

GALLAHER NETS 3 GOALS, ZAFUTTO MAKES 16 SAVES

Blue Devil Laxer Boys Stun Seton Hall Prep Pirates, 6-3

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

Emotional and physical readiness played a major role in the margin of victory when the Westfield High School Blue Devils overwhelmed the Seton Hall Prep Pirate boys' lacrosse team, No. 8 in *The Star Ledger*, 6-3, on May 14 in Westfield.

"It was a very good, complete game against a very good team. All aspects of our game were clicking. We came out on fire like we have done a couple of times this year. However, today the difference was in the second half. We came back at them and didn't give them any ground to gain momentum," said Blue Devil Head Coach Gerry Benaquista.

The 6-9 Blue Devils swarmed around and scooped up the vast majority of ground balls. Senior midfielder Matt Gallagher powered three goals, sophomore attacker Ryan Yarusi flicked in a goal and had two assists while middies Dave Ianazzone and Joe Simone notched one goal each. Gerhard Buchnina scored three goals for the 10-5 Pirates.

Senior goalkeeper Chris Zafutto, who was nothing short of spectacular, recorded 16 saves while Pirate keeper John Moriarty saved seven. "Chris came up big against a big division opponent. We told our defense to stay tight and don't let him hang out to dry," said Benaquista.

Yarusi rippled the net from five yards out within the first two minutes of the first quarter. "We finally eliminated mistakes in this game. We didn't drop the ball, lose possession, just kept it so we didn't have to force much," said Yarusi. "We came out strong, got the momentum on our side, caught them on their heels and

that forced them to play catch up the rest of the game."

Gallagher scored next, rifling the ball past the goalie for a 2-0 advantage. Buchnina got his first goal of the game to narrow the deficit to 2-1. Less than two minutes later, the 6'4", 200-lb Gallagher got the ball in transition from Mike Patella, feigned a move, changed speeds, cut through the middle and muscled the ball in for

knock some heads. They had a much bigger team, but we wanted this game a lot more than they did."

Teammate Brian Skorge added, "We played aggressive, confident and all connected. I believe it's a preview as to what's to come."

Buchnina found the mark twice more in the second quarter, cutting Westfield's lead to 4-3.

No sooner was the whistle tucked



Fred K. Lecomte for The Westfield Leader and The Times
BLUE DEVIL ON A MISSION...Westfield midfielder Matt Gallagher was one tough laxer to halt during the game with Seton Hall Prep. Gallagher powered three goals to lead the Blue Devils to a 6-3 victory.

the score. Ianazzone struck gold, lifting the score to 4-1 to end the quarter.

"I believe this was one of our best defensive games as a team," said Patella. "We talked well, we slid hard and we made sure that they didn't get any easy goals. We're a feisty team. We like to get down and dirty and

away to start the third quarter, Simone hit Gallagher on a skid pass that caught the defender sleeping. Gallagher in turn hit the back of the net to extend the lead to 5-3. Simone found his pot of gold in the fourth quarter when he cruised through the Pirate defense and assaulted the keeper with a shot from 10 yards out.

"They were coming after us, but we kept turning them away. Right when they started to get momentum, we took the ball back and settled in on offense," said Benaquista. "We ate away the clock and ran our stuff."

"This is the first team game where every key player executed for four quarters, something we have not done all season long," said Gallagher.

After the game, Benaquista huddled his team and said, "We stopped them up and down the field. Defense! Goalie! That's what I'm talking about, middies and defense. That's what we can do when we play together as a team. This is just our first step of many, right where we want to be. We're now going to tell people in the state what we're all about."



Fred K. Lecomte for The Westfield Leader and The Times
NO STOPPING HIM NOW...Blue Devil senior midfielder Brady Lau, No. 8, confidently works his way upfield only to be shadowed by a Pirate.

Seton Hall Prep	1	2	0	0	3
Westfield	4	0	1	1	6



Devil's Den
Something Old, Something New
On All-WHS Baseball Team

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

Talk about a tough task! Picking an All-WHS baseball team from the past 45 years (1960-2005) has been anything but easy. Plus, doing something like this could tick as many people off as it does make people happy. Having said that, here's my 20-man team (I just couldn't keep it to the promised 16), including starting lineup and reserves.

CF Bobby Flynn: The best I ever saw at WHS. Line drives every time up, great range, rifle arm and just the right attitude.
LF Brian Ciemiecki: Tough to not put him in the leadoff spot, given that every single or walk was a double or triple with his speed. But I love a lefty batting second behind Flynn.

3B Lamont Turner: Maybe the best pure hitter ever at WHS. If he hadn't missed his sophomore year (academics), he might've set every school mark.
RF Steve Tebbetts: A taller version of Ciemiecki, with a little more power. Tebbetts was one of the most exciting offensive threats ever at WHS.

C Mike Murray: Only a WHS junior and he's already got several school records, with others to fall soon. A slugger who has only K'd seven times in over 200 varsity at-bats.

DH Clint Factor: Any all-WHS team has to include the multi-talented Factor, who pitched and hit with equal power.
1B Kevin Stock: Any team that Stock bats seventh on must be loaded.

SS John Havas: Mention Havas and most old-timers remember the ball he hit at Scotch Plains that almost reached the golf course!

2B Dwight Davies: Gets the nod at second over two of his teammates (Joe Wiendl and Billy Myers).

P Don Anderson: For one game, I'm giving the ball to "Big D" at Infantino Field (my new name for the field behind Edison, named for the guy, Jerry Infantino, who literally made the field).

And on the bench...
P Greg Chlan: If the game could go 15-16 innings, this is the guy I want as my pitcher. A true workhorse.

