

## Pioneers Stop Raider Laxers

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ing back, but we had too many mental mistakes today, too many turnovers; too many missed opportunities. We had 49 shots; we had seven goals. That's about 15 percent we shot today. I must tip my hat to a very quality team; a well coached team. They have a couple of offensive players that can really get the job done," Raider Head Coach Nick Micelli said.

In the opening period, the 2-0 Pioneers tallied the first three goals off fast breaks. Harvey, Ebert and Killen each scored, respectively, all within 12 minutes. Cunningham powered in a goal at the 3:41 mark. Pioneer Singer scored then Greenberg notched a goal with 1:18 left to make the score 4-2.

The 1-1 Raiders opened up the second period with a quick score from Charos, but the Pioneers changed the momentum with goals from Harvey and Ebert to enjoy a 6-3 cushion.

"They tried to shut everyone off. Ebert had the ball on top and he just put it to the hole. That put us up by three. That was the big goal, because they tried to take it away. They take it away, they have a chance to come back," Pioneer Coach Carangelo said.

With 3:31 left, Raider Erickson flicked in a goal. Harvey added his second goal to make the score, 7-4, at the half. The Raiders finished with a 26-9 shot advantage in the first half.

"They were giving us outside shots, but the shots we had were not the quality type that we were looking for. Twenty-six shots! Yes! It's very disappointing. But it's something we need to build off," Cunningham said.

The Pioneers found themselves in harm's way, incurring four penalties early in the third quarter. The Raiders took advantage, commanded possession and netted three goals. Cunningham found the mark at 7:33 and Gerrity hit pay dirt five minutes later. Pioneer Burke scored 30 seconds later and Erickson answered to make the score 8-7.

The Pioneers settled the outcome in the fourth period. With less than 10 minutes remaining, Harvey and Ebert flicked in goals then Burke followed torching the net with his second goal.

"Obviously, it's a setback because this is a big game within our division. Pretty much the jest of what we did defensively wasn't sound, but what hurt us a lot was ball movement. Our transition team needs to pick the ball up, get the ball from the defensive side to the offensive side. I feel we need to bounce back in practice and get the next few, continue to keep going and get a good season out of it,"

defenseman Tyler Haack said.

"What we have been stressing is playing together, not doing too much. Sometimes and we have a lot of talented guys, some people want to do too much themselves. If we play within ourselves and if we take what defenses give us and we play together as a defense, we're a tough team to play against. I think we did that for the most part of four quarters today. That I think made the difference. In certain situations, we have to play smarter, keep our sticks low, just doing all the little things we talk about. Our goals today were to win face-offs, win ground balls and play within ourselves each and every quarter," Coach Carangelo said.

"Positives! I can say, we just had this game early. We had this loss now. This feeling sticks with them. This is a game we felt we could have won. Throwing the ball away and not finishing hurt us today. I thought senior captain Haack did a great job with the defense. I thought senior captain Cunningham did a pretty job with the offense, but we need to take advantage of the opportunities that we had both offensively and defensively," Coach Micelli concluded.

Sc. Pl.-Fanwood	2	2	3	0	7
New Providence	4	3	1	3	11

### Probitas Verus Honos

## Mendham Stalls Blue Devils

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un-composed. It took us a minute to find out what we wanted to do. Once we adjusted, we played the way we needed to play," Coach Warner said.

Blue Devil Anna Tanji began the momentum shift with a goal within the first four minutes. Two minutes later, senior Courtney Weisse spotted senior Elizabeth Cusick charging down the center. She flicked her ball and Cusick ripped the net for the first of her two goals. After Graziano scored her fourth goal, Weisse fed Mary Randazzo for a goal to make the score 9-4.

Maita netted a goal with 5:46 remaining then with 2:42 on the clock, Weisse found Cusick for another score. Cusick's two goals upped her career total to 198, breaking Morgan Lang's WHS record of 191. Weisse's three assists upped her number to 87, also a WHS record.

"We moved the ball very well when

we had possession. We worked on moving the ball fast and finding those cutters, Courtney, Elizabeth, Mary and Anna Tanji. Those are our girls who are able to move and receive the ball and it looks beautiful. Possession is the key in women's lacrosse," Coach Warner said.

