

**PELOSI WINS VAULT, CAPOCCIA BEAM**

**Crusader