



RAIDER TEAM CAPTAINS...Senior Tri-Captains Ally Prestridge, left, Delia McGee, center, and Sarah Canfield look to lead the Raider girls soccer team to another successful season and another Union County Tournament title.

## PARKER, WHEELER, BRUCE TO LEAD Raider Boys, Girls Face XC Number Shortage

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

No team captains have been identified but the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School boys and girls cross-country teams look for senior Brandon Wheeler and juniors Alex Parker and Laura Bruce to be the frontrunners in their respective packs.

Presently, the boys have 16 runners and some experience but they have graduated an outstanding competitor in Martin Sweeney, who placed third in the Union County and Group 3 sectional tournaments and 10th in the Group meet.

"We have a decent number of boys. We will probably pick up some more but I have a number of kids, who have been running for three or four years with decent experience. They've run in the group meets before and they have run on a competitive level. I am expecting a decent season out of them," Raider Head Coach Jeff Koegel said. "Westfield will be tough and Summit will have a decent team. I think we will be able to mix it up better with them than we did last year. Not having Martin will hurt but I think Alex and Brandon came along far enough last spring that it will make up for it. We will have two guys a little farther up than we did last year."

Only eight runners make up the girls team and only one, Bruce, has strong cross-country experience.

"Numbers have always been a problem. We don't really have much in the way of experience. Six of those girls have never run cross-country before," coach Koegel pointed out. "Laura will have a real good season. She is one of the hardest workers I've ever had. She will put in whatever miles I want her to do. She will run through walls. It might take us a little while to feel ourselves out get some experience to figure out how to run the race. It will be a learning process but we will be alright."

Junior Kathleen Leeper should catch on quickly since she placed second in the Union County spring track meet in the 3,200 meters and junior Ali Pearl, who competed hurdles and middle distances, could also catch on quickly.

"Kathleen is a good runner. She is better the longer the race is. The longer the distance the better she is. She and Laura are some of the better runners in the division and I think Ali can develop into that as well," coach Koegel said.



SOON TO BE WAVES OF BLUE...The Blue Devil girls cross-country team will present 86 blue uniforms at their meets this season.

## Westfield XC Girls Look Forward to Great Season

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

Waves and waves of "Blue" will continue to flow over the paths of Tamaques Park as the 86-strong Westfield High School girls cross-country team looks ahead to a new season and a new conference.

The Blue Devils are riding on a 36-meet (4 seasons) undefeated record and the varsity won the Watchung Conference for the second straight year, bringing their total to 10 titles. Prior to dropping a meet to Scotch Plains-Fanwood (Raiders) in 2003, the Blue Devils had 92 consecutive dual meet victories (1991-2003). Westfield won the Mt. St. Dominic's Invitational meet at all three levels last year, so there is indeed a winning reputation to uphold.

Sharon Faktor, Carough Ball, Meg Pulliam and Becky Castaldo have been selected team captains but other individuals to watch would be: sophomores Danielle Grimes and Kelsey Hall, juniors Gabrielle Tanji and Astrid Adriaens (both crossovers from soccer) and senior Samantha Kaufman, along with senior Amy Roggenburg, juniors Evan-Rae Hindes, Tierny Cummings, Abby Kwok, Alex Fraenkel and Alyssa Hatch, sophomores Allegra Larche, Allie Rubin, Alexis Murphy and Julia Fisher, and freshmen Theresa DePalma, Alyssa Fernandez, Courtney Han, Ellie Reinhardt and Maggie Tanji.

"When you have a team of 80 plus athletes you have a major reservoir to choose from. Our program is evolu-

tionary and, as the season progresses, everyone has the opportunity to step forward and make their presence known," pointed out Thom Hornish, in his 37th season as Head Coach.

The Blue Devils will need that vast reservoir with the new Union County Conference, which includes A. L. Johnson, the defending county champions last two years, and the Raiders. Summit will also be a powerhouse in the county.