The Lady Minutemen continued with their "freeze" technique to wind down the clock. The Blue Devils finished with nine shots on goal, 11 draw controls and 15 ground balls, which Cusick scooped six of them. Goalie Mallory Weisse made eight saves.

"In the second half, once we got those jitters out, we played a lot more focused. Even though we lost, I am very proud of how they played and they kept their mind in it, pushing forward. They never gave up," Coach Warner said.

Mendham	7	3	10
Westfield	1	4	5

### Devil's Den

## Matthew Coming 'Home' To Play Pro Softball

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



It was a beautiful spring afternoon in April 2006. The varsity softball team was on the field next to the parking lot and down at the other end of the field a junior varsity game was being played. All of a sudden, a ball hit by a jayvee player entered the varsity playing field and a quick glance down at the other field showed a runner sprinting around second base already.

Almost that fast, the runner sprinting around second base that day - freshman Cyndil Matthew - was called up to the varsity by coach Tara Pignoli. And it didn't take very long to realize that Cyndil Matthew was something special.

(Please, no letters to the editor when I say that she "didn't swing the bat like a girl" or that she "swung the bat like a guy." But that's the truth. And you know what they say about first impressions.)

So when I got an e-mail from Caitlin MacDonald, who took over as WHS's varsity coach in 2009, last week informing me that Matthew was the No. 10 pick of the National Pro Fastpitch League draft by the NY/NJ Comets, it hardly came as a surprise. The main question I had was who were the first nine picks?

Matthew hit .486, .642, .625 and .467 during her four years at WHS, mostly playing third base and pitching. And yes, those numbers are correct. She was a three-time all-state selection.

At the University of Massachusetts, the numbers have continued for Matthew, now a regular in left field. After hitting just .160 in 44 games as a bit player as a freshman, she hit .324 and .409 in 100 starts the next two years. So far this spring, she's batting at a .388 clip.

The Comets are based out of Bridgewater, so it will be a homecoming for Matthew.

"I'm speechless, to tell you the truth," Matthew was quoted as saying. "I'm just really happy. This is a dream come true. It doesn't get any better than getting to play the sport you love, at the highest level, and to be close to home."

Elaine Sortino, the softball coach at UMass since 1980, has seen plenty of great players as she as racked up an 1,167 and 483 record.

"She has worked very, very hard to accomplish this goal," Sortino said. "She has consistently worked on her offensive game and become a great outfielder, too. I am so happy for her."

At Westfield, Matthew holds the school career records for:

Runs with 116 (runnerup Nancy Kasko has 79); Hits with 130 (runnerups Kim Kumpf, Susan Phillips and MaryKate Flannery have 107); RBI with 88; Home runs with 20 (runnerup Sarah Cozewith has 17); Extra-base hits with 44 (tied with Jackie Booth); Batting average with .558.

The Comets will be playing 16 home games - against the Chicago Bandits, the Akron Racers and USSSA Florida Pride - at a variety of minor league and similar ballparks, including TD Park Stadium in Bridgewater, Yogi Berra Stadium in Montclair, Coca Cola Park Stadium in Allentown, Pa., and Provident Park Bank Stadium in Pomona, N.Y.

Matthew will be reunited on the Comets with former UMass pitcher Sara Plourde, who led the nation in strikeouts in 2010, 2011 and 2012. Former Auburn ace Angel Bunner will provide a left-handed windmill. She comes from Falls, Pa., and starred at Conwell Egan High School.

The 10th season of the NPF will kick off for the Comets on June 13, 6:30 p.m., against the Chicago Bandits in Pomona, N.Y.

### FOOTBALL UPDATE

A proposal to change the football

playoffs so that they play down to single Group champions, instead of four sectional champions in each Group, passed its first hurdle last week - the NJSIAA's Advisory Committee. The proposal will be voted on next month by the NJSIAA Executive Committee.

If the proposal passes there - it needs to receive a two-thirds majority vote - the new system could be in place for the 2014 season.

There is talk of an eight-game regular season, of an earlier start, of skipping the bye week, of keeping Thanksgiving Day games. So we will hold off on speculation.

