

Westfield Blue Devil Icemen Blast off to a 6-1 Hot Start

The Westfield High School Blue Devils ice hockey team is off to one of the fastest starts in recent years after posting six wins in the team's first seven starts prior to the Christmas break.

The only blemish on the team's record was a 4-1 loss to state power Morris Knolls Golden Eagles in the championship final of the George T. Kron Hockey Tournament on December 15. Morris Knolls out-shot Westfield, 48-10, in the game en route to winning its eighth tournament title in the past nine years.

In league play, the Blue Devils are off to a 4-0 start and have served notice that they intend to avenge a 4-2 loss suffered at the hands of the Summit Hilltoppers in the championship game of last season's Union County Interscholastic Athletic Conference tournament. Westfield opened the season with a 4-2 win over the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Raiders and manhandled the Dayton Bulldogs, 10-0, before turning aside the Cranford

Cougars, 6-1 and 6-4, in the final two games before the Christmas break.

"Our goal is to be the best team in Union County and to remain undefeated in league play throughout the season, so we're happy we were able to overcome a couple of surprises from Scotch Plains and Cranford," said Westfield coach Brendan Hickey, who took over behind the Blue Devils bench this season, replacing Dennis Doherty, who returned to the Boston area following last season to become general manager and Coach of the Rhode Island Reds junior hockey team in Cranston, R.I.

Coach Hickey expects Summit to offer Westfield its stiffest competition in league play, followed by Cranford and Scotch Plains-Fanwood. The perennial powerhouse A.L. Johnson Crusaders face a rebuilding year following the graduation of sniper Nick Vilaverde, who led the team in scoring throughout his four-year career. The Blue Devils, meanwhile, will rely heavily on the team's

five seniors to provide leadership.

"Our five seniors provide essential veteran leadership on and off of the ice," said Hickey. "CJ Meyer, Henry O'Brien and Nick Attanasio provide a significant offensive threat each game. Colin Fitzhenry provides stability on our defensive corps and Morgan Bungez has been a standout in goal."

The forward line combination of Meyer, Attanasio and O'Brien is a key to Westfield's offense. Last season the trio combined for 156 points as Westfield set new school records for most wins (17) and fewest losses (7) in a single season. The importance of the line was on display in Westfield's second win over Cranford on December 23. With the Blue Devils trailing, 4-2, midway through the third period, Attanasio set up two goals and Meyer added a third as Westfield charged back to capture a 6-4 win. Attanasio's second assist marked his 100th career point, a milestone achieved by Meyer last season.

Westfield reached the Kron tournament championship game by defeating Mendham Minutemen, 2-0, in a hard-fought semifinal game. Attanasio scored both goals, while Bungez recorded his first shutout of the season. In the opening game of the tournament, the Blue Devils opened up a 6-0 first-period lead en route to a 10-1 shellacking of the Parsippany Vikings. Meyer paced the offense with three goals and three assists, while Attanasio had one goal and three assists, and O'Brien had a goal and an assist. Sophomores Sam Meyer (CJ's brother), Ryan Morse and Shane Paulan chipped in one goal each, along with freshmen Dane Huber and Jeremy DeDea.

Westfield opened 2011 with games this week against Ridge and Johnson before facing non-conference opponents Northern Highlands and Morristown on January 10 and 12, respectively.

SP-F Raider Icemen Stifles Millburn in Ice Hockey

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Raiders ice hockey team was firing all cylinders and defeated the Millburn Millers, 6-2, at the Woodbridge Community Center on January 2.

Freshman Brian Rubin started off the scoring in the first period, while junior defenseman Kevin Lewis went coast-to-coast to score and junior defenseman John Tomasulo fired in a dipping slap shot from the blue line to give the Raiders a 3-0 lead. Millburn scored early in the second period, but sophomore Nick Gianni answered, getting a fine assist from senior Ed Logie. Logie then followed up with a slick backhand on a breakaway to make the score, 5-1.

The Millers again scored to lead off the third period, but the Raiders had a response ready with a spin-orama, followed by another backhander by Logie, with freshman defenseman Kurtis Wisniewski getting an assist. The Raiders were actually out-shot by a 38-25 margin, but sophomore goalie Jason Breit was up to the task stonewalling shot after shot.

The Raiders overall record improved to 3-5 as they looked to even their Union County league record with a win against Dayton on January 4. The Raiders will play another non-league game tomorrow, January 7, at 8:30 p.m. against JFK of Woodbridge Township at the Woodbridge Community Center.



