest rushing total this season in New York State, #6 in Red & Black accumulated 1,998 yards and scored 22 times on 232 carries (8.6 average). In both cases, he blew away his AA-2 peers, finishing the season with more than a 1,000-yard edge over his closest competitor and recording double the touchdown quantity...Firmly cementing himself as a living legend, Lacks concludes his scholastic career as the All-time running leader in not only Staten Island history, but the entire five boroughs...Gaining no fewer than 1,058 yards and scoring no less than 11 touchdowns in any specific season, the NYC rushing king departs his throne with career totals of 5,486 yards and 66 touchdowns on 818 carries (6.7 average). In 37 career appearances, he surpassed the 100-yard plateau 28 times, including eight 200-yard-plus performances.



The consummate “money player” during his two years on the Hayes’ varsity, the bigger the stakes, the better the 5’9, 165-pounder [Smith] performed...In seven postseason outings, including two NYCHSFL AAA title contests (151 yards, 1 TD in 2019) and the 2019 Catholic State title game (212 yards, 2 scores), Smith ran for over 100 yards in five (123.6/game average) and scored a total of six rushing touchdowns (while tacking on 176 yards and 1 TD on 16 grabs as a receiver)....A legitimate jack of all trades and an undeniable game-changer, despite being shelved for a few weeks with injury, Smith still managed to lead the triple-A division in both rushing yardage (1,371) and TD runs (14) in 2019. His school reaped the benefits as the Bronx based institution won the title for the first

time since 2016....So versatile in his ability to inflict damage, if need be, Smith could equally be utilized as a receiver at the next level. As an 11th grader, he made 51 catches for 726 yards and nine touchdowns before transitioning into the backfield late in 2018...Smith, who fulfilled the prophecy we made in September by seizing the Riverso, wrapped up his curricula vitae with combined totals of 1,765 yards rushing and 907 yards receiving (2,672 all-purpose) and 26 touchdowns...Displaying a maturity superior to his chronological age, Smith is already on his way toward being an amazing humanitarian. Prior to the start of his senior year, he initiated an online campaign where donors pledged money for every touchdown he scored. The proceeds were to be used to purchase new security equipment as a means of school shooting prevention. Hence, every one of the 15 trips to pay dirt were blessed with intrinsic goodness!



Flipping the script to our defensive personnel, this quartet of gifted stoppers were so sensational in their own right that there is no doubt that the iconic Paul “Bear” Bryant is up above tipping his fedora to them...Using the Bear’s own words, when it comes to this group of fine physical specimens, defense very much has translated into championships...Winning a combined six NYCHSFL crowns (in nine appearances) and two State titles among themselves, this senior foursome racked up 448 total tackles, 39 TFLs, 19.5 sacks, 8 forced fumbles, 6 fumble recoveries, and a plethora of additional feats this season, making them all perfect choices to forever wear the proverbial badge of **Vincent O’Connor Memorial Award** winner. Your 2019 Defensive Players of the Year: Ethan Ortiz

(A; **Cardinal Spellman**), **Aidan Cappellino** (AA-1; Chaminade), Artie Padilla Jr. (AA-2; Moore Catholic), and **Kevin McKenna** (AAA; **Archbishop Stepinac**).

Unblockable during his junior and senior seasons, Ortiz followed up a 139-stop year (4th in NYS) in 2018 by recording 84 tackles for the Pilots in his last season wearing the Red & White. Both years, he finished as the overall tackle king in the “A” division...In addition, 2019 saw him increase his sack total by 100%, as he bagged the opposing quarterback on two occasions to finish 3rd in the category...Showcasing amazingly awareness, he was credited with a pair of fumble recoveries in 2019...A bona fide ironman who rarely came off the field, the 6’0, 177-pounder out of Mount Vernon, was also a major asset this season in the Spellman backfield, rushing for 841 yards and eight touchdowns...Finishing his career with 227 total tackles, on 15 different occasions, Ortiz registered double-digit stops, including six times this past year.



