**Lax Lowdown: Defensive Attitude helps unbeaten Hamilton-Wenham laxmen heading into today's clash vs. Ipswich
By Phil Stacey Executive Sports Editor, *Salem News*4/24/2018**

There is no use avoiding the obvious.

Five straight wins to open the season were fine and dandy for the Hamilton-Wenham boys lacrosse team. But since their schedule was released, they’ve been waiting for Game No. 6 to arrive: Ipswich.

“I’m not going to lie; there’s a lot of pent up anger,” said Bryson Cala, a defensive midfielder for the Generals. “They gave us our only two losses last year, beat us on Thanksgiving (in football) ... this game is huge. We have a lot to show.”

Ipswich is, of course, the defending Division 3 state champions. The Tigers crushed Hamilton-Wenham, 18-2, during the regular season last spring, then triumphed again for the Division 3 North title, 11-7. Add in the fact many of the Generals were also part of the school’s gridiron squad that were upset by Ipswich last November, 22-20, in overtime, and you can see why they’re eager to do battle once again.

Hamilton-Wenham (5-0) will host Ipswich (4-3) Tuesday at 5 p.m. Both teams have elite scorers (Pat Gillis for the Tigers, Andrew Riccio for H-W) and stellar goaltenders (Ipswich’s Aidan McAdams and the Generals’ Mayo Amorello). The final outcome, in all likelihood, will be determined by how well each team’s midfielders fare.

Head coach Josh Wedge’s Generals have allowed just 19 goals through their five games, and the Kenyon College-bound Amorello isn’t seeing a plethora of shots. That’s due in large part to the work of the defensive middies that help him protect the cage: Aidan Nistl, Sam Webber, Cam Peach and Bryson Cala, as well as long stick middies Clint Gourdeau, Matt Deaborn and Colby Cala (who can also play D-middie).

“We’re all athletic and work together really well,” said Gourdeau, a junior three-year starter for Hamilton-Wenham. “The work ethic that we bring day to day to practice and the intensity we bring to games shows in the stats and on the field.”

“A lot of us have been playing together for a long time, having grown up playing town lacrosse together. So there’s that natural chemistry,” added Webber, another junior who doubles as a faceoff man. “We know when to call someone out and how to fix it when something’s wrong.”

The slides tend to come naturally for this unit when opponents are moving the ball around the Hamilton-Wenham zone. Ground balls get picked up more often than not, too, being worked upfield to give senior offensive stars such as Riccio, Kit Shaw, Callen Strong, Tommy Lattanzi, Griffin Barlow and Cole Dwyer time to shred opposing nets.

“What we do as a group, it’s a bonus to be able to play defense and transition the ball up to the offense. It gives us the chance to be really versatile,” said Colby Cala, a sophomore who is two years younger than his older brother.

Nistl also is an offensive contributor; the junior has seven goals and an assist.

“I’ll get a pass from Mayo and take it up the field. If the pass isn’t there, I’ll go to the net,” he said. “But mainly I’ll looking for Riccio, Barlow ... whoever’s open. That’s how I can best help the team.”

Peach, a football standout for Hamilton-Wenham, was a baseball player his entire life before labrum surgery as a junior ended the pitcher’s hopes of returning to the diamond. So he figured, why not take his athleticism to the lacrosse field and join his buddies?

“I like it a lot,” said Peach, who has quickly adapted to throwing, catching and working within the team framework. “I’m not afraid to make mistakes. These guys have all been great.”

Communication has improved this spring among the defenders, said Gourdeau, which makes a strong unit that much stronger. “When we’re out there talking, making the correct slides and all, it makes it hard for offenses to be able to capitalize,” he said.

There’s no doubt the Generals are eager to take on Ipswich Tuesday, but as Wedge reminds them, it’s still just April 24th. Win or lose, there’s still a lot of lacrosse to be played, and state championships aren’t won at this juncture.

“We can’t let the immensity of the game get to us,” reasoned Dearborn, who comes off the bench and is a ground ball machine for Hamilton-Wenham. “We’ve talked about having tough losses to them in the past, but we can’t focus too much on that. The rest of the season is still ahead of us, win or lose. If we win we’ll be happy, but it’s still just one game ... then on to the next one.”

“Ipswich has some real athletes who can move the ball and put it in the net,” said Nistl. “We just have to play our game.”

A large chunk of that will be matching the intensity that Ipswich will no doubt bring with them to Hamilton.

“I know (in addition to Gillis and his 23 goals), they have an attackman, No. 26 (sophomore attack Lucas Kubaska) that’s pretty shifty. He’s got two good hands and is fluid,” said Webber. “But we can’t focus on taking out just one guy. We need to make sure we lock off whoever is the next pass and not forget about any one of their guys. They can all be dangerous.”

“It’s just another game; we have to keep that in mind,” added Gourdeau. “But win or lose, we’re going to play our hearts out.”

Thursday's local sports roundup: No coach, no standouts, no problem for unbeaten H-W lax

**Salem News Roundup
Apr 20, 2018**

**BOYS LACROSSE**

**Hamilton-Wenham 14, Nipmuc 4**: Andrew Riccio had a big day with three goals and five assists while fellow senior Mayo Amorello made 20 saves as the Generals — minus two of their senior leaders in midfielder Tommy Lattanzi and long stick middie Clint Gourdeau — as well as their head coach, Josh Wedge (home taking care of his sick children), continued to roll past their opponents.

Amorello actually scored the game’s first goal, his second of the year, to open the scoring for Hamilton-Wenham (5-0), which shot out to a 10-2 lead to pull away in the second half. Seniors Griffin Barlow (3 goals), Cole Dwyer (3 goals), Callen Strong (2 goals) and Kit Shaw (2 assists), as well as junior Aidan Nistl (2 goals) provided the offense for the winners, who got stellar play defensively from senior captain Zane Clark and junior defender Henry Schibli.

