

# Island Sports

## First flag football season scores points with kids

By **Stephanie Heelan Cotsonas**

When many islanders were at home on Monday nights mourning the end of football season, 43 students in grades 5 through 8 were braving the elements and playing flag football.

Jamestown Mark Swistak, Jr. and Recreation Director Bill Piva put together the league as an introduction to football. Swistak wanted the kids from Jamestown who were interested in the game to have the opportunity to learn the rules prior to attending high school.

The program ran for six weeks and wrapped up on Monday evening. "In the first week we had 20 kids and by week two, because of word of mouth, we were up to 43," Piva said. "I think this is the perfect season because it is right when basketball ends and it is before baseball. We have had a couple of really cold nights up here but the kids come out to play,

they don't care, the only ones that complain are the instructors. The session is over but the kids want to continue playing."

Islanders Matt Swistak, Nick Malloy and Andy Donnelly were instrumental in getting the program off the ground as they acted as teachers, coaches and officials every week. According to Piva, "We teach them the basics. You don't walk, you hustle. Right off the bat we tell them this is what we expect. We don't want to take their fun away, but we want them to know that when they get to high school this is what is expected of them. You can't dance in the end zone; it's not all about you, it is about the team and the game."

Piva also said the coaches taught the kids some basic rules and plays but did not overload them with information because the kids really just wanted to get out and play. "We taught them

some of the NK passing plays and by the third or fourth week they really knew what they were doing. They caught on pretty quickly, we were really amazed," he said.

Mark Swistak added, "I think it went really well. They need to know the very basic stuff, like where you need to go to get a first down, the line of scrimmage, complete and incomplete passes and how to call a play. Some of the older kids didn't need as much coaching."

Participants were mostly seventh and eighth graders and Piva may consider adding another league of third, fourth and fifth graders and then keep sixth through eighth together. The lone girl in the program was Kirsten Barrett, who said she was not intimidated by the boys and will play again next year. According to Piva, Barrett caught a great pass for a first down in last week's game.

Piva and Swistak both praised many of the kids with natural ability, most notably Christian Ellerbe. Piva said, "If we were giving MVP awards he would be at the top of the list along with Jacob Morris and Jake Gillis." Gillis is a fifth grader and therefore one of the youngest in the program.

Shane Farrelly has some tackle football experience and was a natural out on the field. Eric Stroud played his last flag football game in his school baseball uniform after returning from a game and assuring his coaches that he had already finished his homework.

Overall Piva and Mark Swistak were very happy with the

first season of Jamestown flag football. "Hopefully we sparked some interest," Piva said.

Farrelly, Morris and Ellerbe have plans to go out for the freshman football team next year at North Kingstown. "I thought

the best thing was the enthusiasm of the kids. I mean, it was cold a few nights. I was just pumped at how many kids played," Mark Swistak said. Piva laughed and added, "These kids would have played in the snow."

## Summer sports camps

The Jamestown Parks and Recreation Department has announced its camp lineup for this summer.

### Baseball camp

Jamestown resident and Salve Regina baseball coach Steve Cirella will hold his annual baseball camp from July 7 to 11 at the Lawn Avenue fields. The camp is for children ages 7 to 12 and will run from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. daily. Cost is \$80 and registration forms are available at the recreation center. Players are asked to bring a hat, glove and snacks.

### Basketball camp

The recreation department will hold its second annual basketball camp coached by Eric Bush for ages 6 to 13 at the Lawn Avenue School gym from July 14 to 18. Camp hours are from 9 to 11 a.m. and the cost is \$30 per child. Registration forms are available at the recreation center or [www.jamestownri.net/rec/rec.html](http://www.jamestownri.net/rec/rec.html).

### Lacrosse camp

Lacrosse camp for girls will be held July 21 to 23, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. There is no experience necessary for this three-day camp for ages 10 to 15. The camp fee is \$50 and equipment rental is available through the camp.

Registration forms are available at the recreation center or [www.jamestownri.net/rec/rec.html](http://www.jamestownri.net/rec/rec.html).

### Save the Bay

The popular Save the Bay Camp is back again for two weeks this year. Topics include sandy beach, salt marsh and rocky shore exploration, plus an estuary and eelgrass day where participants use nets to catch and observe animals that live in the estuary. Kids will also take a ride on Save The Bay's education vessel to explore Narragansett Bay more closely. Camp wraps up with the Bay Olympics, where the campers' knowledge of the Bay will be put to the test. Each day will also include bay-themed crafts and activities. The first camp session will run from July 7 to 11 and the second from August 4 to 8. The camp will meet 9 a.m. to noon for children entering grades 1 to 3 and from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. for children entering grades 4 to 6.

The camp costs \$60 per week, and meets at the Ft. Getty pavilion.

### Soccer camp

British Challenger will hold a soccer camp at the Lawn Avenue fields in Jamestown from Aug. 18 to 22.

Half-day camps for ages 4 to 14 are \$120, and full day camps for 6 to 14 year olds are \$170. Both sessions include a ball, T-shirt and parting gift. Morning sessions are 9 a.m. to noon, afternoon sessions are 1 to 4 p.m. and full-day sessions are from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Proceeds from the camp will go to the Jamestown schools' athletic teams. For more information or to register, visit [www.challengersports.com](http://www.challengersports.com) or call 560-0145. Host families are also needed for the coaches and host families will receive a credit towards camp.

### Summer Playground

Summer Playground is back with a full schedule of themed weeks and activities sure to keep the kids active this summer. Playground starts June 23 and will run weekly through August 15. A half-day option is available from 9 a.m. to noon and a full-day option runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For a full schedule, visit the recreation Web site at [www.jamestownri.net/rec/rec](http://www.jamestownri.net/rec/rec).

Be sure to visit the Web site for updated information on camps, including a tennis camp, or contact the recreation department at 423-7260 for more information.



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