



RAIDER PRE-GAME RITUAL...The Raider boys have unique warm-up exercises before every soccer game. This season, the Raiders claimed the Union County championship with a 4-2 victory over Union.

BRYAN MEREDITH SELECTED FIRST TEAM ALL-STATE

Raider Soccer Boys Step Up To Successful Year, Won UCT

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

Despite a somewhat slow start, with a much different team than the year before, the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School boys soccer team won its 11th Union County Tournament title under 32-year Head Coach Tom Breznitsky, played in the North Jersey, Group 3 Section 2 semifinal game, won its 20th straight Watchung Conference title, outscored opponents, 46-22, and finished with a 16-6-1 record.

"We were a little more characteristic of what people think of a soccer team this year. Last year we had seven guys who were 6'2 and bigger, so we scored goals on headers. This season we only had a few, so we needed to do some things differently, but I thought our kids were pretty talented. Soccer players are soccer players. Sometimes they're big, sometimes they're not," said Breznitsky whose career record stands at 543-123-39.

En route to the UCT title, the Raiders defeated New Providence, 2-0, in the semifinals then humbled top-seeded Union, 4-2, in the finals.

"The thinking was that Union was the power to beat this year. We lost to them in a very close overtime game

during the regular season. We came up with a little game plan that was very successful, primarily taking Bryan Meredith out of goal. We used it again in the final and it worked well again, along with the help obviously of (Mike) DeVizio scoring three goals. It was very rewarding to us even though we won numerous times before. As a result of a heartbreaking loss to Elizabeth, 4-3 in double overtime last year, and with many of those kids returned this year, that was very gratifying to finally bring one home in dramatic fashion," said Breznitsky.

The Raiders came up short in the sectionals when Holmdel won, 1-0, on a disputed goal.

"Usually when it comes seeding time we have just one or two losses and are the one seed. This year we ended up number six. The six losses that we had, five of them were by one goal and three of them in overtime. In the playoffs, we beat Morristown, went on to play JFK in Iselin and did well and then lost to Holmdel in the last 28 seconds on a very, very controversial ending. Brandon

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

Raider Meredith Gets All-State First Team

Scotch Plains-Fanwood (SPF) High School senior Bryan Meredith has been selected to *The Star-Ledger* All-State First Team in boys soccer for the second straight year. Five Westfield High School boys, five Raiders and one Union Catholic Viking received All-Union County (UC) honors or better.

Meredith recorded a SPF school-record, 47 shutouts in his four years of varsity. This season, he recorded eight shutouts but also netted seven goals. Meredith, also All-Group 3 and All-UC First Team, has been se-

lected UC Player of the Year and the Raiders were named All-UC Team of the Year.

Raiders Brian Hessemer and Mike DeVizio, both All-UC First Team, made the All-Group 3 Second Team. Blue Devils Chris Mattes and Kevin Hennessey were named to the All-UC First Team and Jon Ramalho made the All-UC Second Team, as did Raider Jarek Cohen and Viking Nick Ferreira (also All-Non-Public Third Team). Blue Devils Nick Barba and Tom Parkinson and Raider Evan Aspell made the All-UC Third Team.

This Week's Devils' Den will be on page 20
COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP SIGHTED BY BOYS, GIRLS
Raider Boys/Girls Have Big Numbers in Winter Track

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

Versatile athletes and big numbers could give the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School boys and girls winter track teams a good shot at winning the Union County Tournament (UCT) title this season. The Raider boys aim to defend their title and the Raider girls seek to improve upon their fifth place finish last year.

"Right now, we have about 100 kids out (and growing)," said Raider coach Jeff Koegel. "(There are) Lots of new faces, so we will need time to see which of the new people will distinguish themselves. We have championship aspirations on the county level for both teams."

The Raider girls graduated only one girl, Meaghan Kelly, who could reel in the team points, but they have shored up one of their deficiencies from last winter, the shot put, with the presence of junior Erin Rossi, who also competes in the pole vault, and senior Lauryn Adams.

