

Advertisement

SPORTS / HIGH SCHOOL / **HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL**

Wantagh's A.J. Bardi honored as Nassau's top catcher; Long Beach's Troy DeFrancesco and Roslyn's Lucas Weisser earn scholar-athlete awards



AJ Bardi of Wantagh (left), Lucas Weisser of Roslyn (center) and Troy DeFrancesco (right) of Long Beach were honored at the Nassau baseball awards on Wednesday, June 12, 2024. Credit: James Escher

By Brian Heymanbrian.heyman@newsday.com [X](#)bheyman99

Updated June 12, 2024 10:04 pm

[SHARE](#)

A.J. Bardi was beginning his freshman year with the Wantagh varsity. He had been a middle infielder, but soon he was seeing the field from a whole new perspective — through a mask from behind the home plate.

The team needed a catcher.

Bardi also saw some time pitching and at short, but he became really good at catching over his four years as a starter. His final season brought a nice reward Wednesday night at the Nassau County Baseball Coaches Association's awards dinner at the Marriott in Uniondale.

Advertisement

The senior won the Ryan Caulfield Award as the county's top catcher.

The reason?

"For every reason," coach Keith Sachs said. "The obvious reasons are stats and then his baseball ability. But his work ethic and his leadership are incredible."

The Maine commit threw out 19 of the 31 runners who tried to steal against him. Sachs called that "insane from behind home plate." He also batted .550 with 20 extra-base hits — including five homers — 25 RBIs, 33 runs and 22 steals for a team that went to the Nassau Class A championship series.

"He doesn't take a play off, a practice off," said Sachs, who also coached him in football. "He plays injured . . . He's one of the hardest-working, quiet, [most] humble kids in the world."

DeFrancesco, Weisser tops in the classroom

Long Beach's Troy DeFrancesco and Roslyn's Lucas Weisser received the Michael Capozzi Scholar-Athlete Award.

DeFrancesco, who set his program's record for highest regular-season average at .549, excelled in center and pitched well.

Advertisement

The senior posted a 0.54 ERA across 13 innings as a starter/reliever for the AA semifinalist Marines.

"Troy is what we consider a generational player here in Long Beach," coach Jason Zizza said.

Here are two more stats: weighted GPA — 106.87; unweighted — 99.84. The valedictorian is bound for Princeton and plans to try to be a walk-on with the baseball team.

DeFrancesco also coaches a Little League team and gives private baseball lessons to kids — sometimes for free if a family can't afford them — and works with them on academics.

"He's an elite athlete and he's an elite human being," Zizza said. " . . . Troy's the kid you want dating your daughter."

Advertisement

Weisser, a senior pitcher/outfielder/infielder, batted .412 with an OPS of 1.005. Roslyn coach Dan Freeman called him "one of the best hitters I've ever coached."

The staff's ace also owned a 2.60 ERA over five starts.

"Lucas turned himself into a pitcher as a sophomore because we needed it," Freeman said. "He's an outfielder by trade. He really stepped into that role and became one of the better pitchers in the conference (AA-II) this year, one of the toughest conferences in Nassau."

His weighted GPA is 105. Weisser is headed for Wharton at Penn and plans to play club baseball.

"He's an incredible student, works extremely hard," Freeman said. "He really strives to be great in the classroom. On the baseball field, he strives to be just as good.... He's one of the smartest players out there, plays extremely hard. All he wants to do is win."

Advertisement

By **Brian Heyman**

brian.heyman@newsday.com  [bheyman99](#)

Brian Heyman covers high school, college and pro sports. He joined Newsday in 2021 and previously worked as a sportswriter for The Journal News in White Plains and The Hudson Dispatch in Union City, New Jersey. His work has appeared in The New York Times, MLB.com and Baseball Digest magazine.

MORE ON THIS TOPIC

[POB JFK's D'Ambrosio wins Joe Corea Diamond Award](#)

[Division's Bolton named Don Lang Diamond Award winner](#)

[Massapequa's Adams earns Diamond Award thanks to his power and finesse on mound](#)

Didn't find what you were looking for?



Advertisement

Quick Links

[About Us](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[Today's paper](#)

[Email newsletters](#)

[Newsday Live](#)

[Careers](#)

Advertising

[Media Kit](#)

[Brand 360](#)

[Newsday Productions](#)

[Newsday Connect](#)

[Hometown Shopper](#)

[Classifieds](#)

Manage my account

Public Notices

Mobile & TV apps

Contests

Archives

News

Long Island

Sports

Opinion

Politics

News

Business

Towns

High school sports

Featured

Funbook

Obituaries

Crosswords

Things to Do

Entertainment

Restaurants

Family

Travel

NextLI

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of service](#) | [Subscription terms](#) | [Your ad choices](#) | [Cookies Settings](#) | [California Privacy Rights](#)
[About Us](#) | [Contact Newsday](#) | [Reprints & permissions](#) | [Advertise with Newsday](#) | [Help](#)

Copyright ©2024 Newsday. All rights reserved.

