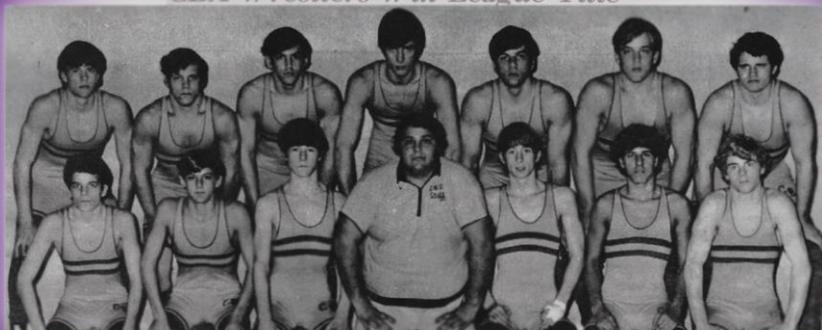


LaSALLIAN HALL OF FAME

CBA Wrestlers Win League Title

Inducted 2016



Guy Berrier	John Callahan	Kerry Hopkins	Rick Mantione	Joe Ramieri	Jim Skopek
Mike Bongiovanni	Steve Hackett	Kevin Hopkins	Paul Mortensen	Lee Rogers	Ron Spadafora
Pat Burns	Tom Harris	Mike Kolinski	Joe Mullin	Deke Ryan	Rusty Tassini
Head Coach Gary Barnaba		Assistant Coach Dave Adams		Moderator Brother Brendan Fitzgerald	

Results (13 wins, 0 losses)

Undefeated CNYCL Champions

CBA 63 Harpursville 6	CBA 48 CBA (Lyncroft) 6	CBA 49 Bishop Ludden 8	CBA 38 Auburn 17
CBA 47 Central Tech 10	CBA 56 Bishop Grimes 3	CBA 25 Canastota 24	CBA 26 Watertown 22
CBA 42 Fayetteville Manlius 6	CBA 55 Nottingham 6	CBA 64 Corcoran 0	CBA 48 Henninger 8
			CBA 27 Liverpool 12

CBA WRESTLING 1972

Our next group of inductees were actually beneficiaries of the move from Willow Street to Dewitt. You see when CBA moved out to Randall Road, the huge new building was able to house many more students. As enrollment grew so did the extracurricular offerings. Sports like golf and tennis were reinstated, while others were being added. In 1967 - 1968 the Brothers added the sport of wrestling to the lineup to give more opportunities for the boys to participate in sports. Our story is going to start in the spring of 1970 when Gary Barnaba, a young southern tier guy who was still playing some semi pro football, was hired to take over the wrestling program. At the time, the sport of wrestling in Binghamton was a year round sport and if Gary was going to put his name on something he was going to do it right. He had a vision for the program and for those of us who know him, you can understand that when sets his mind to something there is no stopping him. Another thing happened then. Gary met Jerry Riordan, maybe the best program builder in the history of high school sports. Barney wanted tips as to how to build a program, and the young coach was encouraged to recruit: on the first, second and third floor. Being a quick study that is what Gary did, and it did it in spades. He started doing offseason work and conditioning and convinced his troops that that they were on the doorstep of



greatness. As part of his vision, he needed to upgrade the perception of the program. You all have heard of Barnum and Bailey right? Well there could be a third B to that Barnaba. The young coach made each meet an event. From the spotlights on the mats, to the flowing gold warmup robes and, my personal favorite, please remember that I was a freshman at CBA in 1972; the mat maid's dressed in purple tops and gold hot pants! Anything to attract the athletes and fans to his program.

Post-Holiday Action Picks Up

1/6/72 G.S.

