

KAYE SINKS 11 POINTS, ZAZZALI NAILS 10, LAW 6

Raider Lady Cagers Silence Ferris, 43-30, in Sectionals

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

A decisive second quarter set the wheels in motion for the sixth-seeded Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School girls' basketball team to roll to a 43-30, victory over the 11th-seeded Ferris Bulldogs of Jersey City in the opening round of the North Jersey, Section 2, Group 3 tournament in Scotch Plains on February 28.

Raider senior guard Loni Kaye led all scorers with 11 points. Junior guard Allie Zazzali chipped in 10 points, three assists and two swipes. Freshman Jackie Law pulled down 12 rebounds and rolled in six points. Senior Lauren Benovengo had five rebounds, three assists and four points. Junior guard Lauren Mains grabbed five rebounds, stole two basketballs and went 4-for-4 from the foul line. Kaylan Jaichon came off the bench to pull five rebounds and net four points. Ashley Staton and Selena Galloway combined for 15 points for Ferris.

"We settled down and we started running on them in the second period. When we can get a run on people, we're playing all right. We began setting better picks, which freed up our cutters and shooters, and we rebounded better," said Raider Head Coach Bruce Davis. "We started out in a 1-3-1 press and they were beating the threes, so we dropped out of that and ran a 2-3 which slowed them down a little bit and that was the difference in the game."

An erratic and flat offense created problems for the Raiders while the quick Bulldogs opened up with an 8-

Klimowicz Selected 'Rookie of the Year'

PHILADELPHIA - St. Joseph's University freshman Hillary Klimowicz (Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Class of 2005) was named Atlantic 10 Rookie of the Year in women's basketball.

Klimowicz leads the Hawks in rebounds (7.4 per game) and blocks (54), while ranking third in scoring at 9.1 points per game. The 6-foot-2 center entered the A-10 Championship on March 3-5 seventh in the conference in rebounding and second in blocks. Her 54 blocks this season rank 10th all-time in Saint Joseph's program history and is the second highest single-season mark for a Hawk.

A seven-time A-10 Rookie of the Week, the third highest mark in conference history, Klimowicz was named to the 15th Annual Hawk Classic All-Tournament Team. She is the second Hawk to earn A-10 Rookie of the Year, joining the 1999 recipient Susan Moran.

2 run to pull ahead, 12-6 at the end of the quarter.

"We've been having a couple of lousy practices and, sure enough, we started out just like we did in practice," said Davis. "They pushed out on their defensive intensity and we didn't handle it real well."

The Raiders did come out with renewed intensity in the second quarter and took the bark out of the Bulldogs with a full-court press and an occasional 2-3 zone resulting in turnovers and few choice looks at the basket. Zazzali, Law and Jaichon teamed up to key a 12-0 run to push the score to, 18-14, by halftime.

"The boards were the biggest thing," said Law. "I wasn't really worried about points because Loni and Allie made the big difference. Coming in, we really stressed that we had to beat them on the boards and we did."

The Raiders maintained a rhythm that spilled over into the third quarter and added 10 more while the defense muzzled the Bulldogs to zero from the field and six free throws for a 28-20 lead. In the final quarter, with Ferris

playing man-to-man, the Raiders responded by rattling the hoop with 15 points. Kaye bucketed five points, Mains hit 4-for-4 from the stripe and Raychel Kruper banged in two. Zazzali and Jaichon each added two points.

"Lauren and I need to keep communicating with everyone; that's the most important thing when we're out there. Today, everyone acted as one, everyone was on, we pulled through and we're moving on," said Kaye.

"The Watchung toughness kind of took over, although the kids from Jersey City are tough," noted Davis. "We got lucky on a couple of plays that went our way. Luckily, the referees called the holds and fouls when we tried to run our offense on the cuts and that made a difference. They got into foul trouble and had to start rotating people."

As to what's ahead, Davis said, "Hopefully we'll beat Mendham and keep playing. I told the kids I'm not done coaching for the season and I hope they're not done playing. One game at a time!"

Ferris	12	2	6	10	30
Sc. Pl.-Fanwood	6	12	10	15	43

Lady Raiders Head to Finals, Tame Tiger B'ballers, 49-45

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school basketball. Allie, she is just unbelievable. She keeps on making play after play no matter what the circumstance. Despite a bunch of turnovers and some foul trouble we did manage to get the job done. Our kids stepped in and did a good job off the bench and that was very important because it bought us minutes to get our starters back. Even the kids who did not get in; they come to practice, they work hard, they push the other kids and they stay ready to play hard when they need to go in there."

The Raiders found the basket with an eight-point tear in the opening quarter and surged to a 13-5 lead at the buzzer. Zazzali netted six points, Mains swished in four, Kaye nailed a jumper from inside the paint and Benovengo converted from the stripe.

