

CIANCIOTTA CAPTURES ALL-AROUND, FLOOR, BEAM

Raider Lady Gymnasts Bow To Watchung Hills Warriors

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

Minus two of their top gymnasts, the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Lady Raiders focused on the accomplishments of Laurel Devlin and Kelly Cianciotta in a 99.515-84.5 loss to Watchung Hills in Scotch Plains on October 14.

Cianciotta, a freshman, added enough difficulty to some of her routines to capture the all-around with a 34.375 total, while Devlin finished fourth all-around with a 32.65. War-

rior Sarah Wasser took second in the all-around with a total of 33.7 and teammate Amy Harrington placed third with a total of 33.14.

Although not winning the event, Cianciotta successfully inserted a difficult Tsukahara (back somersault) into her vault to place third with a score of 9.75. Wasser, who literally attacked the vault, also succeeded with her Tsukahara dismount to win the event with a superb score of 9.25. Warrior Steph Waryn took second at 8.9. Devlin performed a half-on, half-off maneuver to score an 8.45.

"We were a little afraid to do the Tsukahara because of the hard landings, but I just decided to do it today because we needed some scores," explained Cianciotta.

Adding smoothness to her giant swings and finishing with a flyaway dismount, Cianciotta placed second on the uneven bars with a mark of 8.3. Harrington featured a unique top-to-bottom heel-transfer maneuver to go with her giant swings to take top honors in the event at 8.575. Devlin used front up rises and kip ups and finished her routine with a flyaway, half twist to place third with an 8.1.

"For counties, we are going to look at a few more moves and do some twisting off our dismounts," Cianciotta predicted.

With graceful back walkovers and high leaps and dismounting with a round off back tuck, Cianciotta grabbed first on the balance beam with an 8.6. Devlin used nice scales and high leaps to earn a 7.9.

"We have been working really hard on form and being really tight on beam," said Cianciotta.

Cianciotta performed lofty back somersaults and added a difficult front somersault following a front Arabian

handspring to seize first in the floor exercises with a mark of 8.75. Devlin, also using her height very well, performed a beautiful back layout somersault and, as she had in past meets, aroused her teammates to join in on her little dance number to finish with a score of 7.925.



David B. Corbin for The Leader and The Times
UPSIDE DOWN...Raider Laurel Devlin performs a layout back somersault on the floor.

Looking ahead to counties, Cianciotta said, "Counties, there's a spring floor, I believe, so you will see some twisting out there and a few other tricks."

ALL-AROUND:

1. Cianciotta (SPF) 34.375
2. Wasser (WH) 33.7
3. Harrington (WH) 33.14
4. Waryn (WH) 32.65
5. Devlin (SPF) 32.4

VAULT:

1. Wasser (WH) 9.25
2. Waryn (WH) 8.9
3. Cianciotta (SPF) 8.75
4. Devlin (SPF) 8.45
5. Davielle Brown (WH) 8.3

UNEVEN BARS:

1. Harrington (WH) 8.575
2. Cianciotta (SPF) 8.3
3. Devlin (SPF) 8.1
4. Waryn (WH) 8.0
5. Wasser (WH) 7.8

BALANCE BEAM:

1. Cianciotta (SPF) 8.6
2. Wasser (WH) 8.2
3. Liz Fogarty, Harrington and Waryn (WH) 8.1
4. Devlin (SPF) 7.9

FLOOR EXERCISES:

1. Cianciotta (SPF) 8.725
2. Wasser (WH) 8.45
3. Harrington (WH) 8.165
4. Devlin (SPF) 7.95
5. Fogarty (WH) 7.675



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A GIANT TASK...Raider Kelly Cianciotta works giant swings on the uneven bars.

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Devil's Den

If Age Is Just a Number, Why Is This One So Big?

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

Yesterday a child came out to wonder
Caught a dragonfly inside a jar
Fearful when the sky was full of thunder
And tearful at the falling of a star
Tom Rush's "Circle Game"

It was 60 years yesterday, Sgt. Pepper brought the band to play ... OK, maybe Sgt. Pepper wasn't around then, but 60 years ago yesterday a child came out of Monmouth Medical Center in Long Branch to wonder, and wander ... and 60 years later he's still wondering, and still wandering.

Though never a big fan of the Greatful Dead, I can truly appreciate the title of their song/album "What a Long Strange Trip It's Been." Because even with just the part that can be told in a family newspaper, which isn't very much, it's still been a long, strange trip. Not to bore you, but here are some 10-year highlights along the long and winding road ...

1955: A great time to be alive and to be on the brink of teenagedom. Elvis, Jerry Lee Lewis, Bill Haley and the Comets, Buddy Holly, Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Fats Domino, Dion and the Belmonts, and Frankie Lyman were all just around the corner. And, for those who look for major events that foretell the future, there was my victory over future Jets quarterback Bob Davis at the summer league swimming championships.

1965: Still a very, very good time to be young and have everything ahead of you. Bob Dylan, Phil Ochs, Peter Paul and Mary, the folk music movement ... the Beach Boys, Beatles, the Brian Jones-Rolling Stones. Cuddying at Echo Lake, with Don the Fireman, Jimmy Bonzo, Hogan and, of course, caddy-master Jock Heatley, with between-loops lunch at the luncheonette at the bottom of the hill that is now Mountainside Crossing. The Franklin Bowlers and the YBA and Westfield Softball League, against the Kool Jerks, Laymes, Spidermen and the rest. Weekend trips to Staten Island, with stops at Wetson's in Elizabeth for the best cheeseburgers ever.

