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THE WEEK IN SPORTS

Sports Section
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WON 8 WCT, 1 UCT, 1 SECTION TITLE; HAD 281-73 RECORD

Dave Blackman Ends Raider Net Coaching Career a Winner

By DAVID B. CORBIN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School boys' tennis Head Coach Dave Blackman coached his last match on May 22. Although it was a 4-1 loss to A. L. Johnson, Blackman ended his 16-year tennis-coaching career a winner.

Realizing it was his last match, Blackman said, "I realized it a little

bit then but it may hit me even more on Spring Awards Night. It will probably sink in even more next March when I'm not coaching."

As head coach, Blackman guided the Raiders to eight Watchung Conference National Division titles, a Union County Tournament Championship in 1991 and a North Jersey Section 2 Group 3 Sectional Championship in 1996. In 1992, he was the

UCT Coach of the Year (voted by coaches), in 1996, he was named *Courier News* Coach of the Year, and in 2002, he was voted UCT Coach of the Year (voted by coaches). Blackman's career record was an amazing 281-73.

Blackman was especially proud of his UCT title. "Up until that year only Pingry - when the school was in Elizabeth - and Westfield had won the tournament," he said.

As to his sectional title, Blackman pointed out, "It was the only time in the history of our school that we won. It was really nice to see that banner go up in our gym."

Blackman began his tennis-coaching career in a rather peculiar way. "Dr. (George) Esposito, who was the only tennis coach Scotch Plains had ever had, retired. Gene Schiller was the Athletic Director at the time and asked a friend of mine, who was a tennis player, if he wanted to coach. My friend said, 'I know a guy in the district who would be perfect for the job'. Gene called me up to his office and, you know, he's a tough guy to say no to. He got me to commit to it and it was one of the best decisions I ever made."

Reminiscing, Blackman recalled Arjun Viswanathan who competed at first singles for the Raiders in 1994 and 1995. Viswanathan finished with a 46-2 record, was a two-time UCT champion, twice a *Courier News* Athlete of the Year, twice a semifinalist in the state tournament and

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David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
GOING OUT A WINNER...Raider boys' tennis Head Coach Dave Blackman has retired after 16 years. Blackman amassed a 181-73 record, eight Watchung Conference titles, one Union County title and one sectional title.

WILLIAMS TAKES 3 1STS, UC'S MARSHALL WINS 1600

Raider Trackmen Tie for 2nd In Group 3 Championships

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School boys finished in a tie for second place with Toms River South in Group 3 at the NJSIAA Group Track and Field Championships in Egg Harbor on June 1 and 2. The Raider girls finished in a five-way tie for 13th with eight points, the Westfield boys and girls each had six points in Group 4, the Governor Livingston boys and girls each had 12 points in Group 2, and Union Catholic placed 11th in Parochial B with 16 points.

Raider senior Ray Williams was the star of the weekend, collecting 38 team points, with three firsts - 100, 200, 400 meters - and a second - long jump. Should Williams had won all four of his events, he would have been just the third boy in state history to do so.

The Raider boys were in fourth place after Friday's events with 22 points. Willingboro, the eventual winner, was holding onto first with 33 points, followed by Toms River South at 28 and Camden at 24. Williams contributed 20 points by winning the 100 meters in a time of 10.62 and the 400 meters with a time of 47.38. Although not pleased, his 400-meter time was the fastest of all the groups on that day. Senior Bob Wallden earned two team points by crossing fifth in the 3,200 meters at 9:44.94.

On Saturday, Williams crossed the

line in 21.38 to win the 200 and had a leap of 21'10" to take second in the long jump. Junior Chris Feighner earned eight team points by taking second in the shot put with a season's best shove of 56'4.25".

The Raider girls were in a five-way tie for eighth with eight points after the first day. Senior Jill Kosciielecki gathered those points by placing second in the 400 hurdles with a SP-F High School record time



David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
A FORCE TO RECKON WITH...Raider Ray Williams has planned to compete in the 200 and 400 meters at the Meet of Champions (MOC). Williams won the 400 meters at the MOC last spring.

SHAUB JARS 4 HITS; SEMPLE, 3 RBI

St. Joseph Men Stagger St. Lou Softballers, 10-3

By FRED LECOMTE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

St. Joe's opened up on St. Louis with a run in the first inning, three runs in the third and six more in the fifth to claim a 10-3 victory in St. Bart's Softball League action on the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School softball field on May 29. St. Louis got offensive success with two runs in the third and one run in the fourth. "Joe Man" Larry Shaub led the offensive clout, banging out a single, two doubles and a triple while scoring three runs.

In the first, St. Joe's Bill Mirto walked. Shaub bashed a single to center and Ed Belford grounded to second as Mirto scored. In the top of the third, St. Louis seized a 2-1 lead. Gary Cardinale chopped a single past short and Emmett O'Hara followed with a walk. James Sheehan lashed an RBI single and Joe Romash hacked an RBI sacrifice.

The Joe boys responded in the bottom of the controversial third inning to take a 4-2 lead. Neal Le Strange yanked a single to left, Mirto dropped a bloop single to center and Shaub battered a two-run triple to right. Harry Semple then cracked an RBI double to center. A questionable

double play as a run scored led to a protest by St. Joe's. Not to be outsmarted, St. Louis also protested. Conclusion: The run scored. Then when the frenzy appeared to have calmed down, St. Louis issued another strong protest, this time directed at St. Joe's first baseman. "Wearing a pair of black gloves playing first is very illegal according to the rules," hollered St. Lou pitcher Keith Gibbons.

