

# The WELLESLEY TOWNSMAN

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2021 WHS PowerPuff team, refs and coaches. DARREN BOVIE

## No turkey talk for this game, but plenty of friendly rough and tumble

**Patty Bovie**

Wellesley Townsman

In a year marked by change and compromise, one beloved high school tradition had to be reimagined to ensure its survival. The annual senior girls flag football game, AKA Powderpuff, is usually played between Wellesley and Needham high schools on Thanksgiving weekend. This year, Wellesley seniors Kady Bedard, Ella Kilgore, and Natalie Bovie joined forces back in March to make the game a reality in June.

"We had already given up so much this year, we couldn't lose Powderpuff too," said Natalie, who had been looking forward to playing the game since she was a freshman.

Facing coordination challenges, the girls reached out to Joe Roberts whose Terriers Sports programs have rocked right through the pandemic.

"We have been proud to help our youth safely return to active play, and were honored the girls asked us to help," said Roberts.

In 2014, Roberts helped found Community Investors (CI), a non-profit organization supporting physical, social, and emotional wellness through active play. His first recommendation was for the girls to reflect on the "PowderPuff" name, and consider improvements. After a team discussion, the students chose to rename the game to "PowerPuff," more fitting for today's empowered young women.

Roberts, parent volunteers, and the student organizers ran weekly Zoom meetings to address the many challenges they faced in planning the event. With help

from the Wellesley Police Department, who has supported the game for many years, and the Health Department, the girls ultimately received approval to play. Unfortunately, despite a team effort from students and parents from both towns, Needham was unable to field a team. Instead of canceling the game, the Wellesley girls decided to play each other.

"While we all wish we could have played Needham, we were able to keep the tradition alive," said Ella.

More than 50 WHS senior girls enjoyed weekly practices in masks, which were led by coach Andrew Boyle, with help from other parents and WHS senior football players Carl Callahan, Josh Yen, James Dolan, and Anthony Messore. Anthony said, "We were so happy to help make this game happen for the senior girls who were able to play like senior girls have in the past. They deserve it!"

On June 7, on the heels of graduation weekend, they finally took the field. The new logo and shirts were designed by Natalie's cousin, Julie Issenberg. With a close 30-28 victory, the BLUE/RED team raised the re-named PowerPuff trophy.

To mark the start of the new traditional Intramural game, they also signed a PowerPuff Bucket for which future WHS senior girls will compete. "Sports teach kids to overcome adversity, and turn challenges into opportunities for positive change," remarked Roberts. "Though this year's game was different, the girls were thrilled to continue the tradition despite all the obstacles that stood in their way, a lesson in determination that will set them on the path to success in the future."



Team Blue/Red captains Devon Morton and Natalie Bovie shake hands with Team Orange/White captains Riley Boyle and Kady Bedard while refs Will Madden and Anthony Perez look on. DARREN BOVIE



Celebrating Natalie Bovie's game winning touchdown. DARREN BOVIE