

# From Baltimore, with love

by Zach Epstein

For the third consecutive year, the boys and girls varsity basketball teams traveled to Baltimore, Maryland to compete in the 29th Annual Joseph and Florence Weiner Basketball Tournament at Beth Tfiloh Dahan Community School (BT).

## Boys varsity

In hopes of seeking their first championship at the tournament, the Bulldogs started off hot. They won all five preliminary games and the semifinals, before losing the championship game to Hebrew Academy of Nassau County (HANC) 36-33.

On the first day, the Bulldogs defeated the Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto [CHAT] Tigers 75-41 and Mae Boyar High School of Jerusalem 51-32 for their first ever 2-0 start to the tournament. Senior guard Steve Levine had game highs with 19 points against CHAT and 13 against Boyar, leading the team in scoring for both games. Zach Epstein [11] and Noah Rubinstein [11] combined for 14 steals against CHAT.

The second day included two Northeastern schools on the Bulldog's schedule. First, Yavneh defeated HANC 41-38 with S. Levine's dagger, off-balance three-pointer with eight seconds remaining to put Yavneh up 39-35. Though HANC immediately responded with a three of their own, Rubinstein clinched the game with a pair of free throws. S. Levine led the way with 15 points, including four important three-pointers. Several hours later, Yavneh defeated the Joseph Kushner Hebrew Academy 37-30 behind 10 points from S. Levine and eight a piece from Rubinstein, Daniel Chernikov [11] and Grifon Levine [10]. Jonathan Ochstein [12] played all 56 minutes of the two games, shutting down the opposing team's best perimeter player in both.

Having clinched the top seed, a Friday morning match against BT exposed the Bulldogs to an intimidating home crowd filled with rowdy BT students. After defeating the Warriors 44-28, the Bulldogs defeated CHAT in the semifinals 51-27 behind Rubinstein and Chernikov's combined 24 points to set up Saturday night's championship rematch with HANC.

After a restful Shabbat, Yavneh and HANC took to the court with heavy fire.

Throughout the first half, the Bulldogs had difficulty scoring due to HANC's slow pace but still led 14-12 at halftime.

Yavneh went on a quick 7-0 run. 26-17 seemed like too much for HANC to handle.

With Chernikov out in foul trouble, Micah Romaner [10] hit two big buckets to feed the run, followed by an Ochstein steal and assist to S. Levine for another three. However, HANC responded with an 11-2 run, tying the game at 28. The two potential MVPs of the tournament then carried their respective teams for a possession, trading off huge buckets. S. Levine stole the ball at half court and finished while Yonatan Djourabchi [12] of HANC responded with a lay-up of his own. Down two, Epstein hoisted a three from the corner, but HANC swatted it out of bounds. HANC made a pair of free throws before Levine hit a desperation three, bringing the HANC's lead to a mere two points. With the crowd strongly on the Bulldogs' side, HANC hit two more free throws, eliminating the possibility of a last-minute comeback. A 34-15 rebounding disadvantage proved too much for Yavneh to bring back the hardware they hoped for.

S. Levine and Rubinstein earned 1st Team All Tournament honors and G.



The third quarter began in Yavneh's favor, giving off the tangible feeling that Yavneh might finally secure their first championship in Baltimore. Up 19-17,



Levine earned 2nd Team All Tournament honors.

## Girls varsity

Heading into the tournament with a 2-7 record, the Yavneh Lady Bulldogs looked to pull off the upset in Baltimore. They began their tournament against the defending champions, Ramaz. The Lady Bulldogs lost to Ramaz 43-12, with Anna Wernick [10] scoring 10 of their 12 points. Yavneh then played the home team, BT. The home crowd a decisive advantage as BT won 57-27, with the Lady Bulldogs shooting just 3-18 from the free throw line.

CHAT and Boyar awaited Yavneh the second day. Though Wernick's 18 points led all scorers in the CHAT game, 15 points from CHAT junior Kyra Pollack and well-balanced scoring propelled

CHAT to a 48-23 victory. The Lady Bulldogs got back on track in the afternoon defeating Boyar 41-29 behind Wernick's 20 points. Jacquie Mitzner [11] and Elior Cohen [10] also contributed a combined 17 points.

One win in four games presented an exciting situation Friday morning. With only one preliminary game remaining against HANC, the winning team would move on to the semifinals game, while the loser would be eliminated from playoff contention left eliminated.

As the teams exchanged leads throughout, neither team won a quarter by more than two points. Coming right down to the wire, HANC hit a big three pointer to tie the game's score. However, Mitzner immediately responded with her own triple from the right wing, perhaps the biggest shot for the Lady Bulldogs throughout the tournament. The Lady Bulldogs eked out a victory 32-31 as Wernick once again led the team with an all-important 18 points.

The Lady Bulldogs struggled against BT in the semifinals, losing 35-11 after a pivotal 18-1 second quarter in BT's favor\*. The lady bulldogs played Ramaz in the third place game on Saturday night, losing 40-24 and concluding their tournament after shooting 34% from the free throw line.

BT defeated CHAT in the championship game with BT junior Teva Vogelstein taking home tournament MVP.

Wernick earned 1st Team All Tournament honors, averaging 14 points per game. Mitzner earned 2nd Team All Tournament honors.

*\*The semifinal game ended in the middle of the fourth quarter when Sophia Achar [9] sustained a head injury. BT was credited with the win, and Achar is safely recovering back home in Dallas, Texas.*



Clockwise from top left: Senior co-Captain Steve Levine shoots a three; both varsity teams come together to smile for a picture; Amanda Steinborn [11] steals the ball from home team Beth Tfiloh. "Baltimore was a special tournament," Steve Levine said. "The basketball aspect of the tournament is amazing, however it's the people there that take it over the top." photos courtesy of Sylvie Levine, Nina Gartenhaus and Vivian Stienborn.



## CINQUE

REAL ESTATE

**KARI BERNSTEIN, BROKER**  
 4554 GLENWICK LANE SUITE 1104  
 DALLAS, TEXAS 75205  
 KARI@CINQUEREALTY.COM  
 WORK: (214) 528-3482  
 MOBILE: (214) 762-1540

 /CinqueRealEstate

(972) 233-1800



## DIAMOND & GOLD EXCHANGE

DiamondGoldExchange.com

Wholesale Diamonds to the Public,  
 GIA & EGL Certified, Diamond Cutters,  
 Diamond Importers & Manufacturers

7995 LBJ Freeway, Suite 114  
 Dallas, Texas 75251  
 info@diamondgoldexchange.com