Without question the most improved of our four selections, Cappellino belongs at the top of the list when it comes to the breakout stars of 2019 in the entire Empire State...Not even appearing on the 2018 stat sheet, the standout from Sayville made up for lost time in a massive manner in his final season in Mineola...The heartbeat for a defensive corps that surrendered just 13.4 points per game versus fellow double-A foes (18.2 including all games), #41 in Crimson & Gold flew to the ball with unrelenting, unforgiving intensity. As a result of his impassioned play, he immediately and

consistently put himself in a class of his own, collecting 19 tackles for a loss and five sacks to lead AA-1 in both categories. His 120 total tackles was 2nd in the division only to teammate, **Brandon Coward** (145)...The senior captain rounded out his resume this season by forcing and recovering



one fumble apiece.

Like a fine vintage, the four-year Mavs' varsity member [Padilla] grew sweeter and more valuable with each passing season. Joining Lacks as one of the few remaining components off of the roster that won the 2016 title, the 215-pound gem out of SI went from recording just one tackle as a freshman to 64 stops and two sacks as a sophomore, and then 71 (6 TFL) as a junior...And still, despite this steady climb, nothing could have prepared for the Catholic football community for the monumental, out-of-this world effort he demonstrated as a senior...The backbone of the #2 overall defensive cohort in the NYCHSFL (15.5/game surrendered), there was nothing that Padilla did not do this season in capping his career as a champion...Posting AA-2 highs in tackles (140; 4th in NYS), stops for a loss (12), and sacks (8.5), Padilla was an endless nightmare for the opposition...In 10 outings this season, he posted double-digit stops in nine...Padilla was also a master at creating turnovers as indicated by his three forced fumbles this season...His career numbers are as follows:

276 tackles, 18 stops for negative yardage, 10.5 sacks, 1 interception, 4 fumbles



caused.

A three-year mainstay and human highlight reel for a Crusader program that made three trips to the league finals (titles in 2017 and 2018) and won back-to-back state crowns during his tenure, the multi-sport (lacrosse and football) University of Utah bound playmaker [McKenna] is the next in a lineage of renowned Stepinac defenders...The fifth AS representative to win the O'Connor in the past six seasons, when you are in the company of reigning ACC Player of the Week, Trill Williams (2017), you know you had an incredible season and a prestigious career...Recording no fewer than 89 tackles (2017) in any of his three years donning the Red, White, and Blue jersey, #32 was a 4th-Team All-State pick in 2018 following a 117 tackle, 10 sack, 11 QB hurry junior campaign...Asked to do a little more on offense as a senior (237 yards and 2 TDs rushing; 13 catches for 167 yards and 3 touchdowns as a receiver), some of McKenna's gaudy numbers from a year ago may have waned slightly, but in many ways, he actually put forth a more complete and universal display...Putting an exclamation mark on his career with three straight double-digit tackle games (including a season-best 15 in the AAA finals), McKenna ended 2019 with 104 tackles, 8 stops behind the line of scrimmage, 4 sacks, 6 hurries, 4 pass break-ups, 4 caused fumbles, a pair of loose ball recoveries, and a blocked punt...With him at the helm, the Crusaders posted the top-ranked defense in triple-A, permitting just 15.9 points per game...McKenna's final tallies are as follows: 310 tackles, 13 TFL, 14

sacks, 19 hurries, 2 INTs, 5 PDs, 4 forced fumbles, 3 recoveries, and two blocked punts...The 310



stops made him the all-time school leader in the category.

Relishing their rare moment in the spotlight were the often overlooked and/or taken for granted unsung heroes of the trenches...By far one of the most demanding roles one can undertake in the realm of athletic competition, former Kansas City Chief pro bowl WR/KR, Dante Hall, offered this praise to the men who muster the courage to accept the challenge: “Defensive and Offensive linemen control this game; and any true fan already knows that.”...Current University of Nebraska Head Coach, Scott Frost, reflected on his playing days, uttering, “Every great team I played on, the linemen were the bell cows of the whole team.”...With these sentiments in mind, the likes of **Anthony Badagliacca** (A; Cardinal Spellman), **Anthony Casillo** (AA-1; **St. Peter’s**), **Elijah Tobin** (AA-2; **Holy Trinity**), and **Ajani Cornelius** (AAA; Archbishop Stepinac) were fitting choices to be this year’s **Joe Thomas Memorial Trophy** recipients.

