



David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
LETTER OF INTENT...Blue Devil Chris Mattes signs a letter of intent to play lacrosse at Rutgers University. Pictured, left to right, behind Chris are: his parents Sue and Ray Mattes, Blue Devil boys lacrosse Assistant Coach Marc Silbergeld and Athletic Trainer Sandy Mamary.

Blue Devils Complete X-C Season Undefeated

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

Injuries plagued this year's Westfield High School girls cross-country team but the injuries did not stop the Blue Devils from finishing the regular season with another undefeated, 9-0 record, including a victory over rival Scotch Plains-Fanwood. As a result, the team's total record from 1980-2006 has risen to 201-70.

Despite a second place finish in both the Watchung Conference and State Sectional meets, the varsity Blue Devils had a solid performance for the year.

"For a good part of the season, we were constantly moving people in and out due to injuries," commented Blue Devil Head Coach Thom Hornish.

Since 1984, the Blue Devils have either been first or second in the Watchung Conference. Their fifth place finish in the Union County Tournament was their lowest placement since 1987. The girls were first in 1988-89, third in 1990, first from

1991 to 2001, second in 2002, first in 2003, second in 2004 and 2005, and fifth in 2006.

Since 1984 the Blue Devils have qualified for the Group IV Championship meet by being among the top five teams from the section. Westfield grabbed first or second from 1991 to 1996 WHS. The Blue Devils were fifth in 1997 but came back to place either first or second from 1998 to 2006.

The freshmen placed second at the Mt. St. Dominic's Invitational, first at the Stewart Invitational, fourth at the Shore Coaches and were the unofficial Watchung Conference and County Champions. The JV's placed second at St. Dominic's, second at the Stewart Invitational, third at the Shore Coaches and won both the conference and county championships. Liz McCarthy was the individual Union County JV Champion.

"Given the strength of the frosh and JV teams and a solid eight returning varsity runners from this year's top-12, we look forward to a strong competitive season (next year)," said coach Hornish.



David B. Corbin (Union County Tournament) for The Westfield Leader and The Times
READY TO GO...The Blue Devil girls anxiously await the start of the varsity cross-country race at the Union County Tournament.



Devil's Den Extra Meaning to Thanksgiving For Former Blue Devil Cary

By BRUCE JOHNSON
 Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

While Scotch Plains is clearly our No. 1 sports rival, tomorrow's WHS vs. Plainfield Thanksgiving Day game does have its history and charm. It's the second-oldest rivalry in Union County (the first meeting was in 1900, two years after Westfield faced both Battin/Elizabeth and Rahway for the first time). And tomorrow's WHS-PHS game will be the 102nd time the schools have squared off, with WHS holding a 50-44-7 advantage.

Contrary to popular believe, the game was never played on Thanksgiving until 1944, three years after Plainfield coach Jack Liddy pulled his team off the field in the fourth quarter (with his team leading) to protest the officiating. The schools canceled all athletic competitions until a truce was worked out and they met on Turkey Day 1944.

Three years after the rivalry was restarted — in the teams' 42nd meeting, but just the fourth on Thanksgiving — the captains met for the coin toss at Recreation Field (now Gary Kehler Stadium). For Westfield that was Gerry McGinley; for Plainfield is was Charles Cary (see photo on page 92 of the book, *100 Years of Blue Devil Football*). McGinley scored two touchdowns that day on passes from Sam Mitchell, while sophomore Rick McGinley ran for three scores in a 32-12 win that capped a 10-0 season for Spittin' Joe Freeman's squad.

Nearly 30 years later, Cary's son Drew captained the 1986 WHS team that knocked off Plainfield 27-14 as junior quarterback Dave Brown completed 11 passes and had TD tosses to Chuck Mueller and Mark Nelson.

"The Westfield game always meant a lot to my dad," Cary, now a bond salesman in New York City, said the other day. "He loved Plainfield. It was a different town there when he was growing up."