NOTCHING ANOTHER GOAL...The Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School ice hockey team begin to celebrate after Brian Rubin, left, scored a goal against the Millburn Millers. The Raiders defeated the Millers, 6-2, on January 2.

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Lisa Stafford
Honored for Success 2010

Lisa Stafford, a sales professional with the Coldwell Banker Westfield East Office, was recently recognized for her success in 2010. Among her many achievements this past year was being named the Top Associate in Union County in the month of October for Coldwell Banker. Lisa earned this distinction by having the highest number of successfully closed transactions while providing outstanding service and professional guidance to her clients.

A resident of Cranford, Lisa's marketing and negotiating skills afforded buyers and sellers the opportunity to achieve their goals in real estate. Formerly with Riverside Homes in Cranford, Lisa joined the Westfield East Office in 2008. In her first full year she earned the coveted President's Club award.

Buying or selling a home in today's turbulent economy requires a top professional. For a confidential consultation to discuss your real estate needs, you can reach Lisa Stafford at the Westfield East Office.

Lisa Stafford
 Sales Associate

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Cell: (908) 337-2021
 Direct: (908) 301-2044
 Fax: (862) 345-2931
 Email: Lisa.Stafford@CBmoves.com
 www.BuyNewJerseyHomes.com

Westfield Office • 209 Central Ave
 (908) 233-5555

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Devil's Den Anything Can Happen, And It Often Does

By BRUCE JOHNSON
 Specialty Writer for The Westfield Leader and The Times



After more than half a century, has the center of the New Jersey swimming universe finally shifted?

Or were the results of Dec. 17 and Dec. 22 – when the WHS boys swim team took it on the chin from Bridgewater-Raritan, 115.5-54.5, and SP-F, 109-61, respectively – just a blip on the screen?

Since WHS, the state's dominant public school team since the mid-1950s, will get a shot at redemption on Jan. 29 (Union County championships) and hopefully on Feb. 17 (sectional finals vs. B-R), it won't take too long to find out the answer.

(And in between those championships, the Wallace Pool will host two of the biggest dual meets of the year: St. Joseph and Mount St. Mary will swim WHS on Jan. 18; Christian Brothers and Immaculate Heart, both currently ranked No. 1 in the state,

winning no individual races and just one relay) and state championships. WHS entered that state tournament with a 3550 power-point average, compared to runner-up Cherry Hill East's 4200-plus, but won the title by 8 points.

The next year, Bridgewater won, 93-77, to open the season, and WHS won, 100-70, at sectionals.

In 2004, it was Bridgewater again, 91-79, in December, and WHS, 102-68, for the sectional title.

WHS was dunked, 95-75, by Bridgewater-Raritan in December 2005, but tied the Panthers, 85-85, before losing the sectional championship on a tiebreaker, power points for that meet.

Again in 2006, Bridgewater won, 98-72, in the regular season, but didn't earn the sectional final until the final relay, hanging on for an 88-82 win.

And last year, for the first time since

state map. It was the first time the Mounties had been shut out in 108 games, since 1957.

THERE BUT FOR FORTUNE

The upcoming "Phil Ochs: There But For Fortune" documentary – due to open in eight selected theatres across the country starting yesterday – will probably not be a big seller or big interest item in our stodgy, conservative Old Towne. But those of a certain age – i.e., baby boomers – should definitely want to check this out. Nobody, and that's n-o-b-o-o-d-y, was a better embodiment of the riotous '60s than Phil Ochs (pronounced oaks).

When it came to protest singing, to putting down war and the establishment and hypocrisy, he was the best. Sadly, Ochs, who committed suicide in 1976, has pretty much been a forgotten man, lost to the dustbins of history. But his timeless songs should be heard by all generations.

The only documentary that would be as interesting for me is one on Billy Bragg, the left-leaning British punk-folkie. In the documentary, Bragg says, "Phil Ochs was the political songwriter Bob Dylan should have been."

IN PASSING

On Dec. 23, the WHS family lost Joe Dorne at age 92. He was the father of Mark and Mike Dorne, a couple of outstanding baseballers (Mike also was a two-way lineman on the '70 WHS football team), along with daughters Pam and Karen. Joe coached all their baseball and softball teams, and was a fan of WHS football long after Mike's playing days.

