

**HAMBLETON, MAINS, ZAZZALI NAMED CAPTAINS**

# Lady Soccer Raiders Could Add an International Flavor

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

Having graduated only five players, the prognosis for the 2006 Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School girls' soccer season looks most promising. Add senior Tri-Captains Allie Hambleton, Lauren Mains, Allie Zazzali and 13 of their teammates who spent 10 days competing against Brazilian soccer clubs this summer, and confidence, desire and a winning attitude could be at a premium.

"Returning that many kids and having the trip to Brazil are both nice things; however, winning the Union

5, to capture their first Union County crown in eight appearances.

Leadership will come from Hambleton, Mains and Zazzali. Hambleton who played center-midfield last year, was a First team All-Union County (UC) and received All-State recognition. She netted 14 goals and seven assists was the leader on the center part of the field.

"She's good with the ball, good in the air, has good shot selection and we're expecting her to control the game for us," said Ewing.

Zazzali, an All-UC First Team Coaches' selection who received All-

"We're going to expect her to do a lot for us, come up big and she usually does."

Mains will be backed up by two other goalies, seniors Ashley Jacobi and Hailey Mroczek.

"Trying to play behind Lauren is extremely difficult. Both of them could probably start for other teams. It's unfortunate that they all are of the same age," said Ewing.

Up front, the Raiders will feature UC-Honorable Mention Alana Bencivengo who netted some very important goals last year.

"Hopefully, she can really step up her game. We are going to need her to be our leader up front," said Ewing.

Lisa Camarda and Bridget Cornwell, the fast and physical marking backs, both received All-County recognition last year. Other backs are sophomores Stephanie Glover and Tina Carmarda. All-UC Third Team Colleen LaForge will compete in the midfield. Lauren Weisbrod, a smart and vocal player who worked herself into shape after missing last season, will share the center midfield with Hambleton. Midfielders Julie Meurer, Kim Appezato and Raychel Kruper and forward Katie Cornachia, Tyler DelMauro and Alyssa Straniero are expected to see lots of action.

Confident of his team's chances, Ewing said, "Our conference will be very, very strong and it will be very challenging. Westfield will be very good and Kearny will be excellent. We picked up a number of out-of-conference games including

five teams that finished in the Star Ledger Top 20. We have to come ready to play each and every single game. As long as we do that and stay healthy, we'll be successful."



DAVID B. CORBIN FOR THE WESTFIELD LEADER AND THE TIMES  
RAIDER TRI-CAPTAINS...Pictured, left to right, are: seniors Allie Zazzali, Lauren Mains and Allie Hambleton who have been selected Raider Tri-Captains.

County (UC) championship, getting as far as possible in the States, a sectional title and grabbing the Watchung Conference are the goals set and they're definitely attainable this year," said Raider Head Coach Kevin Ewing. "We just have to produce and the kids have to play up to their capabilities since this will be the toughest schedule since I have been Head Coach. Hopefully, we can meet those standards."

Last year, the Raiders finished 11-5-3 then exceeded expectations when they beat Cranford, 2-0, in the quarterfinals, defeated A.L. Johnson, 1-0, in the semi's and recorded a 1-0 victory over Oak Knoll on November

State recognition, finished with three goals and three assists. At the sweep position, she has responsibility of securing the defense.

"She's another very good athlete, an all-over-the-field leader because she's so vocal. Hambleton and Zazzali really set the tone for our team," said Ewing.

Goalkeeper Mains, perhaps regarded as one of the top-two if not the top goalie in the state according to Ewing, was a Coaches All-UC Second Team selection who recorded eight shutouts and finished with a .987 goals against per game average last season.

"The saves that she comes up with are simply remarkable," said Ewing.



FRED K. LECOMTE FOR THE WESTFIELD LEADER AND THE TIMES  
BLUE DEVIL SOCCER LEADERSHIP...Senior defender Gillian Kape, left, Head Coach Katie Wertheimer, center, and senior forward Erin McCarthy expect Westfield to be competitive and promise great things this season.

**GILLIAN KAPE, ERIN MCCARTHY NAMED CAPTAINS**

# Blue Devil Soccer Girls Are Not to Be Underestimated

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

After graduating eight fine players, some may expect this season to be a rebuilding year for the Westfield High School girls soccer team; however, five seniors, six juniors and two sophomores return to their starting positions.

Last year, the Blue Devils lost to Rahway, 2-0, in the Union County Tournament quarterfinals, were burned by Piscataway, 2-1, in a sudden-death shootout in the North Jersey, Group 4, Section 2 quarterfinals and finished with a 9-7-3 record. Key wins were over rivals Scotch Plains-Fanwood and Cranford.

"It was sweet to come out and beat them to capture the Watchung Conference," said Blue Devil Head Coach Katie Wertheimer, formerly Katie Egan, who recently became a bride on July 16.

A lot of people may underestimate the Blue Devils, but according to Wertheimer the tradition is going to remain up.

"Definitely our speed will be an asset. We have all of last year's starting defenders returning, so I'm confident there. We're really trying to focus more on our offensive play this year despite the fact that we have a lot of strength up there. It's just a matter of capitalizing on opportunities," said Wertheimer.

Seniors Gillian Kape (defender) and Erin McCarthy (forward) have been selected team captains. "I don't choose the captains. The team votes on them," said Wertheimer. "They chose two fine leaders with lots of confidence. It's nice to have leadership on both ends; however, they have a great supporting cast. The other seniors are phenomenal. I told them how much I expected of them in terms of leadership and they have taken that role very seriously."

The goalkeeper will be junior Claire Bennett, who will be backed up by Amy Altdzluer.

"Last year, she broke her leg before the season began. She worked hard in the off-season and I'm very impressed with her fitness, attitude, confidence and her fearlessness. Her off-season work has just been phenomenal, so we're excited having her in net," said Wertheimer of Bennett.

Striker McCarthy and sophomore Tara Handza will provide offensive kick.

"Since McCarthy has been on the team, people have been expecting a lot of her and this season she is going to turn a lot of heads," said Wertheimer.

Seniors Erica Ammermuller and Corinne Parkinson, and sophomore Shannon Murray will rotate on offense. Seniors MaryKate Luker and Julie Shelman will handle the outside midfield along with Brittany Cortinhal

and Christina Cognetti. Two new great assets are juniors Allison McDonald and Hannah Wharam. Holding down the center back position is Kape who will be flanked by senior Lindsey Sauerwein with Catherine Cognetti and Stephanie Cortinhal on the outside.

"They really have been working well together, a lot of communication and they know where each other is off the ball," said Wertheimer.

Junior Jessica Campo and sophomore Briana Goncalves will add backfield support.

"The group that we have this year is very talented one and they don't lack motivation. Their work ethics have been impressive. We have incredible speed on the field, so it's a matter of putting the pieces together and figuring out how we are going to score those goals. People will really be impressed with our defensive play," said Wertheimer who added, "We're small and we don't have the big body out there, but we have girls that are tough. They will not give up on a ball, they will beat you to a ball and they're fast enough to dribble around you. I feel people should not underestimate us. We expect to be competitive with everyone in the county and in the state sectionals. I'm excited for the season and I believe we are going to be doing some great things."

The Blue Devils open up the season with Linden on September 11.

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