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THE WEEK IN SPORTS

Sports Section
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COOK RETIRES 11 IN A ROW; KOKET SCORES 1ST, MAKES FINAL PUT-OUT

Blue Devils Jump on ALJ Crusaders, 7-4, Win Magical 11th UCT Championship

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

The number 11 played a significant role at the Union County Baseball Tournament at Memorial Field in Linden on May 25. Not only did Westfield High School win its 11th UCT title by defeating A. L. Johnson, 7-4, but also the number 11 showed up in several additional instances.

The last time the Blue Devils won a UCT baseball title was in 1997

when they toppled Summit, 7-1. Phil Orsini, an 11th grader at the time, was the hero with a two-run homer.

This year, senior pitcher Jay Cook (uniform No. 9) and senior centerfielder Ben Koket (uniform No. 11) contributed to the majority of those 11s. Cook recorded seven strikeouts, yielded three walks and hit a batter – the sum equals 11. After a shaky start, he retired 11 straight batters from the third inning through

the sixth inning. Koket (No. 11) got the first hit of the game and scored the first run. He also recorded the final putout with a brilliant catch in centerfield.

Note that the sum of the score equals 11. The Blue Devils also had 11 hits and hit the Crusader pitcher the hardest in the fifth and sixth innings – 5+6=11. Additionally, 11 Blue Devils stepped to the plate in those innings. Senior Jim McKeon (No. 22) – 2x11 – had a two-run double and a one-run single.

Explaining the fifth and sixth inning sharpness, Blue Devil Head Coach Bob Brewster said, "They brought a new pitcher in and he didn't have the changeup that the first pitcher had. I can't believe how hard (Mike) Sofka hit the ball and didn't get a hit out of it."

The magic began in the top of the first when Koket hooked a double down the left field line and Mike Sofka followed with an RBI double in the same location. Cook brought Sofka home with a grounder to short. Three more Blue Devils crossed the plate in the second when Matt Rothstein singled, John Leonardis drilled a double to right, McKeon ripped his two-run double and Koket made the score 5-0 with an RBI sacrifice fly to right.

On the mound, Cook had a shaky start in both innings. In the first, he



David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
NOT A RUMBLE, A CHAMPIONSHIP...The Blue Devils mob pitcher Jay Cook (No. 9) and Ben Koket (No. 11) – neither can be seen – after defeating A. L. Johnson, 7-4, for the Union County title. It was Westfield's 11th UCT title.



David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
CHECKING OUT THE OPPOSITION...The Blue Devils watch intently as the A. L. Johnson Crusaders take infield practice before the Union County finals. Their observations must have paid off as the Blue Devils defeated A. L. Johnson, 7-4, to capture their 11th Union County title.

WILLIAMS WINS 4; DIDARIO 2, KOS, CARMODY, MORONEY 1

Raider Girls Win 3rd Straight Group 3 Section 2 Track Title

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

A total team effort across the board earned the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School girls' track and field team its third-straight North Jersey, Section 2 Group 3 title in Mount Olive on May 25. The defending champion Raider boys, with a total of 67.5, finished second to Morris Hills with 70. The Governor Livingston (GL) girls finished second in Group 2 with 57 points and the GL boys placed third at 47.

Walden also placed third in the 1,600 at 4:25.3.

Raider Chris Feighner shoved the metal orb 49'9.75" to place second in the shot put and Shawn Doyle took sixth with a push of 45'5.25".

Seniors Jill Koscielecki and Jayne Ferraro – both heading to East Stroudsburg University in the fall – accumulated 54 of the Raider girl's points. Koscielecki who participated in three of her four events on Friday, began by edging Ferraro in the 400-meter hurdles. Koscielecki finished in 1:04.9 – a Raider record – and Ferraro, two-time defending champion in the event, crossed in 1:05.5.

Ferraro, who hasn't competed in nearly three weeks, commented prior to the event, "I'm very nervous. I haven't really run in three weeks and, during practice, we didn't run for time so we wouldn't kill ourselves. I'm really not sure what time I'm going to run."

After finishing the event,

Koscielecki said, "I felt the wind behind me. I'm not sure it was that big of a deal but it definitely picked up before our race. It was my personal best, so I'm happy."

After finishing, Ferraro said, "It was a struggle all the way. I am so happy for Jill but the point is I'm a little disappointed in myself because I won it two years in a row. The three weeks (injured) took its toll. That's all."

Later Koscielecki finished fourth in the long jump with a leap of 15'10" – teammate Jenna Balestriere seized second at 15'10.25" – and came in second in the 400 meters with a time of 58.8. Ferraro went on the place third in the 200 meters at 26.5 and sixth in the high jump with a height of 4'6". In the final event, the 4x400, Koscielecki, Ferraro, Rachel Jones and Aja Bundy had the best time of 4:00.1 to seal the title for the Raiders.