DEN'S TOP FIVE

Several weeks ago we got an e-mail from Faithful Reader dsm.14 in Westfield with his favorite opening riffs, as follows:

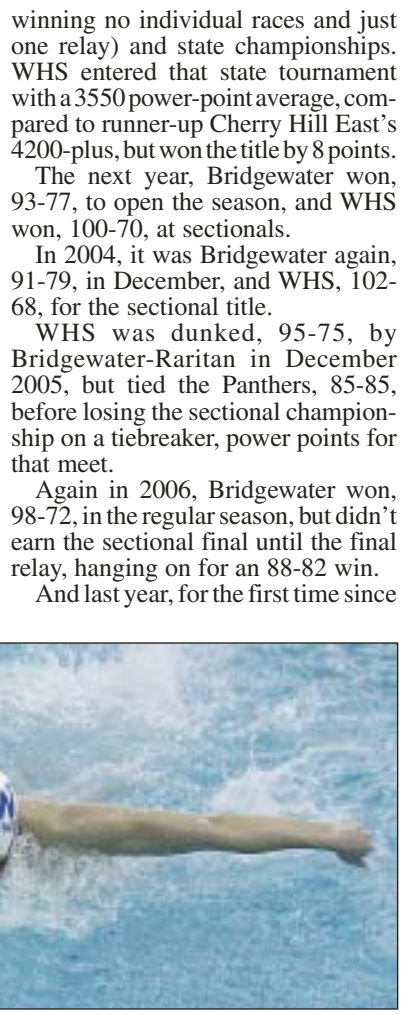
5. House Party, J. Geils Band.
 4. Whipping Post, Allman Brothers Band.
 3. Gimme Some Lovin', Spencer Davis Group.
 2. Layla, Derek and the Dominoes.
 1. Satisfaction, Rolling Stones.
- Not too shabby dsm.14 ... any listing that includes the J. Geils Band has to be knowledgeably researched.
- And we also got a solid top five from FR danks22 from Ohio:
5. Monkey Man, Rolling Stones.
 4. One Way Out, Allman Brothers Band.
 3. Barracuda, Heart.
 2. Pinball Wizard, Who.
 1. Mississippi Queen, Mountain with Leslie West.

Here's my top five ... with apologies to Bat Out of Hell (Meat Loaf), the live version of In Your Eyes (Peter Gabriel), Loan Me a Dime (Boz Scaggs), Babe I'm Gonna Leave You (Led Zeppelin) and Time Has Come Today (Chambers Brothers).

5. Papa Was a Rolling Stone, Temptations.
4. Baba O'Riley, Who.
3. Boogie With Stu, Led Zeppelin.
2. Sweet Jane, Lou Reed and Velvet Underground.
1. All Along the Watchtower, Jimi Hendrix (or Dave Matthews Band live).

(Next time: favorite country and western artists, individual or group, thanks to FR Jeff from Pittstown.)

The Devil's Den appears in The Westfield Leader on the first and third Thursday of each month during the school year. Contact us with comments, complaints and suggestions at bj1019@aol.com. And remember, win or not, WHS4evr!



David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times

MULTI-TALENTED SWIMMER...Blue Devil Becky De La Fuente has and will contribute many team points to the girls swim team.

will be here on Feb. 1.)

The Bridgewater and SP-F results were the largest back-to-back losses in school history. But Bridgewater and SP-F came into the season as the teams to beat in Public A and Public B this winter, and both teams are obviously deserving of being called the best public school teams in the state ... until proven otherwise.

But WHS overcame regular-season losses to SP-F in 1997, '98 and '10 to capture the county title. (In fact, WHS has won 56 of the 59 county meets, including every UCT title since 1957 except 1999, when it narrowly lost to SP-F.) And WHS has a long history of regular-season losses to Bridgewater that are followed by victories at sectionals.

So, how will WHS handle these losses? Will they wave a collective white flag and roll over on their backs? Or will they put in some serious yardage and gear up for another fabulous February run? It's not like WHS is lacking in talent. It just happened to run into a couple of buzz-saws.

But crazy things have been known to happen in February.

In 1997, WHS rebounded from its first loss ever to SP-F – a 103-67 drubbing – to capture the county title by 97 points.

Things tightened up in '98 as SP-F again easily won the dual meet by 24 points, but WHS retained the county title by a slim margin of 14 points, shaving pretty much the entire team to enable the championship streak to reach 42 straight years.