One possibility, however, is that if the new proposal wins, WHS may lose either Plainfield or Scotch Plains from its schedule. Since the teams would be put into similar-size divisions for power point purposes, Westfield would be in with the Group 4 schools, while Plainfield and SP-F would be with the Group 3s. Westfield could either schedule one of them, or schedule both of them and not be serious about making the playoffs.

"No way do I want to lose Scotch Plains or Plainfield," athletic supervisor Sandy Mamary said recently. "They told me if this passes, that we would be able to keep one. That's not an option. Why can't we play both of them? And Cranford, Rahway and Clark? We play somebody like Franklin or Bridgewater and we lose money on concessions because they don't bring any fans. We play Cranford and it'd be a huge crowd."

### BASEBALL UPDATE

The last time I'd seen the WHS baseball team was after an indoor scrimmage against Delaware Valley. Coach Bob Brewster was looking forward to the first week of what promised to be an exciting season. He was thinking that the toughest team his team played that opening week was Hillsborough, the defending Somerset County Tournament and Central Jersey Group 4 champion, and 2012 state Group 4 finalist.

He wasn't looking past Scotch Plains, J.P. Stevens or Union, especially since two of them were conference games (and one of them was Scotch Plains!), but . . .

So you can imagine my surprise Friday going to watch the 0-3 Blue Devils take on Hillsborough. And, of course, the 0-3 Devils played like they were expected to play this season, getting solid pitching (Mike Androconis, with Quinn Dursee's help), playing good

defense (after committing a half season's worth of errors - 14 - in the three losses) and delivering timely hits in an 8-4 win.

(You could call it an upset win, or you could be like me and say the first three games were upset losses.)

Remember, there were four returning starters from last year's 21-4 team, and the rest were part of a 21-1 junior varsity. They're gonna come around, and I'll still be very surprised if they aren't playing for county, sectional and state honors.

### TENNIS UPDATE

It looks like the tennis team will have some stiff competition when the county tournament is held April 18-19 in Plainfield. While the Devils have won the last eight UCTs, and 32 since the event started in 1971, they dropped a 3-2 decision to Summit last week. Adam Greene at No. 2 singles won in 2012, while Justin Cafiero teamed with the graduated Jacob Ziff to win at No. 2 doubles.

The Summit loss especially hurt because a day earlier the Devils had gutted out a 3-2 win over Livingston when Cafiero and Ben Cymbala won 7-6 in the third set at No. 1 doubles. And it was followed by a 3-2 loss to J.P. Stevens.

### SWIMMING UPDATE

WHS juniors Caroline Baldwin and Sarah Cronin continued to sizzle last week at the YMCA national championships in Greensboro, N.C.

Baldwin was fourth in the 50-yard freestyle (23.13), fifth in the 100 backstroke (55.06), sixth in the 200 back (2:08, 1:59.30 in trials) and 10th in the 100 free (50.63). She also turned in a 1:53.01 split on the 800 free relay and a 22.73 anchor of the 200 FR. Cronin was 13th in the 100 free (50.99), and swam 58.30 in the 100 back and 1:51.05 in the 200 free. She also had freestyle splits of 23.33, 23.38 and 50.77, 50.78, 50.71.

Other top performances for WHS swimmers included: Matt Daniel: 51.90 100 fly, 48.27 100 free, 1:55.34 200 fly, 22.04 and 47.04 free relay splits. Tyler Lessner: 2:10.18 200 breast, 53.65 100 fly, 58.98 100 breast, 22.17 50 free split, 27.14 50 breast split. Max Shin: 22.08 free split. Stephen Husch: 53.80 100 fly, 58.95 100 breast, 1:58.98 200 IM. Aram Barmakian: 59.84 100 breast, 2:81 200 IM. Luke McGroary: 21.89 50 free split. Erika Daniel: 58.39 100 fly. Ellie Reinhardt: 53.74 100 free split. Allie McBrearty: 55.54 100 free. Caroline Basil: 58.73 100 back, 2:14.27 200 IM.

### COLLEGE UPDATE

Meade Brewster, a junior at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Va., is captain of the women's lacrosse team. The daughter of former WHS'er Daryl Brewster ('75), and the granddaughter of Marge and the late Bob Brewster, won 12 letters at Mendham High School, where she was an all-American in lacrosse.

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