

Blue Devil V'ballers Cage Cougars in Three Games

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

The Westfield High School girls' volleyball team won the battle of intensity over Cranford in a three-game contest in Westfield on September 16. The Blue Devils won game 1, 25-17; the Cougars regrouped to win Game 2, 25-24, then the Blue Devils outlasted the Cougars to win game 3, 25-21.

Heroic performances were abundant on both sides of the net. Blue Devil Co-Captain Kristina Fietkiewicz notched six kills and two service aces and Kaitlyn Shulman had five kills and three service points. Blue Devil Tara Daly had eight assists, Molly Williams, seven and Co-Captain Monica Dreyer, two service aces.

"This is a game of momentum. We had some, but we need to learn how to stop other teams from taking it away, but that's part of being a young team," said Blue Devil Head Coach Beverly Torok. "We played well and had a good coordinated effort of our bumping, passing and our setting. I'm happy that we came back and that the third game played out where they had to make the adjustments. We finally started moving really well together, covering areas better and mixing up our attack a little."

The Blue Devils had several rolls, built up dominating momentum and jumped out to an 18-11 lead in the first game. The Cougars clawed back and narrowed the margin to 22-16 but the Blue Devils tightened to win, 25-17.

Game 2 was a seesaw match. The Cougars displayed smart ball distribution while the defense picked up its momentum for a 25-24 victory. Middle hitter, Kari Bayniewski, was instrumental with four service aces and two kills while outside hitter, Allison Carollo, killed off four set points.

"Cranford always comes out hard against us, being the rivals that we are, so we knew it was going to be a tough match," said Fietkiewicz. "We started out alright, but lost it a little in game 2. We were not working together the way we usually do, they saw that and took advantage by putting the ball where we could not handle it."

The earlier portion of game 3 was tight. Fietkiewicz then took charge by notching five straight points, including back-to-back service aces to up the margin to 13-6. Back came the Cougars to narrow the margin to 13-11. Williams, Shulman, Fietkiewicz and Ditzell then responded to extend the Devil lead to six. After that, with the help of two kills by Bayniewski and one by Carollo, the Cougars held hope for a come back, however, Dreyer slammed the door for the win.

"After we lost game 2, it kind of scared us due to the fact that we came out pretty confident," said Dreyer. "We realized that we really had to go to work. We were able to put ourselves together, came out strong, communicated well and we moved a lot (momentum)."



Jim O'Connor (www.NJSportPics.com) for The Westfield Leader and The Times
HAVING A BIG DAY...Blue Devil running back Jayshawn King, No. 8, had a field day, rushing for 154 yards and three TDs on 19 carries.



David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
SLANTING TO HIS RIGHT...Blue Devil running back Andrew Shaffer, No. 34, slants right for a gain against the Raiders.

Blue Devils Beat Raider Net Girls

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"She was competitive and never gave up, however I was the stronger player and took advantage by returning the ball deep with lots of top spin," said Goldberg. "Scotch Plains is much better than what we expected. They increased their level of play dramatically."

Blue Devil seniors Jessica Bender and Lisa Aliche dominated Raider seniors Katie Devlin and Alyssa Markovitz, winning their match, 6-1, 6-2.

"Jessica and I played very well today," said Aliche. "The match was fairly easy and it gives us a huge boost of confidence."

"We knew coming in that they were strong and they have amazing serves, but we played with a good attitude and did our best against good competition," explained Raider Devlin. "We have less power, so we knew we had to concentrate on placement."

The Blue Devil second doubles team of senior Rachel Louie and sophomore Kim Morawski dominated and Jaci Lopez and Kiera Thomas in two sets, 6-1, 7-5.

"This is a Blue Devil lineup that has such great depth at every position. We have the strength to win each and every match," concluded Reich.

SPF/Cranford Soccer Available on Website

Many pictures of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School boys soccer game with Cranford are now available on *The Leader/Times* website www.goleader.com. Once on the site, click photos in the upper right corner then scroll to 05sep12SPFCranfordBoysSoccer.

SPF Raiders Win 'Game to Remember', Burn Blue Devil Gridders, 32-29, in OT

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Devil Yarusi recovered their fumble on the kickoff at the 26-yard line. Three running plays later, Simmons bashed in for the score and Bonard added the point after to put Westfield ahead, 19-0.

