



RIVAL RELATIONSHIPS

BLAIR & PEDDIE SHARE CUP IN 115TH YEAR
OF COMPETITION & CONNECTION

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In the 115 years since the Buccaneers and the Falcons first faced off on the gridiron in 1903, beginning what is now the oldest prep school rivalry in New Jersey, the traditions associated with “Peddie Day” and “Blair Day” have become a deeply rooted and quintessential part of school life at both institutions. Ask most alums about their favorite boarding school experience, and they are likely to tell you a story about celebrating the Blair-Peddie rivalry and detail epic victories or heartbreaking losses on that first Saturday of November.

After more than a century of pranks, pep rallies and bonfires—and, of course, in more recent years, competition for the coveted Kelley-Potter Cup—it is perhaps not surprising that the special relationship between the two schools has led to lifelong connections among their graduates.

Here, we spotlight the close bonds that exist between Blair and Peddie alumni who have gone on to become friends, family, co-workers or employees of their respective archrival. These ties have been forged despite—or in some cases, because of—the

friendly spirit of competition that underscores the strong foundation of care, respect and sportsmanship that exists between the two schools.

The stories in this feature, co-created with the editors of the *Peddie Chronicle* in a weekslong collaboration that had us jointly conduct research and interviews, were inspired by a *Peddie Chronicle* class notes photo of longtime friends Don Mattucci, Blair class of 1945, and Clarence Kugler, Peddie class of 1963. The friendship between the south Florida residents who met at a dog park 14 years ago led us to search for other relationships between former Buccaneers and Falcons. And find them we did!

Although work on this piece began months before the early November athletic competitions ended in a tie (only the fourth one ever!), it seems fitting that this article be published during a year where Blair and Peddie share the Kelley-Potter Cup. Clearly, this is a rivalry defined not just by intense athletic competition but also by generosity of spirit and close connection.

RIVAL FRIENDSHIPS

B DON MATTUCCI '45

P CLARENCE KUGLER '63

HOW THEY MET

At a south Florida dog park. The military veterans bonded over their shared Blair-Peddie history, joking that their dogs, Mikey and Marley, intuitively knew something about the rivalry and “sensed hostility from the get-go.” After 14 years, their pets have learned to tolerate each other, their wives, Eleanor and Ali, have become friends and the foursome enjoys dinner together at the same Deerfield Beach restaurant every Wednesday evening.

ACTIVE ATHLETES

Both Don and Clarence lettered in football during high school, with Don captaining the Blair team in 1944, the year that the Blair-Peddie game was canceled due to a polio outbreak (Blair ended up playing Lawrenceville and won). Don’s other sports included swimming and tennis, while Clarence also wrestled and captained the lacrosse team. As he prepares to celebrate his 74th high school reunion this year, Don jokes that he was elected captain of the football team because his teammates “saw longevity in the position.”

Clarence reminisces about playing Blair during his senior year, when a Blair running back stepped on his face mask and, yet, Peddie was able “to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat”—an indelible memory about which Clarence tries to remind Don frequently.

Don: That’s one of the things Clarence and I kid about. He played with a face mask. We didn’t have face masks in my day. We had leather helmets and high-top shoes.

Clarence: And Don is *still* remarkably good looking.

LIFE PARALLELS

Clarence: We have a lot in common: Don served in the Navy in World War II, and I was in the Army, serving in both Vietnam and Iraq. We have those war stories in common, although Don’s are much more exciting than mine, and he even attended college [at Oberlin College in Ohio] in his Naval uniform!

The two men continue to meet up at the dog park, where they talk about Blair and Peddie memories and, of course, who takes home the Kelley-Potter Cup each year—although Don points out that whoever’s school most

recently lost is usually not the one to bring it up.

Clarence: Don is sort of my mentor for “old-old” age. I mean, a guy that will have two scotches for cocktails...that’s the way I want to age!

HOW THEY KEEP THE RIVALRY FUN

Clarence: The Blair-Peddie rivalry enhances our friendship, and it certainly helps to have a Blair man who you see three to four times a week to keep the sparks going. Despite the disparity in our ages, Don gives no quarter in kidding me, and I try to return his serve.

