



St. Joseph Beats St. Mark, 10-1, for St. Bart's Title
See Story in September 15 Issue

SLIDING SAFELY HOME...St. Joseph's Amilcar Monroy slides safely home as Blaise catcher Gregg Swidersky catches the relay in the Saints Division championship game.

JOSEPH'S 'D' KILLS 4 RALLIES WITH 4 DOUBLE PLAYS

St. Joes Head to Title Game, Smother St. Blaise Men, 12-3

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

All season, St. Joseph held the number 1 spot in the Saints Division of the St. Bart's Oldtimers Men's Softball League. On August 31, the Joe boys proved they deserved that spot by smothering St. Blaise, 12-3, in the division title game at Jerseyland Field in Scotch Plains to advance to the league championship game on Labor Day.

Eleven players contributed to St. Joe's 16-hit bombardment, with five getting two hits, but the highlight of the game was their defense that turned four double plays (DP) to quell four St. Blaise rallies. Amidst three of the DPs was second baseman Mike Jonny, who enlisted assistance from pitcher Tony Blasi and first baseman Bill Mirto in the second inning, shortstop Amilcar Monroy and first baseman Larry Shaub in the fourth inning and Mirto and third baseman Rick Wustefeld in the sixth. Wustefeld initiated a third-to-first DP in the third inning. Jonny also made a fine running grab in shallow right. Centerfielder Bob Guy made two fine snags for the Blaisers and rightfielder Tom Straniero made a sliding grab in the first inning.

Jonny was also slick with the stick, going 2-for-3 with two RBI and two runs scored. Monroy doubled, singled and scored twice. George Gracia ripped a two-run double and scored twice. Shaub slapped a pair of RBI singles, Jim Parker singled twice and scored once and Bob Elmi had a pair of singles. Damon Roth rapped an RBI double and scored.

Tom Sherwin and Guy each had two hits for Blaise and a run scored and Pat Luongo scored the other Blaiser run.

The Blaisers registered two hits in five of the innings but failed to plate runs due to double plays. After Blasi grabbed a chopper to initiate the first DP to end the second inning, Roth shouted, "Tony! That's the way, baby!"

In the fourth, Jonny called off Blasi to initiate his first DP.

"I had that all the way. That's why I called him off," explained Jonny. Acting the cheerleader, in the bottom of the first, Roth roared, "Lot of hits, guys! We are playing a good team."

The Joe boys rocked the Blaise backward with six runs on eight hits in that inning. Roth had his RBI double, Jonny added a two-run single,

Monroy doubled, Gracia drilled his two-run double and Shaub sizzled an RBI single.

Getting into the rooting mode in the third inning, Jim Kelk (1-for-2, 1 run) cooed, "Let's roll some through."

Mirto muttered, "Mike! Nice level swing!"

Jonny leveled a single to left and Monroy walked. Wustefeld grounded out to short as Jonny bolted home and Monroy later scored to put St. Joe up, 8-0.

In the fourth, Dean Talcott tagged an RBI single and Kevin Marron lofted an RBI sacrifice fly to make the score 10-0. An inning later, Shaub's RBI single and Elmi's grounder that was mishandled upped the score to 12-0.

As St. Joe strolled to man their defensive positions in the sixth, Monroy reminded his team, "It's all about defense!"

His reminder seemed to fall upon deaf ears as the usually rock-solid defense temporarily turned into mush mixed with arthritic knuckles, allowing the Blaise to blaze with three runs. Ironically, the final DP of the game prevented the blaze from getting out of control.

St. Blaise	000	003	0	3
St. Joseph	602	220	x	12

Devil's Den
Top 10 Reasons to Root For '05-06 Blue Devils

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

It's September, that time of the year when a brand-new optimism-filled year of sports is about to begin at Westfield High School. Last year was not a year that will be long remembered at WHS, though it was hardly a bad year at most schools.

Still, as the 2005-06 scholastic season begins, here are 10 reasons (in chronological order) why it's gonna be a great year to be a Blue Devils fan.

