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THE WEEK IN SPORTS

Sports Section - Pages 11-15



David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times

SCOOTING AROUND THE LEFT...Senior Blue Devil halfback Diano Reavis, No. 2, scoots around the left side for a moderate gain against the Cougars. Reavis scored the winning touchdown on a one-yard slant in overtime.

REAVIS SLIPS IN FROM THE ONE, COOK INTERCEPTS

Shaky Devils Finally Awaken; Skid by Cougars, 14-7, in OT

By STEVEN KRAKAUER with assistance from DAVID B. CORBIN

Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times
Most likely, there were no smiles on the faces of the Westfield High School football players, even though they managed to slip by the very hungry Cranford Cougars with a 14-7 overtime victory at Gary Kehler Stadium in Westfield on September 8. A one-yard slice into the end zone by senior Diano Reavis in overtime followed by a key interception from senior safety Jay Cook, did allow the

Blue Devils to breathe a sigh of relief. One thing for sure, there was no smile on the face of Blue Devil Head Coach Ed Tranchina. "We stunk. We're 100 times better than we played today. We lucked out," he said. The Devils' offense was dismal throughout the first half, tallying only 121 yards; primarily because mental errors and untimely penalties disrupted their rhythm. It was evident on their first series when fullback

Matt Daly penetrated the Cougar 36, but a fumble on the next play gave the ball to Cranford. In the second quarter, the Blue Devils had another drive negated on two offside penalties and a disheartening clipping penalty that nullified a 16-yard, first down catch by fullback Brian Ludlum. Although the Cougars' offense was equally unproductive, amassing a mere 108 yards, they came to play

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SCHILLER HITS 8 OF 12 FOR 137 YARDS, TWO TDS

Lethal Raider Offense Quiets M. X. Shabazz Bulldogs, 27-6

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

Season opening football games usually result in both teams making plenty of mistakes. Usually the team that makes the least mistakes emerges victorious. Perhaps, the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School football team made its share of mistakes but the Raiders hit pay dirt four times and silenced Malcolm X. Shabazz, 27-6, in Scotch Plains on September 8.

Although the offensive line appeared to have some coordination problems, senior quarterback Brian Schiller showed remarkable poise and passed for 137 yards and two touchdowns on eight completions. Although the "Wild Dog" defense may not have been at its best, timely sacks by senior linebacker Andrew Pavoni and linemen senior Brad Belford and junior Matt Loomis held the talented Bulldog running backs to just one touchdown. "We had a good opening drive. I don't think we played good defense

but we did shut them down in the first half after their (Shabazz) opening drive (touchdown)," said Raider Head Coach Steve Ciccotelli. "We were really sloppy on both sides of the ball up front in the second half. I think the heat may have had something to do with it. We were sucking wind."

Maybe the offensive line was sloppy and maybe the defense missed some tackles; however, what was established, was that the Raider offense had several weapons and the weapons were lethal as four different Raiders scored.

"That's what we are trying to do. We scored all on big plays," said Ciccotelli.

The Raiders struck first with 8:27 left in the first quarter with a 66-yard march ending in a 25-yard touchdown gallop by fullback Pavoni. Schiller doing the extra-point kicking, split the uprights to put the Raiders up, 7-0. Shabazz, with the running of halfback Amir Pinnix, who finished with 86 yards rushing, and quarterback Jabril Stokes, who rushed

for 59 yards, immediately answered with a 57-yard touchdown drive when Stokes bolted over the goal from three yards out. A two-point pass conversion failed.

"I'm going to have nightmares about the quarterback," said Ciccotelli of Stokes. "He's like lightning in a bottle. Pinnix was very good. They have some big linemen. They have four or five division I players. They have some good players but today we were the better team."

It took just two plays for the Raiders to take 14-6 lead with 2:21 left in the quarter. Schiller hit senior wide receiver Ray Williams with a six-yard completion then connected to senior Steve Williams on a quick slant for a 50-yard touchdown play.