CBA, Cicero, Westhill Wrestling Favorites

CBA Matmen Trounce Foes In New Jersey

Undefeated CBA Wrestlers Top F-M for Third

FULTON 20, CBA 19.
 98—Callahan (CBA) pinned Hamer, 1:12; 105—Angeleri (F) dec. Ryan, 17-2; 112—Jacobson (F) dec. Tassini, 5-0; 119—J. Hopkins (CBA) dec. Arnold, 3-2; 126—Bilbo (CBA) dec. Heagerty, 8-7; 132—Farfaglia (F) dec. K. Hopkins, 4-2; 138—Bercier (CBA) Wolfe, 7-2; 145—C. Bercier (CBA) drew with Dudek, 2-2; 155—Stevens (F) dec. Chiarulli, 16-0; 167—Merritt (F) dec. Bongiovanni, 8-2; 177—Pelligra (CBA) dec. J. Bennett, 8-3; 215—R. Bennett (F) dec. Harris, 6-2. JV score—CBA 28, Fulton 26.

CBA Nips Canastota In Wrestling

Mat 'Meet of Year'

CBA and Watertown Clash

CBA Wrestlers Win League Title

This started paying dividends during his second year of coaching when after losing a heartbreaker to perennial power Fulton by 20 – 19 on December 11 they would not lose again for the next 26 months. The success continued into the post season and they went on to win their second consecutive Diocesan Tournament.

So coming in to the 71-72 season there were high hopes for a great season although Coach Barnaba admits he thought the FOLLOWING year was going to be the breakout year for his matmen. He had several veterans returning. Senior captains Ron Pelligra and Tom Harris, along with John Callahan, Mike Bongiovanni,

Steve Hackett, Ron Spadafora, Guy Bercier, Kevin Hopkins, Rusty Tassini, Deke Ryan. Plus newcomers Jim Skopek, Pat Burns, Paul Mortenson, Joe Mullin, Rick Mantonio, Kerry Hopkins. Barnaba felt confident in the success of the upper weight classes. In fact, the top three wrestlers Bongiovanni, Pelligra and Harris were dubbed Murderer's Row by the newspapers because of their dominance. His concern was in the lower weights but that concern was quickly alleviated when the matches began. The Brothers dominated their first seven opponents by an average score of 51 – 7. Then came what turned into one of the closest matches of the year against perennial power Canastota. Barnaba knew it would be a close match and the great motivator that he was, told Kerry Hopkins that in order for the team to win he could not get pinned...great coaching! Well Kerry did not, and the Bongiovanni pin in the last few seconds of his match gave the Brothers enough cushion for the 25-24 win and sent the most of the 800 fans in attendance home disappointed.

Two weeks later the Brothers would face undefeated perennial power Watertown for the League championship. I'm not sure if it was the robes, spotlights or mat maid's but a crowd estimated at 1000 filled the gym and was exactly what Barnaba envisioned just 2 years earlier. The crowd was treated to one of the most exciting matches in Central New York Wrestling history. Wins by Burns at 98, Tassini at 119, Bercier at 132 and a pivotal win by Kevin Hopkins at

138 kept the Brothers close in the early going but with three bouts remaining the Cyclones held a 22 – 12 lead. Those three matches, however, were against "the Row...who up until that time had compiled a 35 and 1 record on the season. The row did its job. Bonj won a decision to make it 22-15. Then Pelligra's pin brought the Brothers to within one. When Harris got the match winning pin at 3:17 that huge crowd stormed the mat. The unthinkable had been accomplished, the Brothers were champs! However, they did lose a point



because the crowd stormed the floor.... When order was restored, Harris arm was raised in victory giving the program, in only its fourth year of existence, the ultimate prize. The Brothers became the first Onondaga County school to win a CNYCL championship in the sport which had been dominated but Fulton, Cortland and Watertown.

What is most important about that season, however, is the bond formed between the players. The latest trend states how teams need to become like family and in my opinion, the term is overused. In some cases, like this one, it is right on point. This team worked together, suffered together and most importantly were there for each other. The coach has much to do with that, but it also takes a special group of men to make it happen. One big part of the team who is not here tonight is Ron Pelligra, who was taken from us way before his time. I'm sure Luca is looking down on us tonight with that big smile that we all remember. I am honored to have the 1972 Wrestling team take its rightful place in the Lasallian Athletic Hall of Fame!