Selected in Week #8 of the 2019 season as a NYCHSFL POTW, for the past two seasons, the 6’0, 280-pound beast from the Bronx [Badagliacca] has been a two-way engine powering the offensive and defensive lines...With Badagliacca serving as the Pilots’ primary road grader, the Spellman running attack averaged 190+ yards and scored 26 touchdowns between 2018 and 2019...As a pass protector this year, he provided such a comfortable pocket that sophomore QB, **Aidan Hanley-Piri**, enjoyed increases in all of his 2018 statistics, improving his completion percentage by seven points and tossing for 127 more yards...Defensively, big #77 finished the year tied with Ortiz for 2nd on the team with 2 sacks, while also contributing 22 total stops, 1 forced fumble, 1 fumble recovery, and a pair of punt blocks...As if he was not busy enough, Badagliacca handled placekicking duties

as well for CS, converting 7 of 8 PAT attempts and nailing his lone field goal



try.

A linchpin of the offensive line during each of the past three seasons, Casillo might as well have been nicknamed “Bisquick” because no matter where he lined up (either center or guard), he served pancakes week in and week out...Laying the tracks for 2,693 yards and 24 touchdowns as a sophomore and 2,891 yards last season, there would be no senior slump for the 280-pound Staten Islander, as his work made it possible for teammates, **Kaiwan Taylor** and **Michael Politi**, to have banner years as ball carriers for the Eagles...Like a genuine leader, Casillo embraced a much larger role on defense in 2019 too and his efforts did not go unnoticed as his game film was saturated with

flashes of brilliance where he bulldozed opposing OLs to record repeated tackles for a



loss.

The only non-senior among this four-person brute squad, the 6'1, 250-pounder out of Amityville [Tobin] has already established himself as one of the premier two-way linemen in Nassau & Suffolk and he still has all of 2020 to add to his esteemed reputation...A plug and play phenom on both sides of the ball from his first varsity practice as a sophomore in 2018, there is every reason to believe that this is only the first of two Thomas Awards that he will adorn his mantel...A punishing blocker that fits the Titans' bread-and-butter ground attack to a "T" (as in Tobin), in his two years wreaking havoc on the OL, the Green & White have accumulated 4,459 yards and run for 47 touchdowns...The caliber of superstar that has the God-given ability to not only elevate his own game, but simultaneously make everyone around perform at a higher level, the best piece of evidence you need when assessing the importance of Tobin is that since he has joined the line-up, THREE Titan ball-carriers have achieved All-League status...Building off of a strong sophomore campaign last season where he was credited with 19 tackles, 9 TFLs, and four sacks on defense, Tobin jumped levels on defense in 2019, concluding the year with 31 stops, 11 tackles for negative

yardage, 1 sack, 1 forced fumble, a fumble recovery, and a blocked punt. In recognition of his stellar



body of work, Tobin received his first All-League bid on “D”.

Last, but by no means least, is the behemoth from Harlem, Cornelius...Standing 6'5 and tipping the scale at 315 pounds, there was never a second during the past three years where the magnitude of his performance failed to match the scope of his stature...A Goliath among Davids from his spot at Offensive Guard, Cornelius has been an integral and priceless cog in a machine that has scored 1,193 pounds, rushed for 7,274 yards, passed for an additional 7,057 yards, while accounting for 152 touchdowns from 2017-2019...As noted above in the McKenna write-up, during this stretch, the Crusaders won two NYCHFL Triple-A titles, as well as back-to-back state titles...Presently holding scholarship offers from six different NCAA Division I programs (Morgan State, Howard, Bryant, Hampton, Delaware State, and Rhode Island), last summer, Cornelius gave a verbal commitment to

the Bison [Howard] and could make it official in the coming weeks during the early signing



period.

Garnering the last set of individual awards for excellence in a particular aspect/phase of the game were the talented lads that brought the crowd to their feet, via either a big kick/punt return or a clutch field goal...Holding down the fort for the future Adam Vinatieris, Devin Hesters, or Billy “White Shoes” Johnsons (for your old schoolers) of the world were your 2019 Special Team Players of the Year— **Liam Mullholland** (A; Kennedy Catholic), **Joseph Pasqua** (St. Francis Prep), **Cameron Holmes** (Moore Catholic), and **Mekhi Green** (Archbishop Stepinac).

