



Nearly 30 high school players from Long Island participated in the sport's first Nike SPARQ combine Jan. 31 in Hauppauge, N.Y.

HIGH SCHOOL

COMBINE LIGHTS SPARQ IN ATHLETES

Nearly 30 participate in sport's first such evaluation event

C.R. Vaccaro

Hicksville's (N.Y.) Joe Leonard didn't know what to say. He smiled, thought to himself a second and blurted out the first thing that came to his mind: "It's different." Leonard and nearly 30 fellow lacrosse players from Long Island, both boys and girls, were guinea pigs in Nike's first SPARQ training combine for lacrosse.

Held at Fast-Edge Sports Performance in Hauppauge, N.Y., players took to a four-station training grid designed to measure speed, power, agility, reaction and quickness (SPARQ). "It's comparable to what the NFL combine has," said Kory Angelin, president of Fast-Edge. Through a 20-yard sprint, a vertical jump, a 5-10-10-5 shuttle run with a stick and a situational powerball throw, the athletes trained and will eventually get a scientific rating number based on their performances.

Most of the event organizers said this is the first of many, and they are all hoping it's the start of something big. Angelin wants that NFL combine feel to be implemented nationwide with multiple training stations and hundreds of athletes and college coaches in attendance. Some of Long Island's top young prospects, 26 from Suffolk County, were on hand for the training. Many hailed from successful high school programs, including eight from Ward Hillville, nine from St. Anthony's and one from Garden City.

Paired with lacrosserecruits.com, a new Web site to help high school lacrosse players and college coaches, the day's scores will be posted on the site through each player's profiles. "The numbers don't lie," said Matt Wheeler, president of lacrosserecruits.com. "We're on a cutting edge."

Most athletes said the shuttle run was the most difficult event of the afternoon. Using a stick to measure in-game situational turns, everyone was at least slightly winded after the run. "It's a lot different than what you think, especially with the stick in your hand," said Leonard, a sophomore attackman at Hicksville.

Still, physicality aside, the idea of being recognized by a college coach via training methods is quite an enticement. "It narrows the recruiting process," said Greg Danseglio, a sophomore at St. Anthony's. "It can show colleges who you are and what you can do."

D-I ALUMNI INFILTRATING ARIZONA HS

Interesting nugget from westsidelax.com: three former NCAA Division I men's lacrosse players have taken over as head boys' lacrosse coaches at premier Arizona high school programs.

Hunter Beau-Michael Pich, a former attackman at Maryland, was hired to replace **Derek Drogowski** at Brophy Prep. Former Syracuse defenseman **Dan Lannon** is the new head coach at Desert Vista. Former Duke and Syracuse midfielder **Nick Schmitz** is now coaching at Saguaro.

Play in the Arizona Youth Lacrosse League, which governs high school competition, gets underway this month.

BIGGEST FIELD EVER FOR KATIE SAMSON FESTIVAL

A Pennsylvania tradition, the ninth annual **Katie Samson Lacrosse Festival** will welcome its largest field ever, 26 teams, to six fields at Radnor (Pa.) High School. Thirteen boys' teams and 13 girls' will compete on April 25 to benefit spinal cord injury research. Squads from Connecticut, Delaware, Pennsylvania and New Jersey are scheduled to participate.

For more info, visit www.katiesamsonlaxtext.com.



STRONG LINEUP FOR HAVERFORD (PA.) INVITATIONAL

Haverford (Pa.) School will host an eight-team Nike- and STX-sponsored invitational event on April 18 to benefit prostate and colon cancer research.

Joining host Haverford: Darien (Conn.), Downingtown East (Pa.), Duxbury (Mass.), Garden City (N.Y.), Georgetown Prep (Md.), Malvern Prep (Pa.) and St. Paul's (Md.).

"It's eight great teams," Haverford coach **John Nostrant**, who is battling prostate cancer, told PhillyLacrosse.com. "It should be a great day."

Georgetown Prep coach **Kevin Giblin** is receiving treatment for colon cancer.

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Check out video footage from the Nike/SPARQ combine at the all-new laxmagazine.com.

