

BALCH, HALPIN, SPRUNG, DAVIS ARE RAIDERS' TOP 4

Raider Golfers Stay Unbeaten, Look Forward to UC Tourney

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

Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Head Coach Steve Ciccotelli's golf team extended its dual match record to 8-0 when the "B" team defeated Elizabeth, 165-220, at the nine-hole Scotch Hills Golf Course on April 21. This year's Raiders are on the verge of having one of their best teams in decades and are looking forward to continued success.

After the Raiders' four-top golfers, Jack Davis, Mike Sprung, Brian Halpin and Clayton Balch teed off to play a practice round, the "B" team of Mike Muller, John Katz, Brendan Weber and Rob Burke began their match play with the Minutemen. Muller finished first with a score of 39 and Katz was second with a 40 while Weber and Burke turned in scores of 43 on the par-33 course.

On April 18 at Shackamaxon Golf and Country Club in Scotch Plains, the Raiders finished second with a total of

323 in the Watchung Conference A Division, coming up just three strokes shy of Westfield's 320 total. Balch, a junior, surprised many by finishing second on the par-72 course with a 78, two strokes behind Blue Devil Jimmy Arbes. Halpin finished fourth with an 80, Sprung was eighth at 82 and Davis finished ninth with an 83.

"Some of our stronger competition is coming up later in the season but I'm happy," said Ciccotelli. "In the conference, we shot the lowest score that we've shot since I have been a head coach. I was proud the way they played. Westfield was just better than us that day. In other years, this would have won it."

"Clayton had a great round. He's a talented kid. Most of these kids played last year. He's a little more mature. His maturity has helped him play better. He got up and down a lot. The bottom line is to get the ball in the hole in the least amount of strokes and he did that. He hit some bad shots but he

never gave up," added Ciccotelli. "Davis is steady for us. I don't think he played as well as he liked to have played at Shack. He had an 83. He has done better than that but that's golf! Brian had a great round and Mike Sprung had an 82 and ended up doubling the last hole. So we were right there. We are looking at three strokes with four guys over 18 holes. We are all juniors. The only senior who played in the tournament for us was Mike Sprung. He will be a four-year letterman when he's done. We have a real strong nucleus for next year."

With the scores that the "A" squad has been turning in this season and their second-place performance at the Watchung Conference Tournament, the Raiders have high hopes of dethroning defending champion Westfield at the upcoming Union County Tournament that will be held at Echo Lake Country Club in Westfield on May 12.

"They are the team in our county to beat," said Ciccotelli. "Our kids know that and we just have to give it our best. Again, if we shoot 323, that's a good round."



Devil's Den Gary Kehler, George Kapner: Two Coaches for the Ages

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

It might've happened this past Monday at Hillsborough. Or maybe it was Tuesday against visiting Bergen Catholic. If not, it will happen very soon.

"It" is the changing of the guard at the top of the all-time coaching wins list at Westfield High School, where George Kapner either will pass or already has passed Gary Kehler.

Kehler posted 739 career coaching victories in football, wrestling and golf in a career that spanned the late '50s into the mid-'80s. Kapner, whose coaching career started in the mid-1970s when Kehler was in the prime time of his own career, brought 727 wins into this school year, from girls soccer, boys soccer, girls basketball, boys swimming and boys tennis.

The record would've already fallen, but the boys soccer team had a worst-ever 2-12-3 record.

"I've been involved with soccer since I was 15, in ninth grade, and all the way through high school, college, semipro, coaching girls and boys, and that's the first time I've ever played on or coached a sub-.500 team," Kapner said. "It was just one of those things."

So Kapner started the spring season needing 11 wins to pass the legendary "G.K." His team had 10 of those wins entering this week's play, after last Thursday's 4-1 victory over Bayonne knotted the two close friends at the top.

Kapner will be the first to admit that many of the coaching techniques and disciplines he's used over the years were learned from the master. "Gary was a great influence on me," Kapner has said many times.

time since Westfield won a state title in tennis (1988) and it'd be neat to have coached a state champion team in four different sports."

The win-loss breakdown by sport for both GKs:

Kapner (as of last Sunday): girls soccer (194-29-9), boys soccer (174-73-24), boys swimming (42-10), girls basketball (42-105), boys tennis (287-81). Total: 739 wins, 298 losses, 33 ties.

