



Devil's Den ShopRite Cup: WHS State's Group 4 King

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

It's been written several times in this space that WHS has won more state championships than any other school in state history. You would think that would please most, if not all, Blue Devil backers. But no, there are still some Mr. Negative-heads, people who love to pick nits, complaining that most of those titles were won a long time ago.

Sorry, but that's not close to being true.

And, as if to emphasize that point, guess which school won the ShopRite Cup's Group 4 title for 2010? The award goes to the team that earns the most points, via state and sectional team championships. (Football teams get points for making the sectional semifinals.) Yup, the winner was the school located at 550 Blue Devil Drive, or is it 550 Blue Devil Boulevard?

(Well, that's what the address should be. There are no houses across from the high school on Dorian Road, between Rahway Avenue and Trinity Place; why hasn't this already happened?)

Whatever, with four state championship teams - boys cross-country, boys and girls tennis, girls swimming - along with a runnerup (girls soccer) and third-place (football), WHS scored 59 points, edging out Jackson Memorial (56), Hunterdon Central (53), Randolph (52) and Bridgewater-Raritan (48) in the state's biggest and best group.

Other group winners were Delsea in Group 3, Haddonfield in Group 2, Robbinsville in Group 1, Immaculate Heart in Non-Public A and Belmar St. Rose in Non-Public B.

WHS's previous best finishes in the seven-year-old ShopRite Cup were in 2006-07 (second) and 2007-08 (third). That's a great sendoff for recently retired athletic director Ed Tranchina. By the way, Tranchina's retirement was short-lived. He has been hired as the interim athletic director at Delaware Valley Regional in Alexandria Township.

STILL NO. 1

With those four state team championships last year, WHS now has 111 team and 260 individual/relay state championships. Those 371 total titles and 260 individual/relay champs are both the most in state history, since the NJSIAA was formed in 1918. Runner-up Haddonfield, a Group 2 school, had seven team and 17 individual champs last year, so it now has 366 total.

WHS vs. SP-F L
WHS vs. SP-F XXXXX?

Whatever, when the WHS football team opens its season a week from Saturday against SP-F, it will be the 50th meeting of the Hatfields and McCoys. Amazingly, from the time Scotch Plains High School opened in 1926 until WHS joined the Watchung Conference in 1961-62, the teams only played once, a 20-0 WHS win in 1929. Since then, 1990 is the only season they haven't played.

WHS leads the series 35-12-2, but the gap has closed this century, with each team having won five times. WHS has won the last two meetings, and

three of the last four.
The Blue Devils won 18 of the first 19 meetings (the other was a 6-6 tie in 1962) before SP-F's 11-7 shocker in 1978 made me a fan of Wawa and Quick Chek.

This figures to be another strong WHS team under fifth-year coach Jim DeSarno. Look for as many as nine two-way starters - split end/safety Ryan Hess or Pat Bergin, wingback/corner Pete Ondi, fullback/end Garrett Pryor, halfback/linebacker A.J. Murray, tackle/end Nick Matthews, guard/linebacker Chris Mannino, guard/tackle Jesse DeMartino, tackle/tackle Ryan Elliott and tight end/linebacker John Lanzano. Other starters: center Tony Masterocola, quarterback Dan Kerr, cornerback James O'Rourke and linebacker Brandon Dugan. James McCrea figures to see a lot of action at FB/LB.

THIS AND THAT

Congratulations to Sandy Mamary. After 23 years as the WHS athletic trainer (1987-88 through 2009-10), she was named this summer as the school's supervisor of athletics, replacing the retired Ed Tranchina. Mamary is a native of Wilkes-Barre, Pa., and attended East Stroudsburg (Pa.) University. She inherits the job of overseeing New Jersey's no. 1 athletic program - the winningest school in state history, as far as individual and team state championships (see below), and the 2009-10 ShopRite Cup champion for Group 4 (see above). "I look forward to the challenge," she said. "I started here when Gary Kehler was the AD, and he made me very much aware of the traditions here. It's the best school system anywhere."

A.J. Murray, WHS's talented catcher, has accepted a scholarship offer from Georgia Tech, an outstanding academic school and a member of the Atlantic Coast Conference. His older brother Mike ('06) is playing now in the San Francisco Giants' organization after a four-year career at Wake Forest of the ACC. No word on whether the Yellow Jackets were also interested in Murray as a football player, given that he's also a potential all-star this fall as a halfback/linebacker.

Older brother Mike Murray was hitting .310 through his first 13 games with the Class A short-season Salem-Keizer (Ore.) Volcanoes, the San Francisco Giants' farm team in the Northwest League. Murray had hits in his first six starts, including a single, double, home run and four RBI in his second game after being promoted following a nine-game stint in the Arizona Rookie League, where he was hitting .400.