St. Louis regrouped and added a run in the fourth. Mike Camfield and Paul Rafael both singled and Marty Marks tapped an RBI single.

St. Joe's broke it open with five runs in the fifth. Robert Commo bopped a single, Dean Talcott and Le Strange walked to load the bases. Commo then scored on a sacrifice, Shaub hammered an RBI double and Semple drilled a two-run double. Randy Grizzard then stepped up and yanked an RBI single.

Although Gibbons did not have one of his better outings, he has a reputation of luring batters into wanting to cream the ball, but unsuccessfully.

"His pitches were dropping short, so you got to turn on them when they

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David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
HAVING A VERY TENACIOUS DEFENSE...The Blue Devil defense stuck like glue to the "Big Blue" of Pingry during the second round of the NJSIAA boys' lacrosse playoffs in Westfield on May 29. The Blue Devils advanced to the quarterfinals by defeating Pingry, 16-5.

SCHULTZ ZAPS 4 GOALS, 4 ASSTS; DEBROSSY, 3 & 3

Blue Devil Laxmen Pounce Pingry 'Big Blue' Boys, 16-5

By DAVID B. CORBIN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Leaving nothing to chance, the sixth-ranked Westfield High School boys lacrosse team excelled in every aspect of the game and soundly defeated the Pingry "Big Blue", 16-5, in the second round of the NJSIAA Tournament in Westfield on May 29. Junior Billy Schultz faded the "Big Blue" by firing in four goals and abetting with four assists while senior Mike Debrossy netted three goals and three assists.

Earlier in the season, the Blue Devils defeated Pingry but not nearly as easily, and "Big Blue" had been riding high as they knocked off Ridge in the Somerset County Tournament on May 22 and Pope John on May 23 then pulled an upset over West Essex

on May 25 in the first round of the NJSIAA Tournament.

Working the ball effectively, the 14-4 Blue Devils' offense eventually and consistently found a gap inside where either Debrossy, Schultz, senior Tim Mansfield - two goals and an assist - or sophomore Taylor Hogarth - two goals and an assist - would penetrate and score.

However, nearly the entire offensive squad also got into the act. Senior Greg Elliott and juniors Marc Schott and Dan Kane each scored a goal and had an assist. Senior Dave Santoriello and sophomore Chris MacDonald each had a goal and junior Andrew Tucker contributed an assist.

"Against a zone, you've got to be patient," Blue Devil Head Coach

Gerry Benaquista pointed out. "You've got to be able to move the ball. We did move the ball well and we had our guys, who could shoot, waiting for the shot. Everything we practiced, we did today."

From the beginning, the Blue Devils were far more aggressive than their opponents and took a 4-0 lead before Pingry's Dave Lawrence scored just before the end of the first quarter. By halftime, Westfield commanded an 8-1, lead. However, the Blue Devils' ability to out-total Pingry in faceoffs, 59-43, and ground balls, 14-6, determined the flow of the game.

"We dominated faceoffs. We won ground balls and those are the two things that keep you in the game and make you win games," said

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MACDONALD EXCELLED ON THE MOUND, AT PLATE

Blue Devil Girls Experience Bittersweet Softball Season

By DAVID B. CORBIN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Blazes of glory flashed throughout the season for the Westfield High School softball team. The Blue Devils received the top seeds for the Union County tournament and the North Jersey, Section 2, Group 4 tournament and finished with a fine 19-5 record.

Unfortunately, the Blue Devils' fine season was bittersweet when they were edged in the county semifinals and were ousted in the first round of the sectionals. Additionally, Head Coach Maggie McFadden will retire after 14 strong years at the helm.

McFadden's varsity coaching record was 237-104, a fantastic .695 winning percentage. During her career, the Blue Devils won three Watchung Conference championships, two Union County championships and one North Jersey, Section 2, Group 4, state championship.

McFadden began her coaching career at Westfield spearheading the junior varsity team from 1985 to 1987. During that time, her teams won 51 games and lost just 12. In 1988, she became Carol Donner's assistant coach before taking the varsity job in 1989.

This season, the Blue Devils got plenty of help from senior Caitlin MacDonald who was proficient on the mound and became one of central Jersey's toughest pitchers. In 148 innings this season, MacDonald fanned 217 batters, permitted 77 hits

and 50 walks, held opposing batters to a meager .145 average and had a 1.32 ERA (earned run average). In her four-years of varsity pitching, she had a 35-20 record and struck out 426 batters while yielding just 133 walks in 367 innings.

MacDonald was also wicked with the "metal stick" this season. She led the team with a .500 batting average (37-for-74) and was the toughest Blue Devil starter to sit down with just four strikeouts. She also led in runs

scored with 31, doubles with seven, triples with four, walks with 18 and stolen bases with 13, and also had 16 RBI. She finished her varsity career with a .383 average, crossed the plate 68 times and swiped 31 bases.

Senior catcher Tara Dowling was a terror at the plate finishing with a .403 average (29-for-72). She was second in runs scored with 25 and second in RBI with 20. In her three varsity seasons, Dowling finished

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David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
RETIRING AFTER 14 YEARS...Blue Devil Head Coach Maggie McFadden, between two children, is presented a cake on her birthday in 1999. McFadden accumulated a 237-104 record, three Watchung Conference titles, two Union County titles and one sectional title in her 14 seasons.

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