Following in the foot-steps of 2018 winner, Brendan Lebitsch, Mullholland became the second Gael in a row to be honored for his ice water veins...Successfully connecting on 19 of 20 point after tries, and going 4-for-5 on FG attempts (long of 39), the 6’0, 170-pounder from Mahopac amassed 31 points this season, which was more than three times the amount of any other place-kicker in the “A” division this season...Emerging with one of the signature plays of the 2019 season, Mullholland booted a 27-yard field goal with no time remaining on the clock to send the single-A title game to overtime...Remarkably, his biggest kick of the season came just 24 hours removed from an assist on the soccer pitch that resulted in another Gael title. Hence, there clearly is no situation too big for the Kennedy 11th grader.

Indisputably a cherished weapon in the battle for field position, Pasqua’s 300 total yards on 14 kick returns ranked 10th in New York State...Spotlighted by a four return, 97-yard effort on October 20th, the Williston Park resident reached or exceeded 50 yards as a returner in three of nine games this

season...While not as pronounced, he also gained 11 yards on three punt returns...Not just limited to specialist duties, Pasqua tallied 377 yards of total offense as a ball-carrier (222 on 39 carries; 3 TDs) and target out of the backfield (155 yards on 11 receptions; 1 touchdown catch)...Five of his 29 tackles on defense yielded a loss of yardage.

The Ultimate triple-threat for the Mavs this season, there was not a single area of the game that Holmes did not impact at one time or another during this championship winning season in Staten Island...Belonging to what is likely a very exclusive club, the 6'2, 185-pounder out of the Garden State pulled off a rare feat in 2019, returning both a kickoff and a punt for touchdowns this season...Extremely balanced in his resume as a special teamer, Holmes accumulated 470 yards (6th most in New York) in this dual capacity, concluding his senior year with 243 on 9 KOR (27.0 average) and 227 (3rd in the state) on 13 punt returns...One of, if not the top WR in AA-2 this season, Holmes' totals of 31 catches (1st) for 602 yards (3rd) and 8 TDs (3rd) ranked in the top-3 of all major receiving categories in the division...On defense, he registered 48 tackles, 1 sack, and was the team-leader with both 3 interceptions (including a pick-6 in the AA-2 finals) and 6 pass break-ups.

Entering his swan song as the #1 running back on the depth chart, the injury bug forced Green to adapt to a new role and adapt he did, finding his calling as an invaluable returner for Coach [Mike] O'Donnell's Crusaders...Tallying a AAA best 113 yards (11 attempts) as a punt returner, Green may not have been afforded as many opportunities as a KOR, but certainly maximized the chances he did get, averaging 22.8 yards on four returns (91 yards overall)...The cumulative total of 204 yards tops in the division...Wearing the famed #6 jersey for Stepinac, even if not fully healthy, Green lived up to his captain tag in every possible way, making 37 tackles, causing and recovering one fumble apiece, and breaking-up 3 passes on "D", while rushing contributing 192 yards (24 carries; 2 TDs) and 116 yards (11 catches; 1 score) respectively as a rusher/receiver.

Other notable awards presented on Sunday were:

Monsignor Peter's Memorial Golden Eleven Award

Frank Scafuri (Monsignor Farrell)

Christopher LoRusso (Kennedy Catholic)

Jordan DeLucia (Kellenberg)

Michael Tartaglia (Archbishop Stepinac)

Brian Holder (Holy Trinity)

James Donaldson (Xavier)

Anthony Casillo (St Peter's)

Eric Terrano (St Francis Prep)

Ethan Ortiz (Cardinal Spellman)

Thomas Resker (Xaverian)

James Colesanti (St. Joseph's by the Sea)

John Bromm Memorial Award

Dominick Battaglia (Monsignor Farrell)

Adrian Ordonez (Cardinal Spellman)

Ken Weinman Memorial Award

Derrick Nyarko (Nazareth)

Christopher Ramos (St. John the Baptist)

Anthony Rosati (Xaverian)

Lieutenant Ronald Winchester Memorial Award

Joshua Rivera (Xaverian)