Don: We let Clarence run with the ball.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG BLAIR-PEDDIE ALUMS ON BECOMING FRIENDS

Don: Buy a dog!

Clarence: Don is one of the kindest guys I know, and that helps. You don’t need much of an interview process for a friend who is kind.



Don Mattucci (right), Blair class of 1945, with Clarence Kugler (left), Peddie class of 1963, on Veteran’s Day 2017.

B TODD SMITH '90

P PETE MCCLELLAN '90

HOW THEY MET

Although they wouldn't remember until they ran across each other again at Lafayette College, they first met on the soccer field at Blair, where they squared off and got into a heated exchange that sent them both to the bench with yellow cards. They instantly connected as college freshmen, when Pete saw Todd wearing a Blair sweatshirt at a party. They became fast friends, roomed together sophomore year and became fraternity brothers. Close to this day, Todd served in Pete's wedding party, and Pete's kids call Todd "Uncle Todd."

THEIR SIMILARITIES & DIFFERENCES

Todd: Pete saw this outgoing, energetic, charismatic guy from Blair, and he knew to stay close to him if he wanted to make friends at Lafayette. Seriously though, we both came from similar boarding school experiences where our academic and social foundations were formed, and we learned what it was like to get involved, work hard, play hard and take advantage of opportunities that came our way. I think both of us were well prepared for the rigors, demands and challenges of college life, and we can thank Blair and Peddie for that.

Pete: We obviously had our differences. For example, Todd was an excellent tennis player who looked like an intimidating football player,



Todd Smith (left), Blair class of 1990, with Pete McClellan (right), Peddie class of 1990, at their college graduation in 1994.

while I was a great Ping-Pong player who looked like an average Ping-Pong player. Still, the common experiences we enjoyed in boarding school helped to cement a relationship I cherish.

KEEPING THE RIVALRY FUN

Todd and Pete have traveled to Blairstown and Hightstown to watch the Bucs take on the Falcons since their college days, a trip that always involves good-natured ribbing and some fun side wagers. The fact that one of them has been working at their beloved alma maters since 1994 keeps their friendship alive and kicking: Todd was a faculty member at Blair for five years after graduating from Lafayette before moving to Montclair Kimberley Academy, where he now serves as athletic director, while Pete began his career at Peddie, where he now serves as assistant head of school for student life.

Todd: We have been lifelong friends, but I am not sure if that would have

happened if we didn't have that initial encounter from our Blair-Peddie soccer days. By the way, it still stings Pete to this day that he never beat my Blair teams. He may have beaten us in baseball, but that doesn't count because I didn't play. I was too busy going undefeated against Peddie in tennis, too.

Pete: Understanding that Todd is sensitive and perhaps even a fragile man, I rarely talk about the rivalry in terms of school records. In all seriousness, there is not a great deal of heckling. Even when we were in college and making the trip for a Blair/Peddie Day, I don't remember us giving each other gibes. Rather, we were enjoying each other's company, hanging out with folks from other schools, and getting a yearly reminder of our good fortune—our alma maters have a rivalry that is the envy of every other high school in the nation.

B CATERINA GLEIJESES '13

P MEGAN ZUCKERMAN '12

HOW THEY MET

At Nike Communications, a small New York City-based agency that specializes in marketing luxury and prestige brands, where Caterina is an account executive specializing in travel and real estate clients and Megan works as part of the fashion and lifestyle team.

The pair never met during their high school years, not even on Peddie/Blair Day, which they both cite as among their favorite boarding school memories (Caterina played tennis, and Megan was on the field hockey team). The two went on to attend college hundreds of miles apart, with Caterina graduating from the University of Chicago with degrees in sociology and international studies, and Megan majoring in communications and media studies at Fordham College at Lincoln Center in New York, not far from where they now work.

Today, their desks are adjacent to one another, and they discovered their Blair-Peddie connection while planning the company's holiday party together last year. Although their office has a sleek design that doesn't invite displaying school memorabilia, they both admit to having "many Blair and Peddie sweatshirts at home."



Caterina Gleijeses (*right*), Blair class of 2013, with Megan Zuckerman (*left*), Peddie class of 2012, work at desks adjacent to one another at a New York City public relations firm.

