

More Pre-Season Sports
In April 3 Edition

THE WEEK IN SPORTS

Sports Section
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DINIZO, MARONEY LEAD WITH DEFENSE, OFFENSE

Baseball Raiders Still Young, Still Talented, Still Dangerous

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

Coordinating a mix of freshmen, sophomores and juniors with a few seniors gave last year's Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School baseball team a slow start but it all came together with a huge, 14-2 winning streak to produce a 19-8 record and a share of the Watchung Conference title. Once

again, this year's Raiders will feature just two seniors in the starting lineup with the remainder being a mix of underclassmen.

"We are maybe younger this year but a lot of our young guys do have experience," said Raider Head Coach Tom Baylock. "We started two freshmen last year, who now have varsity experience, and we started two sopho-

mores, who now have varsity experience. We have a lot of good, young talent. We have some pretty good pitchers, no one who throws hard, but we have kids who can hit the spots."

Presently, the Raiders' top-3 pitchers are seniors Brian Piccola and Will Hubbard, and sophomore Gary Binkiewicz, who may also bat in the 6/7 spot. Juniors Kevin Maroney, Jon Kosenick, Marcus Green and Tyler Della Badia will also experience mound time.

Senior catcher James Dinizo, a three-year varsity starter who will bat in the No. 3 spot, should provide some firepower at the plate but his big contribution will be team control from behind the plate. Dinizo is expected to play Division 1 baseball at Northern Iowa next year.

"He's got to be the guy, who carries us. He has a really strong arm. Hopefully, he can keep guys from running on us. Hopefully, he can use his bat and drive a lot of runs in," said Baylock.

Junior Ryan McCarthy will act as the backup catcher, senior Tom Hercel will play right field and Binkiewicz will play in leftfield. Sophomore Lou Mazzella will also play left when Binkiewicz is on the mound.

First baseman Maroney (Mr. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 12**)



DAVID B. CORBIN FOR THE WESTFIELD LEADER AND THE TIMES
PREPPING FOR THE SEASON...Raider pitcher Brian Piccola started on the mound in a recent scrimmage game against Governor Livingston.

SHAPIRO, JENKINS ADD STRONG MOUND PRESENCE

Baseball Blue Devils to Field Talented Squad of Seniors

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

Seniors will dominate this year's starting lineup of the Westfield High School baseball team that used fundamental baseball skills last year to advance as far as the North Jersey, Section 2, Group 4 finals, before being stopped by Edison to finish 16-10. This year's squad will again provide excitement with their crafty base-running style and impressive offense but will also feature a strong mound presence and tight defense.

"This team is going to be more senior laden than any team that I have ever had," said Head Coach Bob Brewster. "Of the 17 or 18 kids we have on the varsity, we have 14 seniors. We have a good nucleus and it all starts right up the middle where we have some quality players. We've got some good pitching and that will help us through early in the season until the kids who lack experience gain experience and find out what they have to do at the varsity level."

That strength up the middle

begins with catcher Justin Olsen who had a .978 fielding average last year and was very effective offensively with a .413 batting average (BA).

"Justin is going to Rutgers on a scholarship. He is an outstanding player. He has as strong an arm as I

have ever seen behind the plate. His hitting is second to none on our squad. I'm looking for big things from him, along with his leadership so, it's going to be a lot of fun with him behind the plate," said Brewster.

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DAVID B. CORBIN FOR THE WESTFIELD LEADER AND THE TIMES
READY FOR THE SCRIMMAGE GAME...The Blue Devils await the arrival of the Roselle Park Panthers in a recent scrimmage game in Westfield.



DAVID B. CORBIN FOR THE WESTFIELD LEADER AND THE TIMES
GETTING READY FOR A TOUGH LACROSSE SEASON...The Blue Devil boys lacrosse team finishes up its practice with a few laps around the track at Gary Kehler Stadium. The Blue Devils will host Don Bosco Prep at 4 p.m. on April Fools Day at Tamaques School.

BERNSTEIN, ROSENBERG, WRIGHT NAMED CAPTAINS

Blue Devil Boy Laxers Must Look to Youth for Success

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

Graduating 20 seniors could make any first-year head coach nervous but Marc Silbergeld, who has been no stranger to Westfield High School boys lacrosse since he has been a coach under Gerry Benaquista for 11 years, has directed his attention to his youth. Benaquista has shifted to the role as his assistant.

"Gerry has been at the helm the whole time. I have bounced around from freshman, JV and Gerry's assistant and last summer we started the Blue Devils' Lacrosse Club. I was able to work on a lot of the younger guys," said coach Silbergeld. "We lost 20 seniors, which is devastating to a lot of programs, but the transition should be smooth. We have a great incoming freshman class and we are just trying to integrate them into the system. The few seniors that we have can instill the work ethic."

Last year, the Blue Devils toppled several top teams, including perennial powerhouse Summit to claim the Union County Tournament title for the second straight year. The Blue Devils also stung No. 4 Chatham, 9-8, and top-5 team Hunterdon Central in a regular-season game and squished Cherry Hill West, 20-7, in the first round of the Group 3 tournament before falling to Ridge and finishing with a 13-6 record.

"We really showed our potential last year that we could beat anyone on any given day. We were a little disappointed the way we finished our season with a loss to Ridge," commented Silbergeld.

Seniors Harry Bernstein and Andrew Rosenberg, and junior Kyle Wright have been selected team captains. Wright, who backed goalie Ben Thomas last year, demonstrated his goalie skills in the victory over Cherry

Hill West but there is indeed competition for the position.

"Kyle is one of our goalies. Dylan Moran is a sophomore who has a lot of promise and my freshman goalie Jeff LaForge is very close behind those two. Kyle is an unbelievable leader and he probably has more enthusiasm and spirit than any other player. He's looking forward to the challenge for the starting varsity spot," said Silbergeld.

Bernstein, an attacker, was quite

effective in finding the goal last year.

"Harry is a sniper. He has an unbelievable shot. He has a completely different role than he had the past two years where he is going to have to step up and initiate some offense. He is going to be matched up with some of the best defensemen in the state," said Silbergeld.

Rosenberg, a midfielder, added excitement when he took to the field last year.

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