



DANIEL DE MATO

Sewanhaka's Carly Bolivar scored 13 of her 26 points in last 10:09.

Bolivar, Hunte fuel title surge

BY KENNY DeJOHN
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CLASS A FINAL

 **62** : **46** 

SEWANHAKA **WANTAGH**

Carly Bolivar and Flo Hunte knew the first quarter was not indicative of how the Sewanhaka girls basketball team can play, so both seniors elevated the intensity in the second half of Sunday's Nassau Class A championship at Farmingdale State.

Hunte's three-pointer from the right wing gave Sewanhaka the lead for good and jump-started a 19-point run with 2:09 left in the third quarter. Bolivar scored 13 of her 26 points the rest of the way, and Hunte scored 11 of her 19 in the same time, leading No. 4 Sewanhaka over No 3 Wantagh, 62-46.

It is the first county championship in program history for Sewanhaka (18-5).

"I knew we were going to come with a different intensity because the first quarter was not us," said Hunte, who had seven assists and six rebounds. "We weren't ready for that first quarter."

Wantagh's sharpshooters blitzed Sewanhaka, as Caitlin Albanese, Julia Wilkinson and Megan Lucey helped the Warriors (17-6) take a 14-4 lead.

A 17-10 second quarter for Sewanhaka sent the game into halftime tied at 24. The sides traded leads in the third quarter before Hunte's three-pointer put Sewanhaka ahead at 38-36.

Bolivar sliced through the defense on the next possession, then Hunte drained another triple from the right wing for a 43-36 lead. The In-

at Farmingdale State

(4) Sewanhaka	.....	7 17 23 15	— 62
(3) Wantagh	.....	14 10 12 10	— 46

SEW: Bolivar 26, Hunte 19, Cattle 8, Akinwunmi 5, Lariosa 4. Totals 17-5-62. WAN: Albanese 13, Kaufmann 11, Lucey 8, Flaherty 6, Wilkinson 6, Huguet 2. Totals 12-4-46. Three-pointers: SEW 5 (Hunte 4, Bolivar); WAN 4 (Lucey 2, Kaufmann, Wilkinson).

dians led 54-36 with 5:23 left in the game before Albanese ended the run with a layup.

Bolivar, who missed the semifinal win over undefeated Island Trees and the previous five days of practice with what she called severe stomach pains, struggled to find words to describe the accomplishment. "It honestly feels unreal," she said. "Coming back from this sickness and being able to play here and get the win, it feels unbelievable."

Ashley Cattle had eight points and was a force in the low post, adding nine rebounds and three blocks. She swatted a shot with 25.3 seconds left in the third quarter that kept momentum in the Indians' favor.

"If I see the ball, I'm jumping for it and I don't want anybody else to get it," she said. "That's mine when I see it go up."

Sewanhaka will play Mount Sinai in the Long Island Class A championship on Saturday.

"You can't win something like this if you don't have the kids," Sewanhaka coach Alex Soupous said. "It's a tribute to these kids and their resiliency and skill."

Aponte makes most of her shot

Key threes help Baldwin win sixth county title in row

BY KENNY DeJOHN
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Alexis Aponte seized her opportunity.

She played a minor role last season during the Baldwin girls basketball team's run to the state Federation Class AA championship, but she made the most of her chance on Sunday in the Nassau Class AA championship game.

Kaia Harrison scored 21 points and Aponte and Jamiela Moore each had 13 as top-seeded Baldwin beat second-seeded Syosset, 58-53, at Farmingdale State. The Bruins have won six straight county titles and nine of the last 10 under coach Tom Catapano.

"She was humongous," Harrison said of Aponte. "Everything we did in practice showed. Shooting before school, staying after practice."

After Syosset inched to within one point late in the third quarter, Aponte provided the game-changer. Her three-pointer from the right wing with 4.5 seconds left in the period put Baldwin ahead by four and her four-point play from the same spot at the start of the fourth quarter extended the lead to 51-43. Aponte called it "a rhythm thing."

"I'm so proud of Lexi," Catapano said. "She's had a monster year for us, and tonight was kind of indicative of what she's done. She stepped up. She's waited for this moment, and she seized it."

Syosset (20-2) led for much of the second quarter but surrendered the lead just before halftime when Moore sank a pair of free throws. Baldwin (20-1) relinquished the lead early in the third quarter on Kendall Halpern's three-pointer.

Halpern led the Braves with 12 points despite receiving an elbow to her right eye early in the game. She returned with visible swelling and a bruise but rallied the Braves, cutting the deficit to 57-53 on a driving layup



DANIEL DE MATO

Jamiela Moore, left, and Elena Randolph hug after Baldwin held off Syosset to win another Nassau Class AA title.

CLASS AA FINAL

 **58** : **53** 

BALDWIN **SYOSSET**

at Farmingdale State

(2) Syosset	.....	13 14 16 10	— 53
(1) Baldwin	.....	16 12 19 11	— 58

BDW: Harrison 21, Aponte 13, Moore 13, Benavides 7, Randolph 3, Moreno 1. Totals 13-6-58. SY: Halpern 12, Ruggiero 10, Grubman 8, Mahler 8, Twohig 8, DeCapite 4, Mark 3. Totals 16-6-53. Three-pointers: BDW 6 (Aponte 4, Benavides 2); SY 6 (Grubman 2, Halpern 2, Ruggiero, Twohig).

with 34 seconds remaining.

Her efforts were not enough, as Moore and Elena Randolph prevented standout forward Rachel Mahler from seriously impacting the game. She had eight points as Moore and Randolph made sure to deny her the ball in the post.

Last season's Bruins featured four athletes now playing Division I basketball, leaving pivotal

roles to be filled by players accustomed to the program. The new starters seized the moment.

"It means so much because a lot of people said that the program was going to take a major hit, and we lost some phenomenal kids that built this program to what it is today," Catapano said. "For these kids to be champions on their own, it's something special."

Baldwin will play Longwood in the Long Island Class AA championship game on Saturday at Farmingdale State in a rematch of a late-December contest. Baldwin won, 56-47, but Longwood outscored the Bruins 39-36 in the final three quarters.

"During this season, we just wanted to work hard and prove people wrong," Aponte said. "Talk is cheap. We used that as motivation and just kept grinding every day."