Bob Mueller ('60) was inducted into the Army Football Letterman's Club as an honorary member back in mid-July. In the 50 years since WHS graduation he has spent over 40 of them as the athletic director of the United States Military Prep School in Fort Monmouth. At WHS he was a two-way end and co-captain of the 1959 football and a district champion wrestler.

Chris Wojcik ('92) was named head lacrosse coach at Harvard, where he was a standout soccer and lacrosse player. At WHS, Wojcik excelled in those sports and also was a top wrestler. He served as an assistant coach at Harvard and Penn before getting the call back to Boston in July.

The retirement of Walt Leonow finally closes the book on a great chapter of WHS boys soccer history. As the coach from 1977-90, Leonow's teams went 211-50-26, winning six county, three sectional and one state title. His 1986 team won the school's first state championship, scoring 109 goals, still a school single-season record, while allowing just 18. (Although that team went 20-2-2, it should be noted that both losses were to SP-F.) Leonow had a 12-11-3 record against SP-F, including a stretch from 1980-85 where his teams won 10 of 11 from the Raiders, including 8-0 and 8-1 victories in '82 and '83. He also was the first girls track coach in 1977 and '78.

Could somebody explain to me how Rob Anderson received no all-state recognition? He hit .457, and led the 18-9 WHS baseball team in hits (43) and runs (33) while tying for the lead in pitching wins (5).

LEGION UPDATE

The Post 3 American Legion team went 13-6 this summer, coming within one run (a 4-3 playoff loss to Union) of qualifying for the state tournament. The team finished third, and was the only team to beat first-place Roselle (17-1). Fourth-year coach Ken Miller was quite happy. "Not bad for a team playing without its two best players (A.J. Murray and Dan Kerr)," Miller said. "And most of the league's top teams included graduated seniors and college freshmen, which we don't."

The regulars:
ss Tim Younger
ss-3b-p Brett Ryan
lf Matt Varakian
c Will Riggs
rf Steve Forghash
cf James O'Rourke
2b James Barry
1b Mike Coletta
3b-p Matt Rivera
p Zach Archambault, Justin White, Mike Mondon
Other contributors included: of John Randazzo, of-3b-c Aris Spioyos, of-p Justin Erickson, p-3b Ben Kraus and p Tripp Nugent.

IN PASSING

Bob King ('63), WHS's all-time boys basketball scorer and rebounder; survived by his wife Linda and daughters Abbie and Katie.

Lillian Viglianti, mother of WHS athletes Ron ('61) and Drew ('69).

Joe Berzanskis, father of Holy Trinity athletes Paul ('68) and Jerry ('72).

Judith McLane, wife of Bruce and mother of WHS athletes Colin ('88) and Jason ('89), and non-WHSers Bruce and Kevin.

Marvin Stith, older brother of Gilbert ('62) and Kenny ('66).

Jim Zitch ('71), considered by many to be the best lineman of the Gary Kehler era. Co-captain of the '70 state champion football team, a district wrestling champion, and a good guy.

Mike Cowles ('64), slick point guard on '63 and '64 basketball teams, lost battle to Agent Orange-related sickness.

Non-Westfielders who passed away but had an influence on my life in some way include:

Tuli Kupferberg, a founding member of the Fugs, the anarchic '60s New York City folk punkers with such songs as "Kill For Peace," "B**bs A Lot" and "Einstein Never Wore Socks;"

Harvey Fuqua, founder of the Moonglows, a '50s group most known for "The Ten Commandments of Love;"

Pete Quaife, the bass player for the Kinks, legendary British rockers.

The Devil's Den will appear on the first and third Thursday of each month in The Westfield Leader during the school year. Contact us with comments, complaints or suggestions at bj1019@aol.com. And remember, win or not, Whs4evr!



JUST A SAMPLE OF TRICKY HITTING...St. Killian veteran Harry Semple tricked everyone with this dinker that turned into an infield single. Semple went 3-for-3 with two RBI in St. Killian's 10-5 win over St. Anthony.

H. SEMPLE 3 HITS, 2 RBI; D. NIGRO KEY 2-RUN SGLE

St. Killian Stops St. Anthony In St. Bart's Playoffs, 10-5

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

Getting a new lease on life paid off when Dan Nigro's foul liner to deep right field was dropped, and he followed up with a two-run single to get top-seeded St. Killian on the right track to a 10-5 victory over St. Anthony in the St. Bart's Oldtimers

each ripped a pair of RBI singles. Ron Labin singled twice and scored once. Lou Balestriere tripled and scored once. Jeff Friedlander drilled an RBI double, walked and scored twice. Phil Appelbaum singled and scored once, while Dave Roth doubled and Tom Litterio singled. St. Anthony took a 1-0 lead when

tacular play at second base in the second, St. Anthony added two more runs on Friedlander's RBI double and Logan's plopping RBI single. Curtis ended the scoring with a diving grab in center.

