

THE EXPRESS-TIMES

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

For Liberty hoops, it's mask up or else



Liberty coach Nigel Long leads the team Thursday against Northampton in his inaugural season. Saed Hindash, for The Express-Times

Boys team faces suspension as BASD cracks down on athletes violating COVID rules

Sara K. Satullo For The Express-Times

Bethlehem Area School Board members have a message to their district athletes: Mask up or don't play.

Three board members Monday night said they were upset to see Bethlehem Area School District athletes on television and on social media over the weekend wearing masks under their chin or not covering their nose, flouting COVID-19 safety rules they all agreed to follow to have a winter sports season.

Their message was clear: playing high school sports in a pandemic is a privilege, not a guaranteed right.

Superintendent Joseph Roy said after the meeting that the Liberty High School boys basketball team is facing a three-day suspension of activities for its failure to comply.

"I'm trying to keep this district both safe and open," Roy said. "I don't have patience for anyone not doing their part."

Board members were referencing Lib-

erty High School's home and away games last week against Northampton Area High School. Freedom boys and girls varsity basketball teams have yet to play a game this season due to COVID-related postponements.

Board Vice President Shannon L. Patrick said the refusal to adhere to basic mask safety at sporting events jeopardizes the district's ability to offer face-to-face instruction. Her daughter wants to be in school learning with her friends more, not less.

Bethlehem remains on a hybrid schedule, where students attend school in-person two days a week and learn virtually the rest of the week. Rising case counts in December forced the district to switch to all online ahead of the holidays and Freedom High School switched to virtual instruction Friday after a spike in COVID-19 cases.

SEE LIBERTY, A2

"I'm trying to keep this district both safe and open. I don't have patience for anyone not doing their part."

Joseph Roy, Bethlehem Area School District superintendent

HUNTERDON COUNTY

Prison leader should step down, lawmakers say

Blake Nelson For The Express-Times

State senators are demanding the head of New Jersey's prison system be placed on leave in response to reports detailing accusations that officers severely beat inmates at the state's only women's prison earlier this month.

State Senate Majority Leader Loretta Weinberg, D-Bergen, and Sen. Linda Greenstein, D-Middlesex, said they'd lost faith in the people overseeing the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility in Union Township, Hunterdon County.

"We are appalled by the egregious acts reported today," the senators wrote in a letter Monday to Gov. Phil Murphy. "This is not the first report that shows that the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility is out of control, improperly managed, and clearly an abusive danger to the women locked up behind its walls."

Corrections Commissioner Marcus Hicks and Edna Mahan's warden should step aside until the incident can be fully investigated, the lawmakers said.

"Wardens" are called "administrators" in New Jersey's prison system. The corrections department lists Sarah Davis as the facility's administrator, but she was on leave when inmates said they were attacked, according to William Sullivan, president of NJ PBA Local 105, the state's largest corrections union.

The person who had been in charge, Associate Administrator Sean St. Paul, was previously suspended, Sullivan said.

Messages left with St. Paul were not returned.

On Monday the prison system appointed a new administrator, Patricia

SEE PRISON, A8



New Jersey state Senate Majority Leader Loretta Weinberg is "appalled" by the latest reports out of the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility. Aristide Economopoulos, for The Express-Times

Injury put Eagles' new DC on path to coaching. B1

ShopRite to close pharmacies, send patrons to CVS. B6

LOWER NAZARETH TWP.

Sports complex with batting cages, turf fields coming

\$3.4M facility to open on Country Club Road by fall

Pamela Sroka-Holzmann For The Express-Times

Sports fans soon will have a place to practice their swing and play on turf fields when "The Park" opens in Lower Nazareth Township.

The \$3.4 million, 12-acre complex at 270 Country Club Road will be owned and operated by Kevin and Theresa Moyzan.

The land has housed a storage facility for construction supply firm ORE Rentals. The sale represents approximately half of The Park's full 24-acre redevelopment footprint. The complex is expected to open by fall.

The Moyzans for the past several years oversaw the area's Powerballers baseball program. That program includes position-specific coaching and elite tournament play, along with regional non-profit baseball training camps, the couple said.

The Park will become the headquarters of the Powerballers, which includes five teen and youth travel teams. It'll also be used by adult baseball and soccer leagues, as well as multiple junior athletic leagues. In total, the facility has two outdoor athletic fields and indoor turf fields, batting cages and community event space.

The couple additionally expects to rent the space out for use by other community teams in the future.

SEE FACILITY, A8

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Easton EMS squad faring well so far

Tony Rhodin For The Express-Times

There is a remarkable statistic when it comes to Easton's public safety personnel and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Easton Emergency Squad, which has answered calls throughout the coronavirus' nearly one-year run, has had none of its 10 full-time employees get sick with the disease, according to Bud Shull, the squad's president.

Four part-time employees tested positive after exposure from other places they work, Shull said. But that didn't impact anyone else on the squad and just caused scheduling issues, Shull said.

And one of the full-time employees did have to quarantine after being exposed outside of work, but did not get sick, Shull said.

The squad, which is not part of city government but is its "primary Emergency Medical Services provider," has stayed healthy by treating every patient as a possible COVID-19 positive, as well as always wearing personal protective equipment including ENVO masks, along with general sanitizing and the decontaminating of equipment and vehicles

SEE EMS, A8