

Viking Boy Cagers Complete Very Impressive, 17-6 Season

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

A tenacious Union Catholic High School boys' basketball team took to the courts this past season and finished with a very impressive, 17-6, record.

The season was indeed highlighted when the Vikings pulled off a stunning, 63-61, come-from-behind victory over Brearley in the county tournament. Six days later, the day after the Vikings lost to St. Patrick, Union Catholic tied the game against North Warren with two-tenths of a second remaining, then scored nine points in overtime for a 59-50 victory.

"We really played over our own expectations. It showed the difference between this year and last year. We had the resiliency to come back at end of ball games and hit the big shots," said Viking Head Coach Jim Reagan Jr. "We won the Mountain Valley Conference, by beating Technology, 69-66. Most people probably thought we would finish fifth but we were able to win it this year. We beat Brearley in a thriller in the county tournament after we were down ten with three minutes remaining. We changed to a full-court press and that pressure resulted in a 12-3 run. We made it to the NJSIAA tournament for the first time in seven years, however lost to a pretty good Bergen Catholic team."

The good news is all of the starters will return next year. Perhaps the three best returning players include first team, all-conference junior point guard Mike Seamon who led the Vikings in two categories. Seamon who could virtually score from anywhere, fired in 220 points and led with 142 assists. In addition, he was second both offensively and defensively in rebounds with 124.

Second team all-conference forward junior Chris Esperon demonstrated his effectiveness by ruling the boards with 186 and scored 207 points.

"He really did a nice job. However, being undersized at 6'-2" he defended well against the other team's big guy," said Reagan.

Sharpshooter Matt Peters, a junior forward better known for his key free throws at the end of games burned the net with 200 points.

"He hit big shots in our win against Brearley, then again against Montclair Kimberly, which took us over the hump," said Reagan.

First year varsity player, junior Obi Nwizugbo, a 6'-5" center, dramatically improved his shot blocking and his drop-step lay-ups as the season progressed. He totaled 133 rebounds for the season and led the Vikings with 42 blocked shots. Off the bench, freshman guard Tony LaRocca, sophomore Terrell Calloway and jun-

ior Brandon Brown provided some real significant offensive minutes.

"We have been developing some players, team work, the tough defense that we play and it's all been coming together for us," concluded Reagan. "Next year we move up in conference whereby we will play Rahway and Hillside. Hopefully, the confidence and consistency that we had this year will really help us. The goal is to win the Valley, which is realistic and play the Mountain teams tough."



David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
DEADLY FROM 3-POINT RANGE...Raider Maura Gillooly, left, bucketed 45 three-pointers this season and finished her career with 1,078 points.

Raider Senior Girls Marked End of an Era in Basketball

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each of her first two seasons and finishing with a team-leading 45 this season. She became the second Raider on the team to break the 1,000-point plateau, finishing with a total of 1,078 - 167 in 2002, 287 in 2003, 335 in 2004 (2004 stats unavailable) and 289 this season. This season, she also had 86 assists, 85 rebounds and 41 steals.

"Maura was such a great competitor and one of the best 3-point shooters I had coached. She made it easier to go inside to Hillary and gave us a nice balanced attack," said McBride.

DeCataldo had her best offensive total this season with 178 points, including 19 three-pointers, while adding 65 rebounds, 62 assists and 35 steals.

"Elizabeth was very deceptive. A lot of times people forgot about her and that worked to our advantage," said McBride. "She was a very good defensive player and shut down a lot of people."

Though there will be a noticeable change next year, junior Lauren Benovegno and sophomore Allie Zazzali made significant contributions this season and will be joined by several talented girls. Zazzali bucketed 169 points, including 14 three-pointers, and hit 23-41 (74.2 percent) from the line, while adding 70 rebounds, 43 swipes and 30 assists.

Benovegno was second on the team in rebounds with 191, sank 106 points, had 34 steals and contributed 21 assists.

"Lauren is going to be very effective. She improved tremendously. We will depend on her for leadership and post presence," said McBride who added, "Allie was without a doubt our most improved player. She took pressure off the seniors and they took the pressure off her. She will make a major impact next year."

Sophomore Tiffany Smith contributed 82 points, 83 steals and 27 rebounds. Sophomore Lauren Mains saw limited action due to an injury but contributed 29 points, 46 rebounds and 11 steals. Junior Loni Kaye finished with 35 points, 34 rebounds and 25 assists. Freshman Brianne Mahoney contributed 29 points and 12 rebounds.

