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# THE WEEK IN SPORTS

Sports Section  
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## SABATINO LED TEAM IN SCORING AND REBOUNDING

### Blue Devil Boys Finished Well In Tough Basketball Season

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

Competing with very tough Union County teams, as well as in the Union County League Watchung Conference Division, offensive and defensive punch was what the Westfield High School boys basketball team needed to employ.

Facing such powers as Cranford, Scotch Plains-Fanwood, Linden, Plainfield, Union and Elizabeth, the Blue Devils finished with a respectable, 10-11 season, a 9-3 non-conference record and qualified for the North Jersey, Group 4, Section 2 tournament for the sixth time in eight years. The Blue Devils began their season

by winning the Rahway Holiday Tournament for the third time in six years. The Blue Devils exercised an extremely effective offensive and defensive strategy overpowering Rahway, 53-49, and defeated perennial rival Scotch Plains-Fanwood, 43-36, on December 29. The Blue Devils had some key victories, which included a 45-24 victory over rival Cranford on January 7.

One thing special was an opportunity for fans to watch two of the most entertaining local basketball players, Sabatino and Hess, do their thing when the Blue Devils topped the Raiders, 56-50, in their first regular-season meeting before dropping a 57-54 decision, with Raiders Patrick Dougher and Chuck Oliver seizing the spotlight on February 4.

Near perfection was needed to upset the fourth-seeded Farmers of Union, but the fifth-seeded Devils became victims of a defensive scheme resulting in a 44-37 loss in the quarterfinal round of the Union County Tournament on February 20. The Blue Devils quickly rebounded and were quite impressive in the North Jersey, Group 4, Section 2 tournament, ousting Elizabeth in Elizabeth. Later, they silenced second-seeded Hillsborough, 50-40, on February 24.

"We got quality minutes from nine guys during the season. We have five seniors and four juniors. The starting lineup included senior center Pat Sabatino, who was our leading scorer and rebounder, and senior point guard Jaraad Rogers, who led us in assists.

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David B. Corbin (Westfield/Cranford game) for The Westfield Leader and The Times

VERY TOUGH ALL AROUND...Blue Devil Pat Sabatino, no. 43, led the team in rebounds with 251 and in scoring with a 14.6-points-per-game-average.

## OLIVER LED SPF IN SCORING, JEGEDE IN REBOUNDS

### Raider Boys Finished Strong In Rugged Basketball League

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

Surviving in a very strong conference is what the young Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School boys basketball team had to deal with this season. The Raiders exercised finesse combined with quickness in most of the games and finished with a 7-17 record. The Raiders began its season in the "Butch" Kowal Tournament in Rahway, whipping Holmdel, 5-41, before dropping a close decision to Westfield.

some big shots that really hurt us in the fourth quarter with their senior laden team. Overall though, I was happy with our performance. Later on in the season we played a little better with them, so I'm pleased," said Raider Head Coach Dan Doherty. The Raiders' victory over a strong New Providence squad in the first round of the Union County Tournament (UCT) was an example of how competitive teams were. Facing a Plainfield team in the quarterfinal round, however, proved more than the Raiders could handle, suffering a 67-28 loss on February 17.

"Against New Providence, we had kind of a slow start in that game, but we ended with a big fourth quarter. Patrick Dougher and Chuck Oliver really had a huge quarter as they hit for six 3-pointers, so we were able to pull ahead and away from them in a good game," coach Doherty said. Reference the Plainfield squad, "One of the top public school teams in the state. As a young team, we were overmatched and they were just too powerful for us."

The Raiders did improve as the season progressed.

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David B. Corbin (Westfield/SPF game) for The Westfield Leader and The Times

SETTING SOME PERSONAL RECORDS...Blue Devil Diana Venezia, with ball, scored a personal-best 31 points and tied her personal best with 17 rebounds in a game against Cranford. She finished with 411 points this season.

## VENEZIA SCORED 411 POINTS, MARKOWSKI HAD 282

### Lady Blue Devils Had Strong Run Toward End of Season

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

Since dropping to 2-6 after a 48-40 loss to Cranford on January 12, the Westfield High School girls basketball team turned its season in the right direction, winning 13 of its next 16 games to qualify for the North Jersey, Section 2, Group 4 tournament and to finish with a 15-9 record.

The Lady Blue Devils avenged that earlier loss to Cranford in a big way on February 16. Not only did they defeat the Cougars, 43-26, but also senior forward Diana Venezia scored a career-high 31 points and tied her career high with 17 rebounds to give Joe Marino his 100th career victory as Blue Devil head coach. Next on the list was a 47-45 victory over the second-seeded Summit Hilltoppers in the quarterfinals of the Union County Tournament (UCT).

After falling to Roselle in the UCT semifinals, the Blue Devils focused on the sectional tournament and defeated Edison, 54-48, before concluding their season with a 57-35 loss to no. 7 Columbia of Maplewood. In that game, Venezia surpassed the 400-point mark for the season at the beginning of the fourth quarter and went on to finish her year with 411 points. "We never felt we were out of the

mix," coach Marino said. "We practiced hard. We set a goal to shoot for the UCT title and states. We never lost hope. We knew we had to polish up things. Our defense got better. It was contagious. The girls got along well and they stuck together as a team. They believed in themselves. They kept plugging away and things happened."

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Should you have any questions, please contact the following board members:  
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