Kehler: football (171-26-7), wrestling (239-45-10), golf (329-44-6). Total: 739 wins, 115 losses, 23 ties. UCT tennis

Speaking of tennis, the annual Union County Tournament will be played today and tomorrow on the courts at Plainfield's Hub Stine Field. Summit will again be the team to beat.

Westfield, which has a record 24 UCT championship trophies, hasn't won the event since 1998, the last year of a seven-year run.

team beats Irvington.

April 30, 1999: WHS wins both doubles but Summit has two winners and three runners up to win the Union County Tournament and end WHS's nine-year reign as boys tennis champions.

May 6, 1930: Steve Banyasz fans 17 batters but WHS loses to Roselle Park 9-1.

May 6, 1938: The WHS tennis team, led by captain Ev Pearsall, beats Hillside 5-0 to end a rare 15-match losing streak.

May 6, 1947: WHS's Ron Roth strikes out 19 in a 4-3 eight-inning loss to Union.

May 6, 1963: WHS golfers capture the first Watchung Conference championship.

Kapner Sets Record

It was just a matter of time but Westfield High School boys tennis coach George Kapner grabbed victory No. 740 when his boys defeated No. 11 Bergen Catholic, 3-2, in Westfield on April 26. The Blue Devils won both doubles matches and at second singles.

DEN TRIVIA

Who was the first WHS boys lacrosse player to top 40 goals in a season?

CATCHING UP WITH ...

Chuck Cosenza, WHS's last state wrestling champion (at 148 pounds, back in 1976), has spent almost his entire post-college career in the U.S. Army, after joining the ROTC at the University of Iowa.

Starting as a member of the 82nd Airborne Division and earning his Master Jump Wings (over 50 jumps), Cosenza later trained for and became a U.S. Army Ranger and still later a Green Beret/Special Forces, serving in several Latin American countries and also Iraq.

Now a Lt. Colonel and living in Manasquan, Cosenza is still serving his country, having received an appointment to the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.

REMEMBER WHEN ...

April 29, 1930: Carl Blank whiffs 15 Summit batters in a 5-3 WHS victory.

April 29, 1950: Columbia's John Reynolds strikes out 16 WHS batters.

April 29, 1970: Skeeter MacCloskey pitches a no-hitter as he out-duels Jim Burke of Roselle Catholic 1-0.

April 29, 1987: Kristen Froden drives in nine runs as WHS softball

Union County Tourney Baseball Seedings:

The 9-2 Cranford High School baseball team received the top seed for the Union County Tournament, which will begin its first round Saturday, April 30. Roselle Catholic (9-3) received the second seed and 8-5 Westfield received the third seed. Governor Livingston (10-2) rounded off the top four.

The quarterfinal round will be played on May 7 at the field of the higher seed. The semifinals are scheduled for noon and 3 p.m. at Veterans Field in Rahway and the championship game is set for 2 p.m. on Saturday, May 21, at Memorial Field in Linden.

TOURNAMENT SEEDS:

- 17. Summit (3-1) at 16. Plainfield (1-10), winner at 1. Cranford (9-2)
- 9. Union Catholic (7-2) at 8. Dayton (9-1)
- 12. Rahway (6-4) at 5. Union (8-4)
- 20. Hillside (3-6) at 13. New Providence (6-3), winner at 4. Governor Livingston (10-2)
- 19. St. Mary's (3-6) at 14. Roselle Park, winner at 3. Westfield (8-5)
- 11. Linden (7-5) at 6. Elizabeth (10-6)
- 10. A. L. Johnson (5-4) at 7. Scotch Plains-Fanwood (7-5)
- 18. Brearley (0-8) at 15. Oratory (6-3), winner at 2. Roselle Catholic (9-3)



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For a tour of our facility, please contact our Membership Chairman at 908-403-0964. Admission is limited to individuals approved by the Roselle Golf Club Board of Trustees.



David B. Corbin for The Leader and The Times
Raiders Clayton Balch, top, and Jack Davis, bottom.



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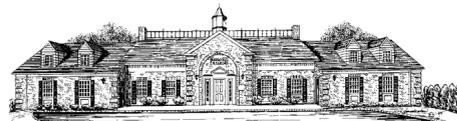


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