"Tiffany is going to be huge next year. She injured her knee and was in and out of the training room. If she's full strength next year, she is going to be good," predicted McBride.

Also members of this year's junior varsity team that won the Union County JV Tournament are expected to be vying for varsity positions. Perhaps another fine Raider era is about to begin!

"I'm excited to see who is going to step in," said McBride.



David B. Corbin for The Leader and The Times
Point guard Jenny Burke

VIKINGS EXPECT MOUND STRENGTH FROM KONCEN

Experience, Maturity Offer Success for UC Baseballers

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

Pitching experience and defensive maturity may put the Union Catholic High School boys' baseball team in the thick of the action for county and sectional honors this season.

With a relatively young team, the Vikings provided plenty of clout finishing with an 11-8 record.

"We had a real nice season, however a lot of rainouts hurt our total number of games," said Viking Head Coach Jim Reagan Jr. "As a twelve seed, we upset five seed Linden, 8-4, in the first round of the county tournament, then lost in the quarters to eventual champion Scotch Plains, 3-2. In the NJSIAA playoffs, we lost to Saint Peter's Prep, 10-7, in the first round."

Noticeably lost to graduation are four seniors: centerfielder Steve Farawell, second baseman Brian Smith, outfielder and pitcher Brandon Garcia and third baseman Pete

Rivera, who now plays third base and pitches at NJIT. Reagan plans to have a banner year and expects to get plenty of wins from his pitching trio of Andy Koncen, Dave Klimowicz and Chris Whittemore. Koncen, the 6'-4 senior will be looked to as the main man.

"He was all-county with a 6-2 record and lost 3-2 to Scotch Plains in the county tournament. We're really looking for big things from him," said Reagan. "However, the key for us really will be our overall pitching as it is in this game. We're pretty solid and we think we have a chance of beating anyone when Koncen pitches."

Klimowicz, a junior, will toss in the number two spot and sophomore Whittemore, notably the best player on the field according to Reagan, will fill the third spot in the rotation and play third base.

"They have given us major innings in our summer legion programs, but the key in how good we can be will be determined by how well our youth will pitch," said Reagan.

Offensive muscle will be provided by leadoff hitter and centerfielder junior Matt Oliveto. Reagan has yet to decide who will be batting second.

Whittemore who fares very well with the "metal stick", appears to have the edge according to Reagan. Chris Esperon, now a junior, matured very well last year at the catcher position and will bat third or fourth without a doubt.

"He really does a nice job handling the pitching staff, does a good job blocking the balls and will probably be our clean-up hitter. Hitting is his key, and he certainly will have a couple of homeruns this year," said Reagan.

Junior Mike Honeyman, who is expected to play shortstop and fill in at first, will bat fifth in the rotation. Klimowicz and senior right fielder Rob Downer will round out the order. Batting ninth and starting at second base will be sophomore Anthony Marsall.

Reagan concluded, "Last year our junior legion team, with a 24-1 record, won the county title and all those kids are back with us. They have been part of the program and now they just need the experience at the varsity level. Our goal is to definitely be one of the top six teams in the county, hopefully make it a little deeper in the county tournament and win a game or two in the state tournament."

PUBLIC NOTICE

TOWNSHIP OF SCOTCH PLAINS

NOTICE is hereby given that at a meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Scotch Plains, held in the Council Chambers in the Municipal Building of said Township on Tuesday, March 22, 2005, there was introduced, read for the first time, and passed on such first reading, the following ordinance:

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER VII OF THE GENERAL ORDINANCES OF THE TOWNSHIP OF SCOTCH PLAINS ENTITLED "TRAFFIC"

PURPOSE: Prohibiting parking on Westfield Ave. (north side) from the northeast curb line of Union Ave. to a point 75 ft. east thereof and from the northwest curb line of Union Ave. to a point 58 ft. west thereof.

A public hearing for same will be held on Tuesday, April 12, 2005 at 8:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, or any time and place to which a meeting for the further consideration of such ordinance shall from time to time be adjourned, and all persons interested will be given an opportunity to be heard concerning such ordinance.

A copy of same may be obtained from the office of the Township Clerk, 430 Park Avenue, Scotch Plains, New Jersey, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday by any member of the general public who wants a copy of same without cost.

BARBARA RIEPE
Township Clerk
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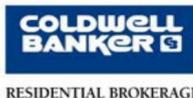


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