SP-F finally broke through completely in '99, winning the dual meet by 18 and then winning counties by 19½ points. The difference at counties was two come-from-behind anchor legs by the Raiders' Dave Russ that provided a 24-point swing. (WHS also had a winning swimmer disqualified for an illegal cap, a 19-point swing of points.)

In 2000, WHS rebounded from a pre-Christmas 62-point loss to Shawnee to shock everyone and win both the county (by 64 points, despite

1999, the county was up for grabs, after SP-F won the dual meet. But WHS regrouped to capture the county title by 30½ points.

As you can see, anything can happen.

But will it?

WELCOME BACK

Joe Greenspan was a key guy on the 2008 Freshman basketball team. But he went out for swimming in 2009 – earning a varsity letter on a state championship team – before concentrating last winter on soccer, where he proved to be a very talented player. But this winter he's back on the hard court, and coach Kevin Everly has to be overjoyed.

The athletic 6-foot-5 senior had 15 points and 14 rebounds in a close loss to Cranford, then had 10 points and grabbed 22 rebounds as WHS upset previously unbeaten Rahway in the opening round of the Butch Kowal Tournament at Rahway. That one-game rebound total is the sixth best in school history, and the most since Dan Deserio picked off 24 against Newark Tech in 2002. The school record of 28 is held by Hall of Famer Bob King, in 1963 against Linden.

FOOTBALL UPDATE

Faithful reader Bill Monninger of lovely Lake Owassa, Sussex County, e-mailed from Utah to note that WHS's entire 1969 backfield made all state: quarterback Joe Monninger, first-team All Groups in 1970; left half Frank Jackson, first-team All Groups in '69; right half Kevin Bonner, third-team All Groups in 1970; fullback Don Knobloch third-team Group 4 in '69.

WHS4evr! people who were at the Woodman Field in '69 recall the 24-0 win over unbeaten Montclair with the same kind of pride that '77 fans recall that year's 35-0 win over unbeaten Montclair. Both came in Week 7. The '69 win totally put WHS back on the

D. Blair Corbin's

Blue Devils **Raiders**

Walk Down Memory Lane

From the archives of The Westfield Leader and The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times – www.goleader.com – click Archives

January 8, 1998: The brunt of the firepower came from senior Dave Gewirtz this time, as the 7-0 Raider boys' basketball team shook up Malcolm X. Shabazz, 59-51, in Scotch Plains. Gewirtz had a game-high 21 points, Benny Martinez totaled 10 and Don Patterson scored 13.

January 3, 2002: In a flashback to January 25, 2001, the Linden boys' basketball team fell to Westfield for the first time in 16 years. The Tigers were good then, but this season their squad was ranked number 11 in the state. The Blue Devils outlasted their opponents to a 61-56 win in Westfield. Co-Captain Dan DeSerio scored 21 points and grabbed 20 rebounds, as well as amassing four blocks.

January 13, 1999: "Welcome to the Jungle" was the tune played as the Cougar wrestlers stormed onto the mats to warm up prior to their match with the tough Raider team in Cranford. The roar of the crowd was deafening as the outcome of the match was not decided until heavyweight Jim Feeley showed Vinnie Munoz the lights to give the Raiders a 40-30 victory. Tony Melendez scored a 14-

2, majority decision over Bob Verhoeven at 130 lbs. and freshman Lucas Francavilla stacked Cougar Pat Daly in the third period at 103 lbs.

January 6, 2004: Ouch! Misfortune on the part of the Blue Devils on a slip that resulted in the ball rolling out of bounds with 35 seconds remaining translated to good fortune for the No. 14 Linden basketball boys. With one second remaining, guard Ariel Garcia hit a short jumper to give the 6-2 Tigers a 45-43, victory over 4-3 host Westfield. Senior Jan Coccoziello and junior Billy Hearon each bucketed nine points to lead the Blue Devils.

January 7, 2004: The Blue Devil boys winter track team placed sixth with an 18 total at the Union County Relays held at Dunn Arena in Elizabeth. Blue Devils Josh Dennerlein at 2:20.9, Jeff Whitney at 1:00.4, Kris Kagan at 3:31.4 and Jeff Perrella at 4:49.7 ended a six-year drought in the distance medley relay – caused by Cranford – by winning the event with a time of 11:43.3.

January 3, 2004: Sophomores Derrick Character and Lance Thomas controlled the boards, totaling 18 rebounds, rejected eight shots and combined for 22 points to lead the 5-1 Raider boys' basketball team past visiting Hillsborough, 67-45.