In the second quarter, sloppy ball handling by the Raiders proved costly as the Tigers roared with five unanswered points. Zazzali, however, re-loaded and bucketed seven points, including a 3-pointer at the whistle, and Mains fired in five points ending the half, 25-17, Raiders.

South Plainfield took a 32-31 lead late in the third quarter. Santiago struck with eight points, however

Zazzali totaled seven points and put the Raiders back on top, 36-33, with a three-point play. Law and Kaye each scored two points.

Defying Tiger defensive pressure, the Raiders continued it's inside penetration in the fourth quarter, which resulted in a two-point jumper and five successful free throws ending the segment of the "Zazzali Show." Law hit three points and Benovengo nailed one from the stripe. Jaichon blocked a critical shot at the end of the game.

"After our win with Mendham, we came out with so much intensity, it just carried over," said Zazzali. "We knew this was going to be physical and we had to play at our pace and that's what we did. We always play zone unless the situation calls for us to go man. We pack it in and end up getting fouls, as you saw tonight."

Commenting on her record-high scoring game, she added, "When I hit my first couple of shots it was a real big confidence booster so I just kept on shooting. In the game, I thought Mains had an awesome game; Jackie came up big rebounding and Loni hit when we needed it. We all stepped it up."

Sc. Pl.-Fanwood	13	12	11	13	49
So. Plainfield	5	12	16	12	45



Devil's Den

A Couple of Last-Minute Snubs Opened the Doors to History

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

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood ... Ever wonder what would have happened if ... You hadn't taken that job in Trenton, where you met your future wife?

You had kept your low-paying but secure and satisfying job instead of going where the grass appeared to be greener?

What would have happened if Dick Schneider had decided to become the WHS football coach in 1955? Or if Fred Bradshaw hadn't decided in late May 1957 to return to Illinois after two years as head coach? Or if Ernie Gardner had taken the job he was expected to be given after Bradshaw's resignation?

Westfield football was in a shaky period. After the controversial dismissal of legendary Joe Freeman following the 1954 season, the school was looking for some stability and offered the job to Schneider, an assistant coach at North Plainfield at the time who went on to a very successful head coaching career with the Canucks. At the last minute, Schneider backed out and Bradshaw was called east from Auburn, Ill., where he coached a perennial powerhouse. But, following back-to-back 4-5 seasons at WHS, Bradshaw headed back home, where he eventually became Auburn's winningest coach.

It was already nearly summer break, but according to a report in *The Leader's* From the Sidelines column, the first choice to replace Bradshaw was Gardner, who had taken over a moribund Somerville program and won three straight state titles. When Gardner became unavailable, a last-minute scramble brought in Les Zorge, an Ohio native whose typical practices would make a Marine drill sergeant blush. It is not known what Zorge was told about the toughness of the kids he was inheriting, but it's safe to say that in four years at the helm, Zorge completely reconstructed the mindset of the local youngsters on the idea of toughness.

(The Den's memory of Zorge involves the first-string varsity against the last-string sophomores. One sophomore linebacker was flattened and assistant coach Harvey Gerber thought Zorge should check him out. Zorge looked down, folded the player's arms across his chest, put a daisy on him and said, "Get the debris off the field." Remember this was 1960, not 2005!)

While the late Norm (Nemo) Koury usually gets credit for calling his players "cake eaters," it has come to The Den's attention that several years before Koury was hired (1962), Zorge was telling his football and jayvee baseball players about flushing his son's birthday cake down the toilet and "getting the hell out of this cake-eating town."

Anyhow, if Schneider, who was North Plainfield's athletic director from 1958 until 1979, or Gardner had taken the WHS job, would they have brought their own staff with them? Would Gary Kehler have even been hired as an assistant football and head wrestling coach? Imagine life in Westfield in the 1960s and '70s without "GK," Dick Zimmer, the 4-2, the 7-end over, and ... actually, it's impossible to imagine life without that, especially if you lived it.

But when Schneider and Gardner came to their fork in the road, they decided to go along the path that was known to them. And Westfield got Zorge, which begat Kehler, an unknown assistant coach out of Rutgers, via Hackettstown and legendary Chot Morrison. In four short years, Zorge turned Westfield into a bunch of mean, nasty players — guys like Bob Wolfgang, Dave Reitze, Jim Kovacs, Bill Bryant, Pete Braun, Greg Weiss, Bob Duncan, and others — and transformed the town's image into a bunch of rough-necks, who were ready to rumble every Saturday afternoon around 1:30.