 **Fast Pitches softball column: High hopes for new coaches at Salem, H-W and Masco
Jean DePlacido, *Salem News*
Apr 13, 2018**

**Rick O'Leary** has taken over the Witches, **George Shapiro** is at the helm of the Lady Generals, and former Swampscott head coach **Frank Kowalski** is now in charge of the Chieftains.

A Class of 1988 Salem High graduate, O'Leary was the Witches' assistant last season when **Jillian Maurice** was the head coach and team won four games, so he's familiar with the program. He's looking for his young squad to get better every inning and every game.

**Jenna Tremblay** returns in the circle with a year of varsity experience and should be ever better than her terrific freshman season. The Witches also have experience at shortstop in senior speedster **Wildarys Correa**; any time she's on base, she's a threat to steal.

O'Leary played football and baseball in high school for the Witches. He captained Salem State baseball as a senior and then served as assistant coach for the Vikings from 1992-96 under legendary coach **Ken Perrone**. Later, he began playing softball and was in a number of national tournaments in Georgia, Florida, North Carolina and Wisconsin.

"I had the luxury of playing for some of the greatest coaches in Salem High history, **Al Giardi** and Ken," he said. " **Mike Giardi, Dave Angeramo, Jeff Juden** and the late **Andrew Viglas** were all great teammates of mine."

O'Leary and his wife **Nicole** have two daughters: **Tayla**, a former Salem High standout student-athlete who is now a freshman at Worcester State, and **Cassadi**, an eighth grader at Saltonstall School.

"When the kids began getting involved in sports, I coached in Salem Little League Softball from 2006-15, which has given me an advantage of knowing most of the girls that are playing in the softball program now," said O'Leary. "I reconnected with most of the girls that I've coached or coached against since they were nine or 10 years old.

"I have two great assistant coaches who were Salem High superstars, **Leslie Boucher** and **Ashley White**. I have the utmost confidence that the three of us can help the girls go to college, be better people and hopefully better players."

Shapiro also has a strong background in coaching youth softball, starting in 2006 in Marblehead with summer workouts, then fall and winter softball. He moved on to coach the Peabody Senior all-stars.

There was an opening at Hamilton-Wenham — now in its fourth season back as a varsity softball program after taking a hiatus from the sport — after coach **Tawny Palmieri** was let go late in the season last year. Shapiro applied and got the job.

"You have to have summer programs in place," said Shapiro, "and the girls have to play all year long if you want to have a good high school program."

Shapiro has experience coaching high school softball and girls basketball at Salem Academy. He has been a Marblehead resident since 1994, but grew up in Swampscott.

"My parents moved to Marblehead just before my senior year," said Shapiro. "I played football for the great **Stan Bondelevitch**. When Stan found out we were moving, he told me I played for Swampscott, not Marblehead, and so I finished up my football career with him."

Shapiro coached the all-star North Shore Magicians, who were undefeated last summer and went 12-2 the two previous years. "I had girls from Marblehead, Peabody, Salem, Woburn, Masconomet, Brooks, Gann Academy and all over," said Shapiro, who went to the University of Dayton in Ohio.

"The people at Hamilton-Wenham have been very welcoming. My philosophy is to treat every girl as if she was my own daughter."

Shapiro believes the Lady Generals should be able to make the state tournament again this spring. **Molly McLean**, who played four years at Salem State is the program's JV coach.

**Thursday's area roundup: H-W, Masco baseball teams reamin undefeated
Apr 12, 2018**

**BASEBALL**

**Hamilton-Wenham 9, Ipswich 2**: Senior captain Phil Durgin drove in three runs to help the Generals (2-0) overcome their rivals. Junior Mark Roselli allowed two hits and fanned five in four innings for his first win while Jake Lanciani (two runs, two steals) and Paul Hordan (two hits) chipped in at the dish. Freshmen Luke McKlintock (four strikeouts in three shutout innings) and Ryan Hutchinson (two runs, RBI) also played well.For the Tigers, Caleb Comeau had a hit, Dan Stedman doubled and Max Kivekas also had a hit with an RBI.

**Tuesday's area roundup: H-W baseball, laxmen roll up victories**

**4/11/2018, Salem News**

**BASEBALL**

**Hamilton-Wenham 5, Manchester Essex 1**: Sophomore Ian Coffey hit a 2-run homer to help the Generals (1-0) grab win number on. Junior Everett Wonson was excellent in his first start with six strikeouts over 4 1/3 innings and Jake Lanciani finished the job with five K’s over 2 2/3. Conor Evers and Adam Parady chipped in hits for H-W.

**BOYS LACROSSE**

**Hamilton-Wenham 17, Georgetown 1:** Finding the back of the net just eight seconds in, Hamilton-Wenham (2-0) scored early and often on their way to an easy victory. Griffin Barlow (5 goals), Andrew Riccio (2 goals, 3 assists), Kit Shaw (3 goals, 2 assists) and Callen Strong (goal, 4 assists) powered the offense while Thomas Kain (goal, assist), Clint Goudreau (2 assists) and Aidan Nistl (2 goals) had their first points of the season. Cam Peach (goal), Hunter Bahr (assist) and Ethan Dwyer (goal) had their first career points; Tommy Lattanzi added a single goal, and Sam Webber was dominant at the faceoff-X.

**GIRLS LACROSSE**

Hamilton-Wenham 12, Georgetown 10: Katie Everitt had three goals and an assist to help the Generals hold on for the win. Ele Hamilton and Cecily Midf had two goals and two assists each and Eliza Towmey and Tessa Landon also scored twice.