ADVICE FOR OTHERS WHO DISCOVER THEY ARE WORKING WITH AN ALUM FROM A RIVAL SCHOOL

Caterina: You can still be friends with an alum from a rival school. If anything, finding out we went to rival schools was a reason for us to become friends. The head of my team is also married to a Peddie alum, so my supervisor was really excited to learn that we were able to experience the friendly rivalry as students.

Megan: The rivalry is really good-natured and, while I know everyone is really passionate about their own

team, they are also really excited for the other team when they win.

CONNECTION & SHARED EXPERIENCE

Caterina: It doesn't come up often at work, but people think it is cute that we went to rival schools and ended up at the same firm. We have a connection in the office that we don't share with anyone else because, even though we didn't know each other at the time, we have so many shared experiences. It bonds us together and gives us another reason to be friends.



Sovann Stark (left) and Rebecca Seman (right), who graduated from Blair and Peddie in 2014, at their North Brunswick townhouse last fall.

B SOVANN STARK '14

P REBECCA SEMAN '14

HOW THEY MET

At Hilltop Country Day School in Sparta, New Jersey, where they attended elementary and middle school together. Best friends since first grade, Rebecca is from Blairstown and Sovann is from Branchville, so even when they decided to attend separate New Jersey high schools, they saw each other regularly. It helped that they both played the same fall sport (tennis), even though they found it “weird” to play on opposing teams after so many years of being on the same side.

The duo reunited after high school as fellow Rutgers students and became roommates last fall in North Brunswick.

Rebecca, a recent Rutgers graduate, is working at a law firm in Princeton while Sovann finishes her final year of college.

FRIENDS WHO BECOME FAMILY

Sovann: We were both really sad that we weren’t going to be together, but it was also time for us to separate because we were inseparable...But we knew we would still see each other since Rebecca lived in Blairstown and because of the Blair-Peddie rivalry. What I always cherished about our friendship is that we wouldn’t see each other for months, but we could pick up where we left off.

Rebecca: And we both played tennis, so we knew we would see each other at tennis matches. I would come over to the Blair side for a bit during Blair Day. You have to laugh because it is all just fun and games. This isn’t a mean rivalry; it is good-natured. At the end of the day, we care a lot about the other school.

Sovann: It is kind of hard to explain to someone who didn’t go to boarding school, but Blair and Peddie students are friends as much as rivals, and that’s been true for generations.

KEEPING SCORE

Sovann’s senior year was the last time the Bucs took home the Kelley-Potter Cup, after a winning streak that made Rebecca’s class the only one at Peddie that never won a Blair Day.

KEEPING THE RIVALRY FUN

Sovann: We always respected our friendship and knew that any competitiveness wasn’t personal. People would sometimes comment, “Oh, you know someone from Peddie?” But it was obviously friendly and funny.

Rebecca: People would say, “Not only are you from Blairstown, but your best friend goes to Blair. Can we trust you?”

Sovann: We kept it fun and spirited, made jokes, but also knew that, at the end of the day, our friendship was going to triumph.

B JENNA FAUST '16

P KATIE CLARK '16

HOW THEY MET

At the airport on their way to a pre-orientation weekend at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee, the summer before freshman year.

Jenna: We were both sitting, waiting for a heavy rain to stop, and I noticed she looked about my age, so I figured I would walk over and ask if she was going to Rhodes as well. We got to talking and found out we are both from New Jersey and went to schools that took their rivalry very seriously.

When Jenna asked what school Katie went to, her mouth dropped nearly to the floor when she said Peddie.

Katie: We were instantly connected through our similar experiences at boarding school. I went from being nervous and worried about getting to know my future classmates to being excited and confident that Jenna and I would be friends (and, who knew, eventually sorority sisters!). A few hours later, we even shared our cab to campus from the airport!

Jenna: What are the chances that we are on this same flight, the only two in this airport and going to the same college? We were inseparable the rest of that weekend and have made a point to stay connected on campus since.