DH Jay Cook: Still holds several school records, including the amazing 41-game hitting streak over his last two years.

C-DH Brian Flynn: A chip off the ol' block, except he hit for power and batted left and played catcher. But the hits flowed off his bat.

P-OF-IF Chris Infantino: My utilityman and ace reliever. Won over 20 games as a pitcher, and solid all-around player.

3B-P K.C. Knobloch: The key guy for coach Pete Lima when WHS won the 1978 county championship.

C Dick Myers: Tough as nails catcher, with a Larry Bird sneer and confidence.

OF Chuck Mueller: A left-handed version of Bobby Flynn, the ultimate leadoff hitter and a terrific outfielder.

1B-OF Ken Stith: As smooth a defensive player as you'll find, and his bat seemingly never hit anything but line drives.

P Kris Williams: The best pitcher of the Bob Brewster coaching era, and one of the best hitters, too.

OK, you did the math and that's only 19 players. My 20th player is actually a guy who never lettered at WHS, but might've been the best pure ball player to ever walk the halls. We'll keep him as a late-inning pinch-hitter deluxe: Monte Turner, father of Lamont and son of the late Robert Turner, legendary Westfield Merchants coach.

DEN TRIVIA

Nicole DiFabio was a two-year starter for Maggie McFadden's softball teams, a slick-fielding second baseman (2001) and shortstop (2002) on teams that went 35-12. Back on April 30, 2001, she made history in a dubious way. What did she do?

A GOOD CAUSE

Lauren Gelmetti has taken on an interesting senior project: she's collecting old/used softball equipment to be given at a later date to the needy.

The senior co-captain and four-year standout on the WHS softball teams will hold a dropoff day on Saturday, June 4 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the WHS parking lot. If you can't make that date, you can contact Gelmetti at (908) 233-8694 and drop your old stuff off at her house, 436 Montauk Drive (but please call first).

The Tufts-bound Gelmetti is looking for old gloves, softball bats, bat bags, catcher's gear, batting helmets, tees, softballs, and gently used rubber cleats. They will be given to Bats, Balls, Gloves and Kids, an organization that distributes those items to the needy around the state.

UCT REHASH

If you were one of the lucky fans at Saturday's Union County Tournament semifinal between Westfield and Roselle Catholic at Rahway's beautiful sun-drenched Memorial Field, you got to see a good ol'-fashioned pitchers' duel of the highest caliber.

Westfield's Billy Hearon was on top of his game, keeping hitters off-balance with his curve and spotting his fastball in almost all the right spots. The Blue Devils played excellent defense behind him - except for two critical errors which RC took advantage of both for a 3-1 victory. But outfielders Sam Kim, Craig Ellis and Chris Hild each had a nice defensive play, and Hearon was bailed out of one jam by a nice 4-6-3 double play from Mike Diaz to Tom Ricciuti to Alex Zierler.

Unfortunately, the Lions' Nick Nolan was equally impressive. After allowing a home run to Hearon and a single by Mike Murray in the first inning, he allowed no more hits and finished with 10 strikeouts.

Even so, Nolan needed two key defensive plays to save him. In the first after Murray's single, Ricciuti's hard line drive to first was turned into an inning-ending double play. And in the second, with one out and runners on

second and third, RC's right fielder caught a fly ball and made a perfect throw home to nail Diaz, ending the final scoring threat for WHS.

MEMORIES OF CAPT. NEMO
Got an e-mail from Eddie Thorne (WHS, '64, now living in Pembroke, Mass.), a two-year varsity centerfielder under the late, great Norm Koury. (Thorne was also a starter on Koury's unbeaten jayvee team in 1962.)

"Regarding the passing of Coach Koury, a.k.a. 'Captain Nemo,' you really hit the nail on the head regarding his demand for fundamentals. In fact, your reference to bunting, stealing bases, etc., was never more apparent than how we scored the winning run against (unbeaten) Springfield in the (1963) county tournament (final). We had lost to them twice, but when I led off the (10th) inning, Captain Nemo gave me the bunt sign, to wish I promptly dragged for a base hit. Jim Smith sacrificed me to second, and Rob Schram plated me with a single. (That opened the door for a four-run inning and a 5-1 WHS victory.)

"The great stories we had about Coach Koury were endless. One time Schram invented this game of whoever could lie the longest in the sliding pit without Norm catching you. I got so proficient at sliding that when I got to East Carolina, my college coach would use me to show sliding techniques at seminars."

REMEMBER WHEN

May 19, 1990: Meiko Saito strikes out 16 Union batters.

May 20, 1930: WHS commits 12 errors in an 18-3 loss to Rahway.

May 21, 1936: Babe Ruth shoots an 82 at Echo Lake as a guest of Tom Morris.

May 21, 1945: Charles Frankenbach strikes out 15 in an eight-inning 4-3 loss to Hillside.

May 21, 1955: Bob List pitches a 10-strikeout no-hitter against Union in the county tournament. He also was 4-for-4 with a grand slam homer.

May 23, 1963: Dennis Burke pitches a no-hitter in a 6-1 win over Thomas Jefferson.

May 24, 1963: Mike Ketcham shoots a 76 to take medalist honors as WHS golfers capture county tournament.

May 25, 1945: Charles Frankenbach strikes out 16 in a nine-inning 3-2 loss to Bound Brook.

May 25, 1951: Bob Williams strikes out a school record 19 batters in seven innings against Plainfield.

TRIVIA ANSWER
Westfield scored 13 runs in one inning against Irvington, and DiFabio made all three outs in that inning: flying to left leading off, then flying to center and finally popping out to first base.

Devil's Den appears Thursday in The Westfield Leader. Contact us with comments or suggestions at bj1019@aol.com

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