The new field at Kehler Stadium: It's very functional, very attractive and will serve the football, soccer, lacrosse and track teams, making it a showplace (if we could ever get permanent lights put up, it would REALLY be a showcase).

Cowles Stewart: Has the ability and attitude to be the school's finest lineman ever... and that's saying something.

Andrew Shaffer: A throwback kind of athlete, a footballer/wrestler who goes all-out all the time.

Jeff Perrella: A late bloomer and soccer convert who has developed into one of the state's premier distance runners.

Anna Koehler and Erin Roudabush: Two of the top players in New Jersey, and both just juniors, they could lead Bev Torok's volleyballers deep into the state tournament.

Pat Daurio: The school's first junior All-American swimmer since Darren Hertell and Dave Schwartz, he'll display his versatility as the team looks for its record 21st state championship.

Erin Miller and Company: The WHS girls basketball team has the potential to blossom into a powerhouse, with the sharp-shooting sophomore leading the way.

Mike Murray, Tom Ricciuti and Mike Diaz: If he avoids senior-itis, and he will avoid it, Murray will finish rewriting those parts of the school's baseball record book he hasn't already done. Sometimes lost in Murray's shadow, Ricciuti and Diaz will be four-year starters at shortstop and second base for coach Bob Brewster.

Kris Fietkiewicz, Mary Kate Flannery, Jillian Olsen: Up the middle at shortstop, centerfield and catcher, coach Tara Pignoli's softball team will be as strong as any WHS softball team has ever been.

Kevin Shallcross, Ravi Netravali, Evan Eisenberg, Brian Kender and Jack Trimble: It's been 17 years since the WHS boys tennis team won a state Group 4 title... that streak could end this spring with these guys.

SUMMER READING
Mrs. Mary Learish, my old English teacher, would have been proud. Some 42 years after leaving her, she would be shocked at how much her former student delinquent read this summer. Here's a capsule of some very, very good summer reading (on a one * to five ***** grading system).

Oscar Robertson: The Big O, By Oscar Robertson: Maybe the game's all-around greatest player ever, from Crispus Attucks High School to the NBA. *****

The Ticket Out, By Michael Sokolove: The story of ex-Mets phenom Darryl Strawberry and his very talented high school baseball team, trying to use baseball to escape Los Angeles and the gang life. *****

Ted Williams, By Leigh Montville: If you like baseball, this is maybe the all-time baseball book by one of the country's best writers. *****

Home and Away, By Carl Becker: A look at semiprofessional and professional football in its infancy, along the Ohio River in the 1920s. *****

When I Was Cool, By Sam Kashner: A child of the '70s gets to live the life of his beatnik dreams at the Kerouac School of Poetry. *****

The Eighty-Yard Run, By Theron Hopkins: Capsule looks at some of America's top high school football programs. *****

Prof Blood and the Wonder Teams, By Charles (Chic) Hess: Back in the 1920s, Passaic High School's basketball team won 159—yes, one hundred fifty nine—straight games. The coach was later basically asked to leave. Even back then there was political intrigue on the scholastic sports level. *****

Joe K, A Biography of Joe Kasberger, By Dennis Joyce: An amazing tale of the legendary coach, who "commuted" from Oregon to coach at St. Benedict's Prep in Newark. *****

Joseph Coviello: Master Mentor, By Warren Wolf: The state's all-time winningest football coach (at Brick) turns author to reminisce about his old coach. *****

Slide Kelly Slide, By Marty Appel: Fantastic read about Mike (King) Kelly, one of the great baseball players in the late 19th century. *****

Havana Heat, Darryl Brock: Interesting novel by the author of "If I Never Get Back." *****

Baseball's Forgotten Heroes, By Tony Salin: Guys you've never heard of, who did something historic at some point. Very cool stuff. *****

Last Train to Memphis, By Peter Guralnick: Perhaps the ultimate book on the "early days" of Elvis, and how Colonel Parker took over his life. *****

