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THE WEEK IN SPORTS

Sports Section
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KLIMOWICZ FINISHES CAREER WITH 1,948 POINTS

Raider Senior Girls Marked End of an Era in Basketball

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

The graduation of four super athletes marks the end of an era for the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School girls basketball team. When Hillary Klimowicz, Jenny Burke, Maura Gillooly and Elizabeth DeCataldo first stepped onto the court to play their first varsity game in December of 2001, perhaps, they never could have guessed the impact they would have on Raider girls basketball.

During the course of their four years, the Raiders accumulated a remarkable record of 90-19 - 21-5 in 2002, 23-3 in 2003, 22-6 in 2004 and 24-5 in 2005 - while adding higher profile teams to their schedule. The Raiders received the second seed for the Union County Tournament (UCT) in 2002 but were stunned by eventual champion Roselle. In 2003, the top-seeded Raiders were fished by Union Catholic in the semis but came back to win the UCT in 2004 and 2005. All four years, the Raiders were stopped in the North Jersey, Group 3, Section 2 finals by nemesis Malcolm X. Shabazz, which won the Tournament of Champions in 2003 and 2004.

The impact of Klimowicz, who will be playing for St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia, was phenomenal. During the season, her name was in print in area newspapers nearly as much as the word "the".

After totaling 448 points her freshman season and sinking another 503 points her sophomore season, it became apparent that the all-time Raider

girls' record of 1,228 would be in jeopardy. Klimowicz broke the girls record on February 3, 2004 against Shabazz and finished that season with 500 points. On December 21, 2004, Klimowicz broke the all-time Raider record of 1,482 set by Willie McCoy (1983-86), then finished this season with 497 points to bring her career total to an astounding 1,948.

This season, Klimowicz, who had

this season, averaged around 200 points per season, hitting 245 in 2003 and 233 this season.

"Jenny was a great point guard and floor leader. She made it difficult for opponents to pressure us and that is a great luxury for a high school coach," said McBride.

Gillooly was the Raiders' three-point queen, beginning with 35 in

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David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times

ALL-TIME LEADING SCORER... Hillary Klimowicz, No. 34, ended her fabulous high school career as the Raiders' all-time scoring leader with 1,948 points. Averaging more than 200 rebounds in her first three years and adding another 368 this season, she most likely shattered the all-time Raider rebound record.

been averaging at least 200 rebounds in each of her previous three seasons, pulled down an amazing 368 rebounds to surpass the 900 mark in career rebounds - most likely an all-time Raider record. This season she also made 129 blocked shots, a team-leading 49 steals and was 91-129 (70.5 percent) from the foul line.

"Coming in, I was very excited to have one of the top post players in the state, but knew we had a lot of work to do (to restructure the team to her system). The great thing was when the seniors embraced the system," said Lori Gear McBride, in her first season as Raider Head Coach. "She (Klimowicz) was so coachable and had a great attitude."

Burke, the point guard and play maker who averaged around 100 assists in her previous three years, had 183 this season to lead the Raiders all four years in that category - most likely placing her No. 1 in all-time Raider girls' assists. Additionally, the Yale bound Burke, who had 41 steals

SHAFFER WON DISTRICT 11 CROWN, FINISHED 23-7

Blue Devil Mat Men Focused On Individual Performances

By DAVID B. CORBIN
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Unable to fill eight or nine of the 14 weight classes, the Westfield High School wrestling team had no chance to win any meets so the primary focus was on the individual development of the five to six varsity wrestlers. The results were amazing!

Last year, only two of those six Blue Devils had winning records, Tom DeDuca at 19-4 and Andrew Shaffer at 13-8. The remaining four had a combined record well below .500. This season, however, the six varsity



David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times

OFFENSIVE 'POP' AND GOOD PITCHING... Leadoff hitter Billy Hearon, left, is just the beginning of the Blue Devils' offensive "pop" and lefty Craig Ellis, right, is one of four strong starting pitchers who will be backed by several fine relievers.

MURRAY, RICCIUTI, POWER TO BE MEAT OF LINEUP

Blue Devil Baseballers Have Offensive 'Pop', Pitching, 'D'

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

Last year's Westfield High School baseball team finished 16-7 and shared the Watchung Conference National Division crown with Scotch Plains-Fanwood. With strong offense, solid defense and a good pitching rotation, this year's team may be even better.

Last year, the Blue Devils had one of their best team batting averages

(BA) in memory, finishing .349. The six returning starters in the lineup finished with an incredible .369 average, so that statistic combined with a junior varsity team that won the Union County title should promise a very successful 2005 season.

"We have six kids coming back who put up some good numbers last year," stated Blue Devil Head Coach Bob Brewster. "For a place to start from, that's pretty darn good. All you

do is plug in a few more good hitters and go from there. The potential is we will have a good offense."

Two juniors, catcher Mike Murray and shortstop/pitcher Tom Ricciuti, came up 3-4 in the batting lineup, with respective averages of .400 and .395. No. 5 batter senior Bryan Power finished with a .361 average and stole 10 bases. Junior second baseman Mike Diaz finished with a .333 BA. Senior leadoff batter Billy Hearon finished with a .333 BA, led the team in scoring with 30 runs and in stolen bases with 12. Senior Sam Kim batted .327 and swiped nine bases.

"All our kids this winter put a lot of time at hitting centers. In addition, a lot of kids spent a lot of time in the weight room," said Brewster. "We are slowly starting to get our batting eye, getting our timing down. Last year, we had eight guys hit the ball out of the park and six are back. Along with some of the kids up from the JV, there's a lot of pop in our bats. We have guys hit for average, we have some speed and we have pop in the bat. I think we have a pretty exciting team when it comes to scoring runs."

With Hearon, Kim, Power and Chris Hild, the Blue Devils expect to hoard a heap of stolen bases this season.

"Other than those four, we also have a lot of kids who have pretty good speed," Brewster pointed out. "During my playing days, I was a catcher and I knew what speed could do to a team. It would sometimes

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