FROM COLLEGE FRIENDS TO SORORITY SISTERS

Now juniors at Rhodes, the duo pledged the same sorority (Kappa Delta) while they pursued different



Jenna Faust (left) and Katie Clark (right), who graduated from Blair and Peddie in 2016, pose together at a Kappa Delta gathering at Rhodes College.

interests—Jenna singing in the choir, working on behalf of their sorority and volunteering in Memphis, while Katie excels at all things sports-related (she walked on to the lacrosse team), actively supports RUF (Rhodes College's Christian ministry), and works as a fellow for the Memphis Center for the Arts.

Although they no longer see each other regularly because Katie is spending her junior year in Copenhagen, both Jenna and Katie appreciate how their high school rivalry has brought them together. And, in further proof of the fact the world is incredibly small, during her time in Denmark, Katie has befriended **Tiffany Sharma '16**, another former Buc who sang with Jenna at Blair.

Jenna: On bid day, we were so thrilled to see each other at the same sorority house; I think I jumped into Katie's arms a little bit because I was so excited that we went from being

at rival schools to being in the same sisterhood! I don't think a relationship like Peddie and Blair's is something many students from other places have ever seen before. When we tell our sisters about it, we feel even closer because it helps us process how special and rare it really is.

ADVICE FOR OTHERS ON TRANSFORMING RIVALRY TO FRIENDSHIP

Jenna: You never know, your high school's rivalry could help you find your best friend!

Katie: Remember that friendly rivalry is healthy, and our connection through Peddie and Blair has really allowed us to get to know each other through memories and talking about Peddie and Blair's similar rituals related to the rivalry. It was a connecting point for me and Jenna, and for that, I am so thankful!

B LUKE CORRADO '18

P ELLEN TIMKO '18

HOW THEY MET

At a New Hampshire summer camp when they were 9 years old. They spent many summers together before discovering one would end up at Blair and the other at Peddie.

With a long history of competing against each other and arguing about the Buccaneer-Falcon rivalry, Luke calls going 0-4 against Peddie during his high school years "tough." They've continued their spirited sparring as they finish their freshman year (Luke at Fordham University in New York City and Ellen at Villanova University in Pennsylvania).

ADVICE FOR OTHERS WHOSE FRIENDS ATTEND BLAIR/PEDDIE

Luke: Make new friends; it's not worth it. I'm kidding...It's a unique connection that not many people are fortunate enough to have. Just be prepared to lose a friend during the first week of November.

Ellen: Of course, we had heated arguments over whether it was "Peddie Day" or "Blair Day," but it was really cool how we bonded so quickly over our schools' strong history rather than allow ourselves to be divided by the rivalry.



Luke Corrado (left) and Ellen Timko (right) at Peddie Day in 2016, two years before they graduated.

KEEPING THE RIVALRY FUN

On Peddie/Blair Day, the duo would watch each other's soccer games, cheering loudly while still rooting for their own teams (sometimes sporting the other school's T-shirts).

They also sometimes saw each other for spring sports or student

council visits, and Ellen remembers fondly one trip to Blairstown during sophomore year for the Mid-Atlantic Prep League (MAPL) music festival, "a sweet, unexpected visit" during which she and Luke got to spend time together.

RIVAL FAMILY MEMBERS

B SUSAN LONG P'13 '16 '20

P BILLY LONG '84

HOW THEY MET

As undergraduates at Washington College in Maryland in 1988. A native of Andover, New Jersey, Billy grew up not far from Blair, although he chose to attend Peddie because his father worked for [former Peddie Board of Trustees Chair] Finn Caspersen and pushed him to check the school out. Susan had attended boarding school at Foxcroft in Virginia, and the two met through Susan's high school roommate during her junior year in college. Susan now serves as Blair's assistant director of advancement for parent relations.

SWITCHING SIDES

Although the Long family has lived a few miles from Blair's campus for 20-plus years, they used to cheer on the Falcons before Susan began working at Blair more than a decade ago. In recent years, Susan and their sons (**Conner '13**, **Wyatt '16** and **Garrett '20**, all of whom are Bucs) have since changed their loyalties and are staunchly in the Blair bleachers come early November. And while Billy, of course, supports his very athletic sons, he has been known to



Blair's Assistant Director of Advancement for Parent Relations Susan Long (left) with her husband, Billy (right), Peddie class of 1984.

wear his Peddie T-shirt under his gear on Peddie/Blair Day.

