

## Blue Devil Swim Boys' Gamble Results In Wild Public 'A' Final

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team point in the overall scheme.

"We split our eight guys, and used Chabs (Chabanov) in this rather than the backstroke. It worked and we went 1-2. So it was one extra point and, in a meet like that one, every single point counts," Johnson pointed out.

Blue Devil P.J. Harley had an amazing day and won the 200-free in a PB 1:53.24. He then got touched out in the 500-free by Panther John Benigno in 4:59.49, for another PB. He also swam a PB 23.3 in the 200-free relay and about 10 minutes later went 52+ for a PB in the 400-free relay.

Panther coach Sean Foley did not enter any of his top swimmers in the butterfly, perhaps hoping that Blue Devil Pat Daurio would not be used and that his guys would go 1-2-3. Daurio won the event in 54.8 and freshman Matt Blutfield dropped two seconds to a PB 59.35 to take second.

Coach Foley put one of his guns, Josh Gonzalez, in the 100-breast-stroke and it paid off when he barely touched out Blue Devil sophomore Phil Anton who "swam like a madman" to finish in a PB 1:07.

Entering the final relay, the 400-free, the Blue Devils needed to have 82 points but only had 81.

"We knew if it went to powerpoints that Bridgewater would probably take it, so we needed to go 2-3 in the final relay to get to 87. If we just took second, and they went 1-3, then it'd be 85-85 and the power points tiebreaker would most likely go to them," explained Johnson. "So we split the last relay. They have one of the fastest relays in the state, about 12 seconds faster than our fastest time, so they took one of their kids, John Benigno, off the "A" and put him on the "B" so they'd have a better chance for the third. And that worked for them."

According to Johnson, "The guy who runs the Lincoln School Pool, Tom Wojslawowicz, has been there for 30 years. He said it was the best, wildest and loudest meet he'd ever seen. Since our girls swam Bridgewater in the opening meet, both teams stayed and that made it even doubly, or triply, loud. It was mad fun! The guys swam out of their minds. The Bridgewater kids all commented later on how great we had swum. We gave it everything we had, and maybe even a little extra. When you're the three-time defending champions, there's always a bit of pressure. But our kids like that. They like being everybody's target. It makes them work harder and they handle it well."

Although they will miss their three seniors, Chabanov, Jeff Dresely and Jamie Hanas, the Blue Devils will have a solid senior group next year, led by Daurio, Brandon Cuba, Kyle Murray, Dan McGrory, Mike Burns, Evan Vanarelli, Ben Holt and Tom Fringer. Juniors Luke Baran, Harley and Anton and underclassmen Brian Corea, Brian Lee, Colin Sullivan and Rob Whitehead all will make big waves.

"They bring different things to the table, but the combination is perfect," Johnson said of his seniors. "They're all hard workers, Dan was a true lane leader and team leader. Jeff and Jamie were as inspirational as it gets. Just great kids! But anybody who thinks Westfield is done hasn't done his homework. Our freshmen this year improved more from start to finish probably than any other group I've coached. Blut(field) and Matt Green, who had maybe the best night of any of our kids against Bridgewater (PB 1:55 in 200, 53 in 100 and 52.9 split in 100-relay), were good all year. And Jon Holt had some big swims at the end."

There are several talented eighth graders, Chris DeLaFuenta, Matt Morgan and Max Blum, who will be an asset next year and, "I've heard there's maybe five or six others who can step right in and help us get state title No. 21," said Johnson. "This was an amazingly enjoyable year. We had a run of three years where we were loaded with talent, bubbling over with talent. This year was completely different. We had to work harder than ever before, and the kids did that. If you came to a WHS practice, you'd think you were at a top-notch USS practice. Not with the speed of the swimmers, but with the effort. They worked hard for what they got. I've never been happier for a group of guys."

### SPF Youth Qualify For NJ Mat Tourney

Three Scotch Plains-Fanwood youth wrestlers qualified for the NJ Wrestling Federation 2005 State Tournament to be held March 19 at Union High School.

Brain Lapham took third place in the 65-lb. Bantam Division and Sean Cannon took first in the 90 lb. Junior Division at the North Burlington wrestling tournament to qualify. Tyler Kovacs took third place in the 70-lb. Bantam Division at the North Hunterdon tournament to qualify.