1975: Reality starts to set in ... a full-time job, assistant sports editor at the Morristown Daily Record. Closing Cutter's Bar & Grill five nights, and the Jolly Trolley and Log Cabin in Clark on my nights off. Bills to be paid. Music is turning to (gasp!!) disco ... didn't the Bee Gees used to be cool? Weekends at the old Copper Mine Inn on the Delaware River near the Water Gap.

So the years spin by and now the boy is twenty
Though his dreams have lost some grandeur coming true.
There'll be new dreams, maybe better dreams and plenty
Before the last revolving year is through.

through.

"Circle Game"
1985: Reality has totally set in ... married ... full-time job in Trenton ... but 40 years old. Play my last real game of basketball at Asbury Park YMCA. Can't stop a 6-foot-6 20-year-old from Monmouth College, so I walk off and retire. When a friend asks why I'm crying, I just say, "It's over. I'm done. I don't wanna play in the 40-and-over leagues. That's it." And I haven't picked up a ball since. All those "make 90 out of 100 foul shots before eating" nights on Embree Crescent, all those great pickup games at Franklin with the Crampton brothers, and at Gumbert and Tamaques, and at the Y ... done.

1995: What's happened? Spinning out of control. Bouncing from part-time job to part-time job. Went from a journalistic star-of-the-future to a journalistic where-is-he-now? But I land a job coaching WHS boys swim team and that makes everything good. It's a dream come true. But there's still the numbing reality of being a half-century old.

2005: To quote Tom Rush's "Circle Game" again, "We can't return we can only look behind from where we came, and go round and round in the circle game." It's the big 6-0 now; mail from AARP senior citizens discounts, people at the market asking if I need help bringing the packages to my car. Arrrrrrgh!

Have you seen the old man outside the seaman's mission,
Memory fading with the medal ribbons that he wears.

In our winter city, the rain cries a little pity
For one more forgotten hero and a world that doesn't care.

Ralph McTell's "Streets of London"
FOOTBALL UPDATE

Another weekend, another loss, another one that got away. It's been 17 straight regular-season losses in a row now, with only last year's NJSIAA Consolation win over winless Edison to break the tough times. And tough times they are, starting with a 20-19 loss to Union in the eighth week of the 2003 season.

Last Saturday is a prime example. Cranford had some nice players, but nobody will ever convince me that Cranford has more talent or is a better team than Westfield—including former Giants linebacker Byron Hunt, who was next to me in the pressbox and pretty much saying exactly that for the Cranford fans as the color commentator on their local TV station.

Sorry, but WHS gave that game to Cranford. On the Cougars' first scoring drive, they had third-and-long three times and converted it each time. On the play before its first touchdown, Cranford had fourth-and-long and got nine yards on a simple pitch to the

right. In the fourth quarter, Cranford got a break when instead of facing fourth-and-long, WHS got called for a late "hit" for a gift first down. (It was late, but not much of a hit.) Cranford then converted one more third-and-long before quarterback Ed Zamorski, under heavy pressure, completed a touchdown pass that looked like it was intended for somebody other than the receiver who caught it.

So now it's on to Union tomorrow night. When your glass is always half full, as mine is (with Dr Pepper), it's another game, another reason to get fired up. And it's Union! C'mon Westfield fans. Let's see if you have what it takes, to go on the road and support your team when it's down. Paint your faces blue-and-white, draw devils on your faces and bellies. Get crazy and do whatever it takes to get our kids into the win column. The Den sees the Blue Devils, behind QB Nick DeRosa and a superior defensive effort, winning 14-7 (maybe 14-0). Then, after the win, a new tradition begins: the singing of the alma mater by the entire team and all the fans, while Cowles Stewart leads the band. Now, that would be cool.

OUT OF STATE SCORES

For those of you following my "other" schools, it was Neshaminy over Council Rock North 24-6 in a Pennsylvania mud bowl last Friday night. The Redskins, No. 2 in Pennsylvania, host No. 1 North Penn this Saturday at 2 p.m. And in Ohio, mighty Massillon hung on for a 13-0 win over Warren Harding.

BIG WEEK AHEAD

It is now "nitty-gritty" time for the WHS soccer, field hockey and cross-country teams: the time to make a good season better or a so-so season not too shabby—Yes! It's time for the county and sectional tournaments to kick into gear.

The Watchung Conference cross-country championships will be held today, and the WHS boys are a solid favorite to add another crown to their huge trophy case, led by senior Jeff Perrella. The girls, after a regular-season loss to Cranford, will be considered a contender but coach Thom Hornish's teams usually peak at the right time.

In soccer, coach George Kapner knows a team is judged by how it performs in the biggest events, and he would love a UCT rematch with Scotch Plains-Fanwood, which won in overtime earlier. Meanwhile, coach Katie Egan's girls team has quietly put together a nice season, and county/sectional titles are there to be won, especially if goalie Lauren Sinnenberg stays hot.

The Devil's Den appears Thursday in The Westfield Leader during the scholastic sports season. Contact us with comments or suggestions or trivia questions at bj1019@aol.com. Go Devils!

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