



David B. Corbin (2006 sectional finals) for The Westfield Leader and The Times
CLOSE TO THEIR WORK...Raider Lauren Weisbrod, No. 20, and a Lady Minuteman concentrate heavily on the bounce of the ball.

Lady Soccer Raiders Deliver Special Successful Season

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1-0, by No. 8 Ramapo in the NJSIAA Group 3 semis.

"The kids fought 70 minutes, back and forth in an even game. They have one of the best players in the state. She got that one break, took advantage of it and put the ball in the net," said Ewing.

The Raiders had the luxury of 11 veteran seniors led by outstanding Tri-Captains, Hambleton, Lauren Mains and Allie Zazzali. Hambleton, who netted 10 goals, led the team in assists with 19 and goalkeeper Mains posted 14 shutouts.

"Whenever you have some of your best players as captains, I mean Allie is one of the best players in the state and Mains, hands down is the best goalie in the state of New Jersey," stated Ewing. "Having her in the back made a huge, huge difference. She is not as vocal as Allie but leads by example. In the county final against Westfield, when the kids were down, Lauren made two unbelievable saves then stood up, held the ball on her hip and kind of gave a nod to everyone like 'whatever you've got to bring, go ahead, because you're not

scoring'. She started yelling, got them motivated and that turned the tide to help us win."

Zazzali, who netted three goals and three assists, led the very stubborn defense.

"She's like having a coach on the field. She took a great leadership role and I was really impressed in the way she was always positive, communicated and motivated on and off the field. That's what you need and expect out of captains," said Ewing. "The best thing about Allie is that she can play any position with her knowledge and skill level."

LaForge (13 assists) led the Raiders with 15 goals. Lauren Weisbrod netted five goals and seven assists.

"She knows how to play, knows where to be and finds the back of the net," said Ewing of LaForge. "With the two of them up front, really turned the tide for us offensively, while it gave our defense a break and provided numerous scoring opportunities."

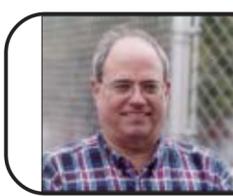
Defensively, the Raiders relied on sophomore center-mid Rachel Kruper, (2 goals, 1 assists), Lisa Camarda (4 goals, 2 assists), Tina Camarda (2 goals), Katie Cornacchia, (2 goals, 1 assist) and Stephanie Glover (1 goal, 2 assists).

"All of them had tremendous seasons," stated Ewing. "We had six kids who were on varsity for four years and four for three years. The camaraderie, the team chemistry and mentality the kids created was just tremendous, all due to the experience that they created and I never worried about leadership. I'm going to miss them as individuals and as players. They're great young ladies and they will be successes in life."

WF's Rodrigues Named 'Gymnast of the Year'

Westfield High School freshman Jenna Rodrigues has been named North, Section 2 Gymnast of the Year by *The Star-Ledger*. Rodrigues gained recognition in every event, including the All-Around, in her section.

The Westfield team, which won the Union County title and the sectional title, was named North, Section 2 Team of the Year. Westfield finished seventh in the state tournament.



Devil's Den A Deep-Rooted Interest In WHS Football

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

You've undoubtedly heard or read about "six degrees of separation." According to Wikipedia, it is the hypothesis that anyone on Earth can be connected to any other person on the planet through a chain of acquaintances with no more than five intermediaries.

The hypothesis was first proposed in 1929 by the Hungarian writer Karinyth Frigyes in a short story called *Chains*. The concept is based on the idea that the number of acquaintances grows exponentially with the number of links in the chain, and so only a small number of links is required for the set of acquaintances to become the whole human population.

Got it? What's my point? Well, with the considerable help of Paul (No. 66) Harbaugh and Pat Ferro, we have come up with some amount of degrees of separation — see if you can figure how many, cause I sure couldn't! — between the 1932 WHS football team and this year's team (both of which defeated Plainfield to help WHS to a 51-44-7 lead in the ancient rivalry).