"But for him, Westfield against Plainfield wasn't as big a deal as when I was playing in the game. For me, that was the big game, to be part of the tradition and one of the names of the players who played in that game, that was very important to me. Westfield had its dominance over the years, and they (Plainfield) had some dominance too."

"I grew up in Westfield. Westfield and Storrs (Connecticut, where he played four years of football and was also a shot put standout, holding both the WHS and UConn records) and now New York are the only places I've lived," Cary said. "We had a big rivalry with Scotch Plains. That was pure hate. The towns were so similar, they just hated each other."

"But Plainfield was huge, too," Cary said. "I played with guys from the south at Connecticut and they would talk about the crowds and stuff at their high school games. For me, for us, that was the Plainfield game. Those crowds were the closest we got to the big time."

Drew Cary won't be attending tomorrow's game. His father passed away this past August 1, and the youngest son will spend a reflective day with his brother Charles Jr., and sister Roslyn. But you know when kickoff time rolls around that he'll be thinking of the Blue Devils, and his dad.

"I hope we win," Cary said. "My dad just loved that game so much. He had sort of split allegiances, of course. But he would always sit on the Westfield side when I played."

SENIOR SENDOFF

WHS will be looking to finish the football season with a 6-4 mark under first-year coach Jim DeSarno. That would be a huge turnaround after back-to-back 1-9 seasons. A solid group of outstanding seniors will be playing their final football game for WHS (in many cases their final football game ever), including: Pete Antonelli, Tommy Bonard, Mark Boyd, George Cornell, Sam Crawford, Sean Ferro, Will Harbaugh, Mike Henry, Matt Ince, Dan Johnson, Jack Meagher, Santo Nardi, C.J. Patella, Joe Schurig, J.T. Sheehan, Tyrell Simmons, Joe Simone, Ryan Yarusi and Devon Wise.

(By the way, DeSarno's former high school, Kinnelon, has won four of its last five games and takes a 5-4 record into its Thanksgiving Day against Mountain Lakes.)

DEVIL TRIVIA

Before Plainfield became the annual Thanksgiving opponent in 1944, seven different teams had played WHS on that day (eight if you count Spring Valley, N.Y., which backed out of the 1929 game). How many of the seven can you name?

DEVIL TRIVIA II

This is a trick question. Malcolm Allen and Ricardo Johnson each ran for over 100 yards against Bridgewater. When was the last time WHS had two runners go over the century mark in a single game?

THE STARS CAME OUT

If you weren't at the seventh Westfield Athletic Hall of Fame induction dinner this past Monday night, you missed an awesome night. There were 13 new inductees: individuals Roger Anderson, Brian Ciemniecki, Denise Comby, Matt Elmuccio, Bob Harvey, Andy Hubsch, Dave Robinson, Jack Rogers, Steve Tebbets, Bob Torborg and Marcie Williams, former swim coach Chuck Gantner and the 1970 football team.

But what made it extra special was the place was packed with WHS fans and also many former Hall of Fame inductees, including Jackie Booth, Russ Bowers, Owen Brand, Pete Braun, Dave Brown, John D'Andrea, Merilyn Diamond, Krissy Jeremiah (Turner), Gary Kehler, Glen Kehler, Gerry McGinley, Joe Monninger, Greg Moore, Dicky Myers, Jim Ohaus, Kim Schmidt (Selert), Jeff Torborg, Greg Weiss, Chris Wojcik and Jim Zitch.

Devil of the Week Santo Nardi WHS Football

It's not too soon to start planning for the eighth induction dinner, which will be Monday, Nov. 25, 2008. If you'd like to nominate an individual (five years out of WHS), coach (no longer coaching), or team for possible induction at a future dinner, contact Bill Jordan at Taylor-Love Realty, Ed Tranchina at the WHS athletic department or me, via the Devil's Den at *The Westfield Leader*.