Westfield under Zorge went from a team everybody wanted as their Homecoming Game opponent to a team everybody feared. And when Zorge — citing "personal reasons" — left following the 1960 season, Kehler inherited a veteran team that was coming off a 7-2 season and had beaten Plainfield for the first time since the 1948 season.

The combination of Schneider and Gardner changing their minds at the last minute, Zorge shockingly departing the scene and Kehler getting his first big chance was about to produce one of the greatest eras of high school football in New Jersey history.

Soon, perhaps as early as this week (word is that just two of the original 15 candidates are being brought back for second interviews), the next football coach in WHS's illustrious history will be named. And more history will be there to be made.

SWIMMING UPDATE

Could there be a more fitting end to a WHS swim career? Senior All-American Pat Daurio had just swum his final race — finishing third in a touchout in the 100-yard breaststroke — and was making his way back to where the eight-man WHS group had set up its "area" at the Gloucester Institute of Technology in Deptford at the Meet of Champions. Four of those swimmers were on the blocks for the 400-freestyle relay, and the other three had gone to the other end of the pool to cheer for them.

Daurio — who 20 minutes earlier had passed on an opportunity to rest for a better shot at winning the breaststroke to swim on a 200-freestyle relay so that three teammates would have a shot at breaking the school record and maybe earning All-American status — walked alone at the far end of the pool. Just before he got to the team's area, he stopped, looked into the packed balcony and shouted, "FIELD." A couple seconds later, a faint "west" could be heard from the middle of the stands. Again Daurio yelled "FIELD." This time the "West" was louder. Daurio: FIELD. Balcony: WEST. Within seconds, the Westfield parents in the balcony were joined by archrival Bridgewater-Raritan parents, chanting "WEST" to Daurio's "FIELD." Soon it was the team's famous "field-WEST-FIELD-west-FIELD-WEST-field" chant.

Athletes like Pat Daurio come along once, maybe twice, in a coach's lifetime. Even though he had come up hundreds of a second short of a state individual championship minutes earlier, he felt the need to get his school's relay fired up for its final swim.

Maybe it's a small thing. But in an age where so many high school athletes give the appearance of being more committed to their AAU, travel or club teams in whatever sport, it was quite a sight to see an All-American, bound for Princeton University, show one final time his feelings for the WHS boys swim team.

WRESTLING UPDATE

And then there was one. Senior Andrew Shaffer will be WHS's lone representative in Atlantic City, after finishing third at 145 pounds in the Region 3 tournament last weekend.

While he's a longshot, Shaffer will be looking to be WHS's first state champion since 1976, when Chuck Cosenza surprised the field and won the 148-pound title.

It'd be worth making the trip to A.C., just to hear Jocelyn Shaffer's voice over the raucous crowd of 10,000 or so people.

BASKETBALL UPDATE

The Devil's Den went into the Lions' Den on March 1 to catch the WHS girls basketball team against North Hunterdon. It was not quite the right game to see coach Joe Marino's squad, which finished the season at 14-10.

It was, however, quite a night for Dave (The Rave) Robbins, the legendary capped North Hunterdon fan who just missed with his backward halfcourt attempt at halftime. North Hunterdon has a long, long history of outstanding girls basketball teams, and this is another. Ironically, North was eliminated by Bayonne in the next round.

The WHS boys ended their season with a 15-9 mark, the third straight winning season (and four of the last five years) under coach Kevin Everly, who does as good a job as any coach in the county. While Josh Gerckens and Terron Rogers will be missed, the future is bright with the return next winter of guards Mike Venezia and Tom Bonard.

NO FOOLIN'

In case you're wondering, there are 23 days until the 2006 baseball season opens against Hillsborough, Saturday, April 1, 11 a.m. at Edison Intermediate School. If you're any kind of WHS fan, this will be a "BLUE OUTF" day and everybody should be there dressed in blue to watch what is potentially one of the best teams ever at WHS.

Anybody who doesn't want to see Jay Anderson, Tom Bonard, Brandon Cuba, Mike Diaz, Craig Ellis, Josh Gerckens, Dave Kaplow, Jayshawn King, Mike Murray, Tom Ricciuti, Alec Zierler and Co. go after the first sectional title in 18 years and the first state title ever is just not a true Blue Devil!

DIY YOU KNOW ...

That Randy Winn, who could be a starting outfielder on Team USA at the World Baseball Classic, is the son of Dwight Winn, WHS Class of 1962. Dwight was one of the finest all-around athletes ever at WHS.

And offensive tackle Jeff Backus, son of Bill Backus, WHS Class of 1967, was named the Detroit Lions' "franchise" player for 2006.

The Devil's Den appears Thursday in *The Westfield Leader* during the scholastic sports season. Contact us with comments, suggestions or trivia questions at bj1019@aol.com. Go Devils!

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