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## Friday, Aug. 18, 2017: Pulaski, Oriskany look to convert to eight-man football

**Leading off today:** Eight-man football in Central New York could be expanding even before the first game gets played.

With player turnout light in the first few days of practice for the 11-man big brother of the sport, officials at Class C Pulaski and Class D Oriskany will seek entry into Section 3's new eight-man league so the schools can still field teams this season, [Syracuse.com reported Thursday](#).

The two schools would join Bishop Grimes, Cooperstown, New York Mills and South Lewis in the league approved this spring following the demise of a division created for struggling 11-man programs in the section. Approval could come Monday, and it's possible other schools could also seek entry. Section 3 Executive Director John Rathbun said Seton Catholic in Binghamton asked about possibly joining after that Section 4 school determined it would not be able to field an 11-man varsity this fall.

What we're seeing is the continuation of an age-old problem that's growing worse with shrinking enrollments across much of Upstate New York. Class D has always had instances of schools dropping the sport in the preseason or folding before the playoffs rolled around, but it's increasingly an issue now in Class C, too.

With the eight-man league set to debut in what will be Week 4 of the upcoming traditional football schedule, there's still time for Pulaski, Oriskany and perhaps others to make the switch.

"It's been a tough couple of days," said first-year Pulaski head coach Paul Monnat, an assistant the previous three years. "It stinks that it happened so late, but it (eight-man) gives us an option."

AD Jeff Shirley said Pulaski had 29 kids sign up for football in the spring, but only 15 followed through as of mid-week. The state minimum is 16 for 11-man football.

**Following up:** Sachem East football will field a football team in the aftermath of Joshua Mileto's death, but district officials are expected to announce changes to the coaching staff on Friday, [Newsday reported](#).

Mileto, 16, died Aug. 10 after a log that he and four other players were carrying during a workout fell and struck him on the head. The workout was part of a six-week strength and conditioning camp that took place on school grounds and was run by Sachem East football coaches, the paper reported.

Head coach Mark Wojciechowski has not spoken publicly since Mileto's death and did not return the paper's message Thursday night seeking comment. Practices since the beginning of the week had been canceled and players, coaches and parents met with administrators for the first time on Wednesday.

Players met again Thursday as district officials debated whether to carry on with the season.

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in the head," the indictment states.

Haylett was celebrating with friends after being selected MVP in an exceptional seniors game. He died from his injuries the following day.

Eleven defendants were arrested in and around Dutchess County in a coordinated series of arrests beginning Wednesday. One was arrested in North Carolina and another in Florida. Eighteen were already in custody on state charges and are expected to be transferred to federal custody. They face penalties ranging from 10 years to life in prison on charges that include murder, attempted racketeering conspiracy, narcotics conspiracy and firearms charges.

The gang warfare has been a factor in the majority of the 89 shootings and 21 murders between 2012 and 2016 linked to gang activity, Kim said.

"When gangs flourish, neighborhoods suffer, parents grieve, and children die," Kim said. "It is as simple as that. And we will not sit by and let that happen."

**'Unified' approach in Tennessee:** The Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association is stepping up its move into [Unified Sports](#), which have become a fixture in many NYSPHSAA schools in just three short years.

The TSSAA Board of Control met this week to approve the addition of Unified Track and Field events, marking the beginning of a partnership with Special Olympics Tennessee. The competition will begin during Spring Fling this school year. It will be considered an invitational



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championship in 2018 and could become a sanctioned sport soon afterward.

"When you look at those kids competing -- I've done it for many years in education -- those are the kids that have no complaints," TSSAA executive director Bernard Childress said. "It's not about winning and losing with them. It's about them being able to compete, have fun and have a sense of accomplishment."

Events included in the inaugural TSSAA Unified track and field invitational will be the 100-meter dash, 400 run, 400 relay, shot put and long jump.

"This is a win, win," TSSAA assistant director Richard McWhirter said. "We don't get many of those in our office."

**Stadium ready for debut:** The Katy, Texas, school system will officially take the mantle from Allen, Texas, as the [most expensive high school football stadium](#) in the nation when Legacy Stadium open for business this month.

The \$70 million facility, which was dedicated Thursday, will serve as the home field for eight schools in a district with 77,000 students in grades K through 12. It features 12,000 seats, two concession stands on each side and two lockerrooms that can divide into four rooms for additional space. Exterior lighting can be programmed to display the colors of participating schools on a given night.

The first game at Mike Johnston Field at Legacy Stadium will be Aug. 31 with Taylor High takes on Foster High.

**Extra points:** Mike Auerbach has been approved by the school board as the new boys basketball coach at Panas in Section 1. He is making a move after two seasons at Valhalla and four years before that at Irvington.



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alleged murders, attempted murders, shootings and rampant drug dealing," Kim said, flanked by law enforcement officials from multiple agencies. "The victims of this turf war have not been limited to rival gang members. They have included innocent bystanders."

Nicholas Harris, 25, Dimetri Moseley, 23, and Jahquez Hill, 19, alleged members of the Uptown gang, face life in prison or the death penalty for their alleged role in the slaying of Haylett. Prosecutors say the three men arrived at a barbecue intending to retaliate for taunts on social media.

"Upon approaching the barbecue, Harris, Moseley and Hill fired multiple shots from at least two guns at the Downtown (gang) members, one of which struck Caval Haylett, who was attending the barbecue and was not a member of the gang,

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