Unforgivable Blackness, By Geoffrey Ward: Heavyweight champion Jack Johnson comes across as Muhammad Ali, with an attitude. An amazing timepiece of a racist America in the early days of the 20th century. *****

Black Ajax, By George MacDonald Fraser: A story of America's Tom Mollineaux, a black boxer in the 1800s who took on the best in England. *****

Red Grange, By John Carroll: A look at the man who left college to help the NFL start on the road to becoming the huge thing it's become. *****

Unbeaten, Untied, Uninvited, By Kristine Setting Clark: The 1951 University of San Francisco may have been the most talented team in college football history. Three NFL Hall of Famers, five Pro Bowlers, and 11 players who made it in the NFL. They went 10-0, didn't go to a bowl game and the school dropped the sport. *****

The Dark Prince of Baseball, By Donald Dewey and Nicholas Accocella: The rise of first baseman Hal Chase in the early 1900s... and the fall into darkness. *****

Monsters of the Midway, By Jim Dent: The Chicago Bears and player/coach

George Halas, in the early days of professional football. *****

Rammer Jammer, Yellow Hammer, By Warren St. John: A New York Times writer takes a fall off and travels the south via Trailer Home following the Crimson Tide of Alabama's football team. *****

So, how'd you spend your summer?

DEN TRIVIA
Joe Kasberger (football, baseball) and Prof Blood (basketball) coached at St. Benedict's during the 1940s. What Westfield resident played football under Kasberger and basketball for Blood at St. Benedict's during the 1948-49 school year? Hint: He also had four sons play football or wrestle for WHS coaching legend Guy Kehler.

LEGION UPDATE
The Westfield American Legion baseball team had an 11-10 record this summer. Third-year coach Bob Gardella's team won a playoff game against Scotch Plains, but fell to Springfield in a game that could've advanced it to the state tournament.

The Westfield team is mostly comprised of "next year's WHS varsity" players. But Gardella had to deal with only occasional appearances from WHS tri-captains Mike Murray, Tom Ricciuti and Mike Diaz, along with Jay Anderson, who were also playing on AAU and travel teams.

"The kids this summer leaned to stick together and to make more from less," Gardella said. "They stayed positive and made a positive season from what easily could have been a disaster."

P/cf Craig Ellis, 1b Alex Zierler, ss Josh Gerckens and p/of Brandon Cuba—all key players for WHS this past spring—were the Legion leaders. Ellis hit .507 and led in RBI (11) and stolen bases (11) while posting a 2-2 pitching record and striking out 33 batters in 36 innings. Zierler had a .451 average, 19 RBI and 10 extra base hits (six doubles, four triples). Gerckens batted .367, while Cuba was at .304, with a 4-1 pitching record and 30 K's in 31 innings.

Dave Kaplow filled in at catcher when Murray wasn't there and did a fine defensive job, though hitting just .227.

Three players brought up from the Junior team were a huge help for Gardella. Joe Schurig played third base and hit .417, driving in 18 runs in half a season. Kevin Hennessey played second base and hit .500 while versatile Kyle Zeitoumian's .267 average belied his importance to the team as he played the outfield, third, first and second.

Cuba also played on a team from Monroe, Middlesex County, that recently went 7-1 and won the Rhode Island Showcase in West Warwick. He hit over .500, pitched and played right field.

NEED YOUR HELP
Working on a history of sports at a high school as old and tradition-rich as Westfield is a tough job. And even somebody who loves doing this "work" can use some help. So, it'd be great if anybody out there could help with these two items:

Sports Illustrated's Faces in the Crowd: Who from Westfield, and/or WHS, has

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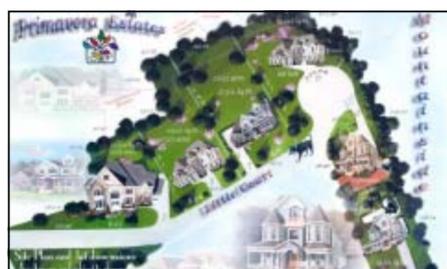
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