"That's the way Scott! You dive for it," shouted Messano.

St. Killian tied the score in the bottom of the second when Nardi lashed a two-run single and Fisher poked an RBI single. While Nardi and Fisher, both with their heads shaved, were still on base, Harry Semple chuckled and said, "We got speed on the bases now. No wind resistance!"

Although Nardi and Fisher were stranded in the second, St. Killian seized a 6-3 lead with three more runs in the fourth. Curtis lined a two-run double, and Harry Semple yanked an RBI single. Logan blooped an RBI single in the fifth to narrow the score to 6-4, but as St. Killian came to bat, Balestriere pleaded, "We got to hold them here. Let's hold them!"

His plea nearly worked, but Dan Nigro's lease on life added two more runs to Killian's lead. Baldowski bopped an RBI single in the sixth, but Killian added two more insurance runs in the bottom of the inning on Harry Semple's RBI double and Walch's RBI single.

St. Anthony	120	011	0	5
St. Killian	030	322	x	10



DANGEROUS LEADOFF HITTER...St. Anthony's Ron Labin went 2-for-3 and scored a run against St. Killian at Brookside Park in Scotch Plains on August 27.

Men's Softball League Angels Division playoffs at Brookside Park in Scotch Plains on August 27. Since the new playoff format is a double elimination, St. Anthony will get another shot at glory.

Interestingly, Dan Nigro's brother Pat, who played for St. Anthony, had a reverse fortune when he lined a shot down the right field line with two men on base, and the ball just missed being fair by inches. Dan Nigro finished 2-for-3 with two RBI, while Pat finished 2-for-3 with no RBI.

St. Killian veteran Harry Semple gave several samples of fine hitting when he went 3-for-3, including a ground-rule double, with two RBI and a run scored. His rookie son, Jason, rapped a pair of singles and scored three times. Scott Curtis cracked a key two-run double and scored twice. Chris Nardi (2 RBI), Eric Fisher (RBI) and Steve Ferro (run scored) each had two singles. Scott Friedrichs doubled and scored once. Mike Walch tapped an RBI single and scored once, Lou Messano singled and Frank Litterio scored once.

Bruce Logan and Tom Baldowski

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St. Killian/St. Anthony
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Balestriere tripled and scored on Baldowski's RBI single in the top of the first. After Walch made a spec-

St. Bart's Oldtimers Men's Softball League Playoffs:

The St. Bartholomew Men's Oldtimers Softball League opened its 32nd postseason adopting a modified double elimination playoff system. The regular season ended August 18 and the two division winners, St. Killian and St. Rocco, received first round byes.

St. Matthew 17, St. Jude 6
Mattman James Barba scored three times, and Tom Stranero had four RBI. Jude captain Joe DeCharo went 3-for-3.

St. Anthony 19, St. Aloysius 8
Tom Baldowski (2-for-4, HR, 3 RBI) led St. Anthony.

St. David 26, St. Anne 5
St. David played big, avenging a late-season loss to the Annies. Dave Rotherberg (4-for-4, 3 RBI, Dbl) led the hit parade and Varojuan Baboonian knocked two homers.

St. James 13, St. Joseph 11
Joe Tilloca (1-for-3, 2 walks), Paul Newton (2-for-4, triple) and Kevin St. Onge (2-for-3, HR, 3 RBI and stylish fielding) led the James Gang. Franklin DeFaria (2-for-3, HR) and Rick Wustefeld (2-for-3) led St. Joe.

St. Killian 12, St. Matthew 3
Scott Curtis cranked a solo home run for Killian.

St. Rocco 13, St. James 2
The team that should have won did.

St. Joseph 20, St. Aloysius 9

Amilcar Monroy and Franklin DeFaria (3-for-4, 1 HR each) led Joe.

St. Jude 13, St. Anne 7

Jude advanced while Anne went home.

St. Killian 10, St. Anthony 5

See exclusive story. Killian remains in the winner's bracket. St. Anthony slips to the loser's side.

St. David 9, St. Rocco 6

The raucous Rocco team posted a 6-3 lead through four innings but coughed up six runs in the top of the seventh. David's Ed Villaverde quietly went 3-for-3, and Marty Bernstein went 2-for-3. Nash Warfield went 2-for-3. St. David and St. Killian remain unbeaten while St. Rocco rolled to the loser's bracket.

St. Jude 11, St. James 10

The Judies held an 11-5 lead in the seventh, but the plucky James Gang fought valiantly. Kevin St. Onge (3-for-4, double) used Keith Gibbons' bats effectively, and patient and timely hitting spurred a five-run bottom of the seventh rally. The James Gang had to retreat to their hideaway until next year.

St. Joseph 21, St. Matthew 9

St. Joseph scored three touchdowns to Matthew's three field goals. Joe's had the better red-zone offense and stayed alive in the second tier of the tournament.

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