Dom Urciuoli was a star fullback on Hall of Fame coach Bob Duncan's WHS teams in 1930-31-32, and he was also part of a huge family that later spread out to include, among others, Rich Ventimiglia (whose mother was Dom's sister), co-captain of the 1955 team under first-year coach Fred Bradshaw. An assistant coach on that team was former WHS star Karney Scioscia, the cousin of WHS Hall of Famer John Chironna, and the uncle of Steve Scioscia, the co-captain of Hall of Fame coach Gary Kehler's final team in 1982.

Let's not forget Dom's nephew, Bob, a starting center on the '66 WHS football team.

Oh, and also there was Ellen Yarusi, an aunt of Jason and Ryan Yarusi, the captains of the 1996 and '06 WHS teams, who married a cousin of Anne Urciuoli, the mother of Pat Ferro and grandmom of current WHS footballer Sean Ferro.

At some point, the Harbaugh family moved into town across from Franklin School and Greg and Paul both played football under Kehler. Paul married cheerleader Barbara Hannis, who is a cousin to the Urciuolis and whose nephew Will was a starting lineman on the '98 WHS team.

Greg and Paul's sister Mary married Dan Kinningham, a starting guard on the '70 WHS that was recently inducted into the Hall of Fame and the brother of Bob Kinningham, one of the rare two-way starters at offensive guard and defensive halfback on the '75 team. (Mark Carroll, a backup center, was a starting safety on the unbeaten '74

football team.)

(There is, so far as I can tell, any direct relationship with the Urciuolis-etc. families and the Triano, Mannino, Matino, Sisto, Vella or Bavosa families. At least until I get an email to the contrary.)

That's eight decades, the 1930s through this past fall, and I'm so confused that we'll just leave it at this, with a breakdown of the six (or seven or however many) degrees of separation for one WHS football "family," with their WHS-Plainfield senior year score:

- Dom Urciuoli (1932; W, 13-6) ...
- John Chironna, Karney Scioscia (1945; W, 12-6) ...
- Rich Ventimiglia (1955; P, 20-0)
- Bob Urciuoli (1966; P, 33-14) ...
- Greg Harbaugh, Dan Kinningham (1970; W, 49-6) ...
- Bob Kinningham (1975; W, 9-6) ...
- Paul Harbaugh (1979; W, 3-2) ...
- Steve Scioscia (1982; P, 21-3) ...
- Jason Yarusi (1996; P, 38-7) ...
- Will Hannis (1998; P, 21-6) ...
- Mark Harbaugh (2004; P, 40-0) ...
- Will Harbaugh, Sean Ferro, Ryan Yarusi (2006; W, 17-7).

STATE FOOTBALL UPDATE

The two playoff games most of New Jersey cared about were both played Friday night, with Don Bosco Prep humbling St. Peter's Prep, and Elizabeth rallying to defeat Phillipsburg.

First Bosco ... which I am told is not just chocolate syrup that you mix with milk for a yummy drink. Apparently their quarterback, Matt Simms — son of ex-Giant Phil and brother of current Tampa Bay quarterback Chris — made some vulgar gestures and taunted the St. Peter's fans and bench at least twice late in the game. (Faithful reader "tenkay" was there and provided the Den with some details.) This had apparently happened at least one other time earlier in the season, against St. Joseph of Montvale.

As somebody who has been fired six times and been known to let his emotions get in the way of his mouth, the Den has two thoughts on this: 1) it's good to see that fine, disciplined Catholic school education paying dividends, and 2) how would this have played out if his coach was Gary Kehler or Dick Zimmer?

OK, call me old-school, and I know people today just say, "Boys will be boys," or "He's under a lot of pressure." But I just can't in my wildest imagination see Kehler or Zimmer allowing that to happen even one time. And there would be zero possibility of two or three times.

Second Elizabeth ... the University of Elizabeth. Even though it's in the same county and conference as WHS, it's impossible to root for a school

with an egomaniacal coach like Lizzy's. And that's not even factoring in that Elizabeth should be at least two, maybe three, high schools. Combine the enrollment at the three Group 4 Toms River high schools and you get Elizabeth's. It's absurd. With three times the talent to pick from that P'burg (or any of its opponents) has, it's almost an embarrassment that Lizzy would have to come from behind to win.