"Rossi has given up swimming for winter track. She and Adams will make a very strong duo in the shot put, where we had been struggling to score points in the winter. We are hoping to have a two-person shot team over 70,'" said Koegel.

The girls will be very strong in the distance events with junior Cassy Valdes, who placed second in the two mile at the UCT, Cathy Harley, who finished fourth in the event, and the addition of sophomore Brittany Veeck, who had a 5:14 1,600-meters as a freshman.

"Brittany has become a year-round

runner now, so I expect even more improvement out of her," commented Koegel. "Valdes, who is coming back from a hip injury at the end of the cross-country season, ran in the 3,200 at the Meet of Champions last winter."

Senior Kim Appezzato competed in the 800 and 400, and was on the winning 4x400 relay team, along with Samantha Gates, Danielle Vena and Kelly, at the UCT last year. Juniors Julie Meurer, Alana Bencivengo and sophomore Emily Carow will add depth to the middle distances.

"We have a few freshman girls who didn't run cross-country whom I think will be able to contribute," added Koegel.

Seniors Vena and Amanda Bobyack will be strong in the sprints as will junior Tina Olsson. Freshman Alanna Salituro should contribute as well.

For the boys, senior Adam Biner, who ran a 4:27 1,600 meters, will head the distances runners, while juniors Dan Sapienza and Pat Doliber will add depth. Biner placed consist-

tently in the county last year in the 1600 and his training has been strong. Sapienza missed most of the fall with injuries but is returning to form. Junior Mike Ragan is beginning to develop and should contribute as well.

According to Koegel, "Sapienza and Doliber will be very strong in the 3200."

Senior Kyle Rowbotham will be the iron man in the sprints, hurdles and jumps. Rowbotham has the ability to compete well in nearly all of those events. Senior Tom Pennella, who has similar abilities to Rowbotham, may forego jumping events due to a knee injury from football season. Senior Mike Katz could compete in the sprints.

"Rowbotham and Pennella are two of the best all-around track and field athletes in the county and we will be looking to them to score significant points for us," said Koegel.

Junior Mike Alleman, who placed second in the shot put in the Meet of Champions last spring, has his sights on hitting 58' this winter.

Blue Devil Matmen Rebuild, Are Deep in Middle Weights

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

Sophomore Sam Reichbach also showed a lot of potential last season and qualified for the regions at 119-lbs. This season, the much bigger Reichbach has risen to compete at 140-lbs.

"Sam did some growing, which is good! He had a good summer, probably got about 50 matches in," said Kurz.

Junior Andy Castrorao just missed qualifying for the region tournament last year but he has shown strong signs of improvement.

"He's done a much better job managing his weight. I think he is going to have a breakout year," said Kurz.

Some pleasant surprises are sophomores Rob Grandstrand and Pat Younger, who will also be competing in the 125-140-lb range.

"They are flying around the room like 100 mile per hour. They are intense," Kurz expressed.

Junior Matt Shaffer, who wrestled varsity at 135-lbs, and sophomore

Nick DeFreitas, who wrestled varsity at 103-lbs, are expected to compete at 135-lbs and 112-lbs, respectively.

"We have a core group of kids who like to wrestle and they do it all year long. It's really promising for the future," said Kurz who added, "This freshman class paired with last year's freshman class, I think we are going to have a great team down the road."

The Blue Devils will host Malcolm X. Shabazz in their season opener on Friday, December 15, at 4:30 p.m.

POSSIBLE LINEUP:

- 103: — Open
 - 112: — Nick DeFreitas (10)
 - 119: — John Barnes (10)
 - 125: — Younger/Grandstrand (10)
 - 130: — Colin MacKay (12)
 - 135: — Matt Shaffer (11)
 - 140: — Sam Reichbach (10)
 - 145: — John Falzon (11)
 - 152: — Andy Castrorao (11)
 - 160/171: — Mark Boyd (12)
 - 189: — Undecided
 - 215: — Undecided
 - Hwt: — Undecided
- *Other wrestlers may win wrestle offs and bump the present individual.

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