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THE WEEK IN SPORTS

Sports Section
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VENEZIA SINKS 23 POINTS, BONARD HAS 6 ASSISTS

Blue Devil Hoopmen Muzzle MX Shabazz Bulldogs, 52-41

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

Success in boxing out the much taller Malcolm X. Shabazz High School boys basketball team and a 23-point scoring performance from Mike Venezia, with the fine setups of point guard Tom Bonard, led to a 52-41 Westfield Blue Devil victory in Westfield on December 21.

Forwards Santo Nardi (5 rebounds), Dan Pritsker and Tony Di Iorio, who contributed four points, controlled the defensive boards while Bonard (5 rebounds) and Venezia (8 rebounds) hounded Bulldog sharpshooters Da'Shon Barrino and Al ray Blackmon. The strategy worked. Although Barrino and Blackmon netted 18 and 15 points, respectively, their shooting percentage was much lower than normal and the remainder of the

Bulldogs could only come up with eight points.

"Last year, we noticed that they were a three-point shooting team. We knew every time they shoot, it was going to be a long rebound. We practiced all week on defense and boxing out. If we boxed them out, then we could get everything moving. If we are playing in their face, they won't

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MOVING THE BALL AROUND INSIDE...Blue Devil Santo Nardi, No. 50, moves the ball around and looks for an outside shooter against the Shabazz Bulldogs.

BAKER, GANO, MINEO, OLSSON PICK UP VICTORIES

Hungry Panthers Make Prey Of Raider Wrestlers, 44-16

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

Hungry Roselle Park High School Panthers let it be known that, at this point in the season, they are the No. 1 contenders to grab the Union County Tournament wrestling title away from the Brearley Bears, after feasting on an unsuspecting Raider squad, 44-16, in Scotch Plains on December 23.

At this point in the season, the 3-0 Panthers held a definite edge in mat sense and conditioning, and won 10 of the 14 bouts, which included every key match-up. The 3-1 Raiders received victories from veterans Keith Baker, Sal Gano, Ricky Olsson and Pat Mineo.

"We were looking at the lineup and had a different idea of what was going to happen. We juggled around some of the heavier weights. They (Roselle Park) were conditioned. Their style of wrestling is to ride up high, hold an arm until the official calls something. I believe in coaching the kids to wrestle, do a flurry of moves. When someone slows you down, it's real difficult and that is where a lot of my

kids were getting frustrated," explained Raider Head Coach John Scholz. "They are a great team. They always are. They don't give up many points. That's what makes them who they are. For that, I give them kudos."

The ability to pick up extra team points and to avoid ceding extra team points went the way of the Panthers. That edge immediately presented itself in the first bout (189-lbs) when Panther Rich Benner managed to claim an 8-0, majority decision - a wrestler must defeat his opponent by at least 8 points to gain a majority decision - over Mike Zamzam to give his team a 4-0 lead.

At 215-lbs, Baker feasted on Ryan Angus, scoring two takedowns and a nearfall before settling him with a front arm hook and body press in 2:15 to give the Raiders their only lead of the evening (6-4). Panther veteran heavyweight Mike Lefano scored a takedown and a reversal to win a key 4-1, decision over first-year varsity starter Joe Blaes.

The third key Panther victory came at 119-lbs when Anthony Zangari was

trailing 6-4 late in the third period but took advantage of a tiring Tristan Bundy to score a takedown and a two-point nearfall to earn an 8-6 victory.

The Raiders needed six team points from Gano at 125-lbs but Panther Joe Pisaro held off enough to yield only four team points via 11-1 majority decision. Then Russ Benner won the fourth Panther key bout at 130-lbs when he avoided being taken down

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TAKING THE HEART OUT OF A KARDINAL...Blue Devil John Barnes took the heart out of the Kearny Cardinals when he claimed a 10-5 victory over Vin Ignomirello at 119-lbs.

BLUE DEVILS VICTORIOUS IN 7 OF 9 HEAD ON BOUTS

Blue Devils' Good Mat Sense Downs Kearny Kards, 45-33

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

Good use of mat sense guided the Westfield High School wrestling team to a 45-33 victory over Kearny in Westfield on December 20. The 1-0 Blue Devils won seven of nine head-to-head bouts and spotted the Cardinals 24 team points by forfeit.

"He took the heart right out of that team. That kid could be their best wrestler. He was second in the Kearny Tournament. John mentally and physically beat that kid to a point where he could not fight back," expressed Kurz.

Joe Panarese followed at 125-lbs to pin Chris Plaugic in 2:45 with a tight waist and underhook maneuver. After Pat Younger gave the Blue Devils a 15-9 team lead by receiving a forfeit at 130-lbs, Colin MacKay tore into Don Plaugic to show him the lights in 1:21 using a tight waist and half nelson.

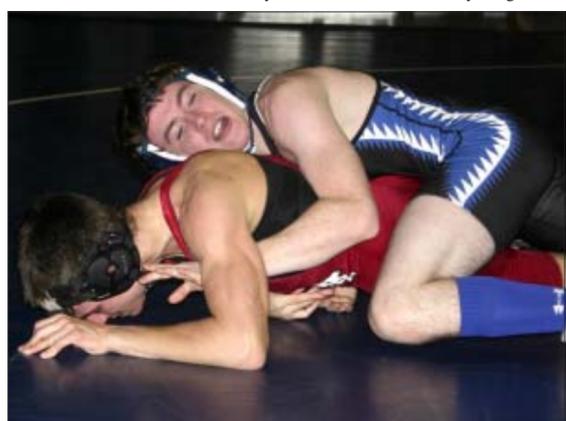
At 140-lbs, Matt Shaffer began with a quick spin-behind takedown then listened to his coach to clamp Jhon (his spelling) Lopez in a nearside cradle in 1:28.

"He was looking for the farside and the guy kept turning in. He made the adjustment and put the kid on his back and pinned him," Kurz explained.

Blue Devil Sam Reichbach scored two takedowns before sensing that Mo Khwan was a little hesitant in his sit-

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LOOKING FOR AN OPENING...Raider Ricky Olsson, top, looks for an opportunity to turn 135-lb Panther Tom Degnan who tries to keep close to the mat. Olsson won the bout, 6-0.

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