RIVALRY GETS HOTTER

The WHS-SPF rivalry in girls swimming has really heated up over the past few years, since SPF split into separate boys and girls teams. The last two years it seemingly reached a peak, with down-to-the-wire dual meets and county meets that were incredibly intense and close.

And now we find out that two meets isn't enough for the rivalry. SPF, which won the state Public B championship last winter and would've been a heavy favorite to repeat this year, has moved up to Public A, into North Jersey Section 2. WHS has been in the state Public A final the six of the last seven years, and has won the last seven North 2 Public A titles.

Something has to give. The two rivals will meet Jan. 16, a Saturday night, at the Westfield Y in what figures to be a wildly exciting dual meet. Then there's the county championships Feb. 3. And then, in what will be the grandmammy of them all, Tuesday, Feb. 20, at Lincoln School Pool in Bayonne, for the sectional title that will leave one of them two victories from a possible state title; the other will go home.

(Making Tuesday, Feb. 20, a date to remember is the likelihood of yet another classic confrontation between the WHS boys and Bridgewater-Raritan, the defending state Public A champion!)

HARDING UPDATE III

The list of WHS athletes who have grown up on Harding Street continues to grow. When we first mentioned it, we somehow forgot to include Brad, Daryl (Daps) and Roger Brewster. And then came word that we had overlooked Dave Faris.

On a personal note, here's a much smaller list of WHS athletes who grew up on Embree Crescent (former home of the Den, at 712): Ray Bailey, Brian and Mike Pattysen, Chris and Don Assmann, Tom, Jim and Dave Tinness, Joe and John Krakora, Rick and Stan Warne, Jackie Raetz, Lou Rettino Jr., coach Bill Odenkirk, Dave Odenkirk, and the grand wizard of billiards, Don Mokrauer.

IS IT JUST ME ...

... or does "Be True to Your School" have no meaning, except to fans of

the Beach Boys? My school is, and always will be, Westfield High School, although I do have other schools I root for—the University of Alabama Crimson Tide, the Massillon (Ohio) Tigers, and Neshaminy (Pa.) Redskins. I've been a Bama fan for over 40 years. When Mike Shula was hired by athletic director Mal Moore four years ago to clean up the mess the football program had become, nobody was happier than me. Mike had been a great quarterback at Alabama under Ray Perkins, and he had plenty of coaching experience in the NFL. For sure, Shula was up against it, with bowl probation and limited scholarships because of sins by previous coaches.

Bottom line: Shula puts up a 26-23 record, not great but the team always played hard, always competed and was never an embarrassment to the school or the tradition. Sure, he lost to Auburn four times—28-23, 21-13, 28-18 and 22-15. But he was recruiting well, and the team was 10-2 and ranked No. 8 in the country last year! (OK, the team was wearing black socks, so that's a minus.)

Last week Moore, under whose guidance the Crimson football ship has been slowly sinking, fired Mike Shula. To say I'm ticked off wouldn't begin to scratch the surface. Yeah, Shula will get his multi-million dollar buyout, and he'll coach again. But that's not the point. I just find it difficult now to care even a little about college sports. And, since I'm not one of the millions who have swallowed the professional sports Kool-Aid, my sports-rooting interest is down to three teams to root for (well, really, only one). Bama gets one more chance to keep my interest: when they play Oklahoma State on Dec. 28, they better be wearing a No. 11 (Shula's number as a player) on their helmets. Otherwise, anybody interested in a complete collection of 'Bama Magazines? (Anybody who wants to see a copy of the email I sent Mal Moore, contact me at the address below.)

DEVIL OF THE WEEK

This week's free sub from Al the Owner at Westfield Subs (261 South Ave.) goes to P.J. Harley. The Penn State-bound senior co-captain won the 200- and 500-yard freestyles last Friday as WHS knocked off three-time defending state Public B champion Mountain Lakes, 88-82, in the head coaching debut of Jeff Knight.

The Devil's Den appears Thursday in The Westfield Leader during the scholastic season. Contact us with comments, complaints, story ideas or note-type items at bj1019@aol.com. GO DEVILS!

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