Karen Clarkson for The Westfield Leader and The Times  
CO-CHAMPIONS...The Blue Devil icemen gained a share of the Van Cott Central Conference White Division title by skating to a 2-2, overtime tie with top-seeded Verona.

## Blue Devil Icemen Share Cent. Conference Crown

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Westfield failing to score on a breakaway. Senior Captain Ed Kramkowski stole the puck from a Summit player inside the Westfield zone and brought the puck up all the way by himself scoring his first goal of the year and earning Westfield a berth in the championship game.

In the finals, Westfield faced Verona whom they tied once and lost to once in the regular season. Verona controlled the first period but due to superb

goaltending by freshman Eric Zagorski, Verona only scored once to take a 1-0 lead. The Blue Devils played much better in the second period and it appeared they would enter the third period down one goal until Verona scored with four seconds left. Westfield, determined to win its first championship in the 11-year history of the program, scored two goals to tie the game. Freshman Craig Esposito netted the first goal and senior Greg Spier fired in the tying goal to send the game to overtime.

In overtime, both goalies emerged as heroes. Zagorski made 13 saves in the extra period to bring his total to 49 and the Verona goalie made nine saves. "Winning this cup was one of our goals at the beginning of the year. We're upset because we have to share it with Verona but better to get a piece of the cup than none at all," said Davis. "However, they were the top team in our division and there is no shame in tying them. Winning a championship is a good way for the seniors to go out and it gives the underclassman the foundations to build on our success from this year."

"It was a great game with end to end action. We came out slowly letting our nerves get to us in the first period but we came back on fire in the third period with a great line change putting Craig Esposito on a line with Davis and myself," said Spier. "He gave us the energy that we needed by scoring our first goal. Shortly after, I scored the tying goal, it was an awesome feeling and I was really pumped that we had come back to tie it. Our freshman goalie really made a statement and was our savior that day."

Also, during the week, it was announced that Westfield received the No. 33 seed to face River Dell in their first state tournament since 1999.

### WF's DeCampo Has Strong Mat Season

ALLENTOWN, PA. - Freshman Joe DeCampo of Westfield, wrestling mostly in the 141-lb class, finished with a 13-12 record for the Muhlenberg College wrestling team. He had three pins and one major decision. DeCampo also had 38 takedowns, fifth best on the team.

"Joe was probably in the toughest weight class all year," said Muhlenberg head coach Tom Schleicher. "I'm looking for great things from him in the future."

Muhlenberg finished 8-10 overall, and 4-3 in the Centennial Conference.

### SPF Midgets Place High in Mat Tourney

On February 27 the Central Jersey Midget Wrestling League 2005 JV tournament was held at Kenilworth High School. The following wrestlers from the Scotch-Plains Fanwood wrestling team placed.

Harley Sachs	46 lbs	fifth
Dominic Natale	61 lbs	first
Brian Lapham	64 lbs	first
Tyler Kovacs	66 lbs	first
Matthew Ridge	68 lbs	third
Michael Steinified	82 lbs	first
Robert Sidebottom	85 lbs	first

## WF's Oria Alexander Receives Medals in Diving Competition

WESTFIELD - Oria Alexander received medals in both the three-meter and one-meter diving competition at the New Canaan Invitational in New Canaan, Connecticut on February 12-13. Oria, a 10-year-old fourth grader at Benjamin Franklin Elementary School, dives in the Junior Olympic competition for the diving team, Lords of The Boards.

Lords of The Boards is based out of Bridgewater and was one of 25 teams from five states invited to the invitational, Whirlwind Winter Weekend, hosted by the New Canaan Whirlwind diving team. Oria placed fourth on the three meter with her personal-best score of 174.40. She placed fifth on one meter with a score of 135.90. These meets involve the finest divers on the east coast. Oria com-

petes in the 10/11-year-old category and, with her scores, has already qualified for National competition. Her next meet is a regional meet in Akron, Ohio on April 2-3.

### Male Players Sought For Baseball League

The Men's Adult Baseball League of New Jersey is currently forming and admitting new teams for the spring season. Individual players (ages 18 and up) or teams are welcome.

A 20-game season with an All-Star Game in a pro baseball stadium is offered. For more information, please call Dave at (973) 699-8336 or e-mail dimicallef@hotmail.com or visit www.amateurbaseballnj.com



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