Susan: It is hard not to get caught up in the excitement. I remember going to Blair Day (which I now call Peddie Day!) when my oldest, Conner [now 24], was in sixth grade. We parked on the front hill and walked across campus, and as he took in all of the excitement, he said, "I wish I could go to school here." Blair's beautiful campus had something to do with that, of course, but the rivalry is a big part of the boarding school experience.

A FALCON IN A BLAIR FAMILY

Billy: It has gotten brought up a lot over the years and there has been a lot of good-natured ribbing, but it is all in good fun. I get a lot of heat from my friends on Alumni Day. They ask, "How could you do this to us?" I tell them we live two-and-a-half miles away, and my wife works there! At my 20th reunion, everyone was like, "Are you serious?" But I will say that my Peddie clothes are

used every year in Blair's Peddie Day Eve pep rally.

Susan: When people find out he went to Peddie, it is not quickly or easily forgotten. Regardless of whether we are in Blairstown or Hightstown, Billy bops into both hospitality tents and embraces the best of both worlds.

WHY THE RIVALRY IS SO SPECIAL

Susan: We have such a long history and, although we are the fiercest of competitors, at the end of the day, regardless of who won or lost, we all come together. It has always been a positive and fun rivalry. I think this comes from the top down, and the culture is carried down over the years. As much as we want to win, we are all friends.

Billy: The relationship between our two schools is fantastic. The rivalry is intense, but there is something endearing about it. Deep down, the schools are connected and care for each other.



Blair's Chaplain and chair of the religion and philosophy department Lisa Durkee is a cousin of the late F. Edward Potter Jr., Peddie's beloved 13th headmaster.



B LISA DURKEE

P F. EDWARD POTTER JR.

CAREER INSPIRATION

Blair's chaplain and chair of the religion and philosophy department, the Rev. Lisa Durkee, is the first cousin of Peddie's beloved 13th headmaster, the late F. Edward Potter Jr. (1943-1988). Although there was a large age gap—"Eddie," as she called him, was 22 years older—they were close, and Lisa fondly recalls spending summers with him in Vinalhaven, an island off the coast of Maine, a place she saw him more than any other.

In fact, Mr. Potter, who became Peddie's headmaster when he was in his mid-30s and died of a sudden heart attack at the age of 45, was the first person to suggest to Lisa that she pursue a career as a triple-threat (teacher, coach and housemaster)

at a boarding school. Then an undergraduate at Wellesley College, she says his rationale for why she'd excel at the job are still the reasons she loves boarding school life today: connecting with adolescents and "meeting them where they are."

Lisa: When I interviewed at Blair in 2017, I thought of Ed the whole time. I called his brother, John, and said, "You'll never guess where I had an interview." Ed was so dynamic—larger than life. He loved people, and his day-to-day joy was so authentic and infectious. To say he was a people person is a gross understatement. He was always beaming. I can remember the last time I saw him at Vinalhaven and the smile on his face.

EDUCATOR & CHAPLAIN

Having spent years as an independent school teacher in New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts, Ms. Durkee attended seminary, earned a master's degree in divinity from the

United Church of Christ and served in churches for a decade before returning to boarding school in 2017. At Blair, she develops and teaches religion and philosophy courses, facilitates weekly Vespers and Chapel, coaches girls' JV lacrosse and serves dorm duty in Mason Hall.

Lisa: Having watched Ed's model of being an administrator, I used to think that would be my path as well. But that was *his* gift: to know all of the facets of how things run and be hands-on without getting your fingers in the pie. People knew he cared about what they were doing, but he didn't meddle. I am grateful for the gifts I have grown into, and Ed and his brother were two strong role models of my generation who shaped who I became as an adult and educator.

BLAIR & PEDDIE CONNECTIONS

When Lisa was young, she only ever heard about Blair in context of the school being Peddie's archival. Now, as a faculty member concluding her second year as a Buc, she has had fun discovering family connections and learning more about Ed's legacy at Peddie and in the independent school world at large.