"The ultimate goal at the varsity level earn to the right to compete at the Meet of Champions by being among the top three teams in Group IV. That's a major accomplishment given the depth and quality of the competition," coach Hornish said.

The Blue Devils have won the county title from 1991 through 2002 and in 2004. They won the State Sectional Championship in 1991, 1994, 1995, 1998, 2000, 2004 and 2005.

According to coach Hornish, "The goal of Westfield cross-country is to provide a competitive opportunity for each member of the team and to develop a collective team spirit. Our goal is to achieve excellence in both sportsmanship and competitive effort. Our traditions and records speak for themselves as to how well we had lived up to our stated goals. We look forward to a great season."

The Blue Devils open on September 12 at the Jersey City-Mount St. Dominick Invitational. The NJCTC Class Meet follows on September 19. Coach Hornish and Jen Buccino, who has been with the program as an assistant coach since 1995, will be ready.

## PRESTRIDGE, MCGEE, CANFIELD NAMED CAPTAINS

# Raider Soccer Girls to Face Stiff Competition this Season

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

Despite graduating five seniors, who have been on a Union County championship team in all four of their years and harvested two sectional crowns, this year's Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School girls soccer team returns a host of experienced athletes, who are preparing to face some very stiff competition.

"Last year, we played a lot of underclassmen. In most games we played 18 players, so we have a lot of kids with experience. We still have some new kids, who are going to gain experience. We will be competitive," Kevin Ewing, in his eighth season as Raider Head Coach, said.

Last year, the Raiders finished ranked well within the top-20 with a 19-5-1 record to set an SPF record for wins. It would be up to team captains Ally Prestridge, Delia McGee and Sarah Canfield to make sure their team keeps on a steady course.

McGee, who was named to the All-Union County (UC) Second Team, and Prestridge will command the backfield and will receive support from senior Devon Daly and junior Claudia Falconieri.

"She's good. She's smart. She could play anywhere on the field. She's very vocal. She's a big help," coach Ewing said of McGee.

Junior Emily Nagourney heads a solid midfield, which includes seniors Lauren Rosenthal, Kathryn

Dinizo and Canfield. "We are going to count on Emily Nagourney to control our midfield and Ally Prestridge in the back helping us out on defense. There are a number of kids, who have experience and are going to step up. We are looking forward to a good season," said coach Ewing, who added, "Sarah (Canfield) is such a strong soccer player, physically strong, mentally strong. She played the majority of the minutes last year because we needed her on the field and we are going to need her on the field this year."

Goals must be scored and two of the most prominent Raiders to make that happen are senior Morgan Burke and junior Avika Shah, an All-UC Third Team selection last year. Junior Gabby Vacca and sophomore Sarah Vanbuskirk are also expected to play as forwards.

"Morgan is going to help us out a lot with her leadership, speed on the field and her ability to hit the ball. Avika is good at finding the back of the net, so we are going to look to them for some scoring, along with a couple of other people," coach Ewing said.

Three girls are vying for the goalkeeper spot vacated by All-American Jackie Law, who graduated last year. Junior Paige Della Badia, sophomore Meghan Allen and freshman Taylor Sebolao have been working diligently to fill the vacancy.

"Over the past six years, we had

Lauren Mains, who was a regional All-American, then Jackie was an All-American. This year, we have three girls, who have experience. They just haven't been tested yet. They will be fine," said coach Ewing.

The Raiders will open at home with a very strong Pingry team tomorrow, September 11, then they will follow with a host of Union County teams, which includes rival Westfield on Wednesday, September 23.

"We like facing good competition. It prepares us for the playoffs," coach Ewing said. "Union County, the talent level is pretty tough this year. There are a lot of teams that are pretty even in ability."



RAIDER X-C PACK LEADERS...Pictured, left to right, junior Alex Parker, senior Brandon Wheeler and juniors Ali Pearl, Laura Bruce and Kathleen Leeper plan to be in the front of the pack for the Raider boys and girls cross-country teams.

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