The Raiders' special teams rattled Shabazz with 8:25 left in the second quarter when junior Kyle Adams fielded a punt on his own 20 and returned it 80 yards for the touchdown. Schiller's third PAT gave the

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David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
PART OF THE VERSATILITY...Raider halfback Kyle Adams, No. 24, slants right for a decent gain. Adams also had an 80-yard punt return for a touchdown.



David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
SHOWING SMOOTH MOVES...Senior quarterback Brian Schiller tossed touchdown passes of 50 and 34 yards.

WOODRING GOES 3-FOR-3, HOMERS KNOCKS IN 3

St. Jude Fulfills Final Quest; Wins St. Bart's Title, 14-9

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

Impossible dreams came true at Brookside Park in Scotch Plains on Labor Day. St. Jude's quest for immortality came true when it outlasted a feisty St. Thomas team, 14-9, to claim the St. Bartholomew's

Oldtimers Men's Softball League championship game. Witnessed by an exuberant crowd of perhaps 300+, St. Jude catapulted to a 9-3 lead after three innings and held tight to outlast the late offensive surge of St. Thomas. The Jude's mounted a 16-hit assault, led by Kevin

Woodring who went 3-for-3, including a solo home run, and drove in three runs. Teammate Tom Ulichny rapped two singles and crossed the plate three times.

St. Thomas did all it could to prevent the quest by answering with 15 hits, including two homers, a triple and two doubles. Steve Pietrucha went 3-for-3, including a triple, and drove in three runs. Bob Elmi poked an RBI single and smashed a two-run homer to put St. Jude on edge.

Once again the intensity of a championship game brought the cream to the top in superb fielding plays that determined the course of the game. St. Jude squashed two St. Thomas rallies with key double plays, one in the third inning and another in the fifth. Ace pitcher Joe Matuska initiated a 1-4-3 double play in the third, then shortstop Woodring, with the bases loaded and one out, scooped a grounder in the fifth, tagged second and fired to first to end a Tom threat.

The Toms answered defensively with two excellent fielding plays from pitcher Keith Gibbons and another slick 1-3-6 double play involving Gibbons. Russ Voorhees and Pietrucha made fine snags in right field in the third and ninth, respectively, and first baseman Bill Mirto made a great scoop out of the dirt to end the eighth inning.

Jude's quest began with a four-run surge in the top of the second. Woodring singled and Paul Raphael's hopper eluded the second baseman. Matuska dropped an RBI single into left and Steve Ferro plunked an RBI single to right. Bill Hicks reached base safely on a fielder's choice then John Chupko and Dennis Hercul both

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David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
SAFE AT HOME PLATE...St. Jude hitter Kevin Woodring slides safely home in the St. Bart's championship game against St. Thomas.

Devil Gymnasts Set Sights for State Title

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

What accomplishments remain for a team that has won seven-straight Union County tournaments (UCT), three-straight North 2 titles and placed second in the state tournament twice in a row while finishing with a 12-0 record? The answer is the state championship and that is what the Westfield High School gymnastics team has yet to accomplish.

The pool of talent to achieve that goal definitely exists as the Blue Devils, who boast 23 team members, have returned all of their top-five gymnasts and will be led by senior Tri-Captains Lauren and Jessica Caravello and Bethany Goldman. Joining them are veterans senior Christina Mazza, junior Rachael Skolnick and sophomore Krissy Valla.

"We are very fortunate to have our top gymnasts back. They have worked on their skills and are ready to compete," said Head Coach Melissa Greenwald. "We have a stronger team and have put in a few new skills."

Last year, Lauren Caravello, who is a two time state champion in the uneven bars, was the North Jersey, Section 2 Gymnast of the Year. In

1999, she placed second in the All-Around at the state tournament, and in 2000, she finished ninth in a very

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ON A QUEST FOR NUMBER 1...The Blue Devil gymnasts placed second in the states two years in a row and seek to be No. 1. Pictured, left to right, are: front; Rachael Scolnick, Krissy Valla and Christina Mazza; back, Lauren Caravello, Bethany Goldman and Jessica Caravello.

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