Lisa: Going to Peddie Day last year made me wistful, and I asked a lot of people I met there, "Did you know him?" Our family is filled with talkers and storytellers who are engaged with the world. It is no surprise that Ed became a headmaster who did that...as evidenced by the fact he even met the Queen of England during his time as Peddie's headmaster...I am two degrees of separation from the Queen!

B JASON NEWMAN '17

P DANIEL NEWMAN '17

L SCOTT NEWMAN '17

TRIPLETS AT SEPARATE SCHOOLS

Having lost their mother in sixth grade, the Newman brothers decided to attend three different New Jersey private high schools with the goal of establishing their individuality and charting their own course to college: Jason chose Blair and went on to Claremont McKenna College in California; Daniel opted for Peddie and enrolled at Brown University; and Scott went from The Lawrenceville School to Princeton University.

Jason: We're all actually very different people. You can tell by looking at us, too. We've got very different interests... As great as it is being Daniel's brother and Scott's brother, I didn't want that to be the basis of my reputation, and none of us really did. At Blair, people knew me as Jason, the guy who likes to ski and enjoys hanging out with friends. It was great to have that individual experience.

WHY BLAIR/PEDDIE

Jason: I felt immediately Blair was a place I could spend four years. Everyone was so friendly, smiling and happy. I really wanted to go to a school with a community of people who wanted to be there, who wanted to engage with each other. And that's exactly what I got out of Blair. I got a family.

Daniel: I really liked the relaxed environment [of Peddie]. Also, it

was close to New York and close to home...I just felt at home when I first visited campus.

A FAMILY EXPERIENCE

The brothers took a very lighthearted view of the Blair-Peddie rivalry, cheering each other on during the Peddie/Blair Day contests and enjoying the opportunity to be together. Their dad, Jerrold, stayed neutral, avoiding apparel from either school, and always rooting for his son's respective teams (football for Daniel and soccer for Jason) to prevail.

Jason: As much as I wanted Blair to win, I was rooting for Daniel...None of my friends were ever mean-spirited that I had a brother going to Peddie. They actually thought it was pretty cool. They said the Newmans are going to take over the Mid-Atlantic Prep League, since we represented three of the six schools. Peddie won the Cup all three years Daniel was there [after having transferred from St. Andrew's School in Delaware], and I was happy for him.

Daniel: I just enjoyed seeing my brother and my dad that day. And I thought it was cool to have a family experience.

Jason: It's neat that we'll always have that rivalry as part of our story. In 50 years when we are 70, we'll drive up together to Peddie or Blair Day and just enjoy the good old times and see what has changed since. I think this rivalry will always be a part of us.

TWO COMMENCEMENTS, ONE DAD

With two of his three sons graduating on the same Sunday in 2017, the boys joked with their dad that he



The Newman brothers all graduated in 2017 from different high schools. *From left to right:* Daniel (who went to Peddie), Scott (who attended Lawrenceville) and Jason (who went to Blair).

would have to pick his favorite son. But Jerrold had a different plan: He got the schools to agree to have Scott walk first at Lawrenceville and Daniel to walk last at Peddie so he could attend both ceremonies (Jason had graduated from Blair the preceding Thursday and attended Daniel's commencement, while their grandmother attended Scott's). Daniel had already taken off school to attend Jason's Blair graduation.

Daniel: They had a parking spot reserved for Dad right in front of Annenberg Hall by the graduation tent, so he could pull into the parking spot quickly, and he sprinted from there. You just saw this parent breathing heavily and fully sweating in his suit at graduation.

Jason: We were there, ready to take pictures in case Dad didn't make it, but he ended up arriving on time. It all worked out. ■

RIVAL EMPLOYEES

BLAIR ALUMS WORKING AT PEDDIE:



B MOLLY DUNNE '93
director of admission at Peddie

B ANDREW MARVIN '12
manager of multimedia strategy &
production at Peddie

PEDDIE ALUMS WORKING AT BLAIR:



P GWYNETH CONNELL '96
dean of teaching & learning at Blair



P SARAH NEWBURY '11
math teacher at Blair



P BRAD STRAUSS '91
athletic trainer at Blair