The Raiders responded with an eight-play, 79-yard TD march highlighted by Rowbotham's 14-yard reception and Strong's 32-yard catch followed by his two-yard TD scot with 7:33 left in the third quarter. The extra point failed.

The Blue Devils, however, began their next drive on the 22 and took only four plays to get to pay dirt when King broke loose for a 63-yard TD dash. Bonard's point after made the score 26-6. The Raider band began banging away to arouse spirits. It worked!

Ventura's fumble recovery gave the Raiders good field position on the Blue Devil 23. After a five-yard penalty placed the ball on the 28, Brand had respective runs of 16 and seven yards, putting the ball on the five where Weber, on a keeper, hooked in for the TD with 2:01 left in the third quarter, cutting the Blue Devils' lead to 26-13.

In the fourth quarter, Baker recovered a Westfield fumble on the Blue Devil 26. Eight plays later, Weber whammed in from the one, making the score 26-19. The Raider band played on!

With regulation time running down, the Raiders got the ball on their 35-yard line. Burney-Porter had a 10-yard reception and Brand followed with a 24-yard catch to put the ball on the Westfield 31. After a 10-yard sack, Weber attempted another pass and got an interference call that gave the Raiders a first down at the 24. Zelesnik made a 10-yard reception and Strong rushed four yards to the 10 then We-

ber found Rowbotham in the left corner of the end zone for the TD. Matt Hirschhorn nailed his second point after to send the game into overtime.

"We did a lot of things wrong; however, everyone worked his hardest and we did what we had to do in the second half. I'm really proud of our team. It shows the identity of this team and it shows how hard they love the game," said Weber.

Using the college style format, the Blue Devils got the ball at the 25. On the seventh play from scrimmage, Bonard split the uprights from 24 yards out to put Westfield ahead, 29-26.

The Raiders stuck to the ground game. On the third running play, Strong gave a great second effort for a 13-yard gain then followed up with another 12 yards to put the ball on the Westfield one. After Weber kept for a



David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
PUSHING TOWARD THE GOAL...Running back Greg Brand, No. 22, was instrumental in setting up two Raider TDs.

On the TD pass to Rowbotham, Weber added, "That was huge play on timing. He's the only junior out here. He stepped it up and helped us stay in the game."

"That's the game," Blue Devil Head Coach Ed Tranchina said of the pass interference. "We intercept a pass. That's the game! They give us the fumble that we got down there. That's the game! The third quarter, I thought we took the momentum of the game. They answered and we answered right back, so I give them a lot of credit for hanging in there. It's as hot as it gets. Both teams played as hard as they possible could."

one-yard loss, Strong bashed in for the game winner.

"We have a great fullback, Giannaci, blocking for us and even though our line is pretty young, they gave a great push. I kept my feet pumping. In the huddle, Giannaci said, 'follow me and keep your feet moving,' I listened to him," said Strong.

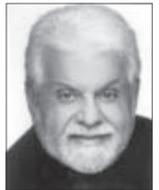
"Our coaches demand it. We are not going to give up," said Raider Head Coach Steve Ciccotelli. "They caught us off-guard. They changed their offense but we didn't quit. That was a character check."

Westfield	6	6	14	0	3	29
Sc. Pl.-Fwd	0	0	13	13	6	32

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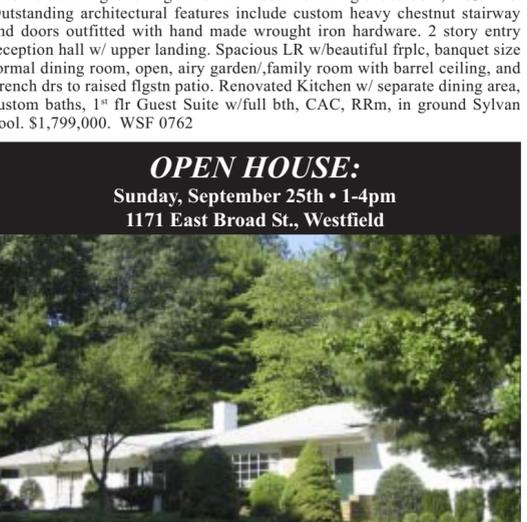


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