VENEZIA TO COLGATE

Harding Street has produced more than its share of WHS athletes and coaches over the years. Starting with (according to the street's unofficial historians, Bob and Marge Brewster) the late Bill Taylor back in the 1940s, former WHS baseball coach Norm Koury and ex-basketball coach Bob Sanislow, and athletes Dennis Burke, Jerry Hendershott, (Animal) Ed Down, Bob Brewster Jr., Larry Inkster, Kurt Gillhaus, Shawn Flaherty, Sue Phillips, Matt Jessup, Kevin McCormack, Andrew Shaffer, the Murphy brothers and Kurt and Kevin Stock.

Mike Venezia has already earned his place on that list, and the two-year WHS basketball co-captain recently signed a letter of intent to attend

You've undoubtedly seen the video of that wild college football fight between Miami and Florida International (probably ad nauseum if you are one who chooses to watch the Bristol Clown Channel, a.k.a., ESPN). The Miami placekick holder on that fateful PAT prior to the brawl was No. 16 Matt Perrelli. Back in 2001, Perrelli quarterbacked the WHS freshman team to a 5-4 season. His family then moved to Jupiter, Fla., where he was a three-year starter. Perrelli is now a 6-foot-3, 232-pound sophomore backup QB for the Hurricanes.

ON THIS DATE

1930: Dom Urciuoli's 1-yard run in the fourth quarter gives Westfield a 12-6 victory over previously unbeaten Cranford. That earned WHS (6-0-2) a share of the North Jersey Class B championship with Hackettstown (the home of future WHS coach Gary Kehler), the first of WHS's 14 sectional titles.

1979: WHS manages a mere 60 yards of total offense but hangs to beat Plainfield 3-2. Steve Rothrock's 20-yard field goal in the second quarter and a late goal-line stand were the difference.



David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
LETTER OF INTENT...Blue Devil Mike Venezia signs a letter of intent to play basketball at Colgate University. Pictured, left to right, behind him are: Head Coach Kevin Everly, and parents Mike and Ann Venezia.

Colgate University in Hamilton, N.Y., this fall. Venezia enters his senior basketball year with 594 career points, after leading the team with 396 points as a junior. More important, his WHS teams have produced winning records all three years he played on the varsity (he started as a sophomore and junior), going 16-8, 11-10 and 14-9.

Blessed with excellent court vision, a nice touch, and the rare (these days) ability to not force shots to put up a bigger point total, Venezia honed his game last summer with the Jersey Shore Warriors. After sifting through several scholarship offers, he went with Colgate.

Any old-timers looking for a comparison, Venezia is a slightly smaller version of 6-5 Bob Felter ('65), one of the school's three 1,000-point scorers. One big difference, Venezia sports a '50s-era letterman's crewcut, as opposed to Felter's '50s-era rebel "duck's a—" do.

Venezia's older sister Lisa, herself a three-sport standout at WHS, is now a senior at Villanova, and younger sister Dianna, a WHS freshman, just finished the volleyball season and will be an impact player on the WHS varsity girls basketball team.
PERRELLI ON TV

TRIVIA ANSWER

Madison 1923 and 1925, North Plainfield 1926-27, Nyack (N.Y.) 1934-35, Haverstraw (N.Y.) 1936, Pearl River (N.Y.) 1937, Ridgewood 1940-41, Ferris (Jersey City) 1942-43.

TRIVIA II ANSWER

It was November 1999 against Kearny, but the trick part is that there were actually three runners — Chris Giaccone (118), Pat Tuohy (108) and Terrence Jenkins (101) — over the century mark in WHS's 21-14 victory.

DEVIL OF THE WEEK

There was no varsity action between last week's Den and today, so this week's winner of a free sub from Al the Owner at Westfield Subs (261 South Avenue) is Santo Nardi. The senior two-way lineman, a three-year starter, had an exceptional day in WHS's 35-18 win over Bridgewater-Raritan on Nov. 11. He had 10 tackles, three for losses, including a pair of sacks, and his blocking helped both Malcolm Allen and Ricardo Johnson run for over 100 yards.

The Devil's Den appears Thursday in The Westfield Leader during the scholastic season. Contact us with comments, complaints, story ideas or notesy items at bj1019@aol.com. GO DEVILS!



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