Jones also finished fifth in the 400



Fred Lecomte for The Leader and The Times
TAKING THIRD...Blue Devil Rich Miller soars 21'4.25" to place third in the long jump.

HUBBARD TAKES 2ND IN POLE VAULT

Devil MacNeil Gets 1st In Group 4 Sectionals

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

The Westfield High School boys placed eighth with a 33 total while the girls finished 11th with a 15 total in the North Jersey, Section 2, Group 4 Track and Field Championships in Roxbury on May 25. Blue Devil freshman Emily MacNeil finished first in the 800-meters and senior Joe Hubbard placed second in the pole vault.

MacNeil looked great down the stretch and crossed in 2:19.2 beating her nearest competitor by two seconds. Pleased with the win, MacNeil said, "I knew from the onset I really had to go hard, because Giselle Joshua from West Orange had run under 2:14 in past meets, so I just had to go out and kick it as hard as I could the whole way. When she started to pick it up before I did and she came up on me, I pushed it a little harder to keep her off."

"She went out a little better today, more aggressive on the opening 100, which was good," said Blue Devil Coach Jennifer Buccino. "And the final quarter was very nice too. She

really held it off, took it more aggressively and she got it under 2:20, which is important for next weeks state group 4 meet."

Earlier, MacNeil took fifth in 400-meters with a time of 59.5. Blue Devils Deenie Quinn, Erin McClellan, Anne Onishi and Sarah Mahran placed sixth in the 1,600 medleys with a time of 4:09.1. In the field events, Sara Burke had a leap of 15-51/2 in the long jump to grab fifth place. Burke also had a great result in the pole vault as she soared 8'6" to qualify for the Meet of Champions.

Although the Westfield boys placed eighth, several boys were impressive. Senior Joe Hubbard finished second in the pole vault with a height of 13 feet. LaQuan McCoy crossed fourth in the 100-meter dash with a time of 11.4. The awesome four-some of Diano Reeves, Rich Miller, Earl Lambert and Alexis Gonzalez teamed in the 1,600-meter relay in a time of 3:22.5 to place second behind Plainfield.

"It was a great effort by both

GELMETTI GETS 2 HITS; CORBETT, MAC GET 1 RBI EACH

Lancers Penetrate Blue Devil Pitching, Win, 5-2, in Sections

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

Little spark came from the top-seeded Westfield High School softball team's bats and visiting, eighth-seeded Livingston took advantage with 10 hits of spark to pull a 5-2 upset victory in the first round of the North Jersey, Section 2, Group 4 tournament on May 23. The 19-5 Blue Devils could only muster six hits and had a major scoring opportunity squelched to prevent a momentum swing that may have changed the course of the game.

Both teams were able to get the bat on the ball as Blue Devil pitcher

Caitlin MacDonald – normally prolific with strikeouts – could only sit down three Lancer batters while Lancer junior Emily Marion fanned just four Blue Devils. However, both pitchers kept the batters off-balance, and of the 15 hits, only one – a lined single to center by Blue Devil Rachel Wagner was hit with emphasis.

"They played well. They made every play. They didn't make any errors," said Blue Devil Head Coach Maggie MacFadden of Livingston's readiness. "They were putting the ball in play. One reason for that was Caitlin has a severely pulled hip flexor muscle."

McFadden, who will retire after 13 years as Blue Devil Softball Head Coach but will continue as the Field Hockey Head Coach, added, "She (MacDonald) pitched well enough to keep us in the game. She didn't get hit hard at all today. We just didn't play well. We didn't play like a number-one seeded team today."

MacDonald got into a bit of trouble right off the bat as the Lancers scored a run in the top of the first. Katie Manger drew a leadoff walk and moved to second on a groundout. Barrie Shron, who finished with two hits, an RBI and a run scored, dribbled an RBI single between the first baseman and second baseman.

The 16-10 Lancers went to work again in the third, putting two more clear marks on home plate. Manger drew her second leadoff walk and Erica Pally followed by reaching base



David B. Corbin for The Leader and The Times
IN THE LEAD...Raider Bob Wallden, left, overtakes KC Brown of Cranford in the second lap of the 3,200 meters. Brown and Wallden jockeyed for position throughout the race.



David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
TOUGH PLAY AT HOME PLATE...Blue Devil catcher Tara Dowling grabs the ball as a Lancer slides safely into home plate. Livingston defeated the Blue Devils, 5-2, to advance in the Section 2, Group 4 Tournament



David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
A VERY FAMILIAR OUTCOME...Raider Ray Williams crosses first to win the 100-meter dash. Williams also won the 200 meters, 400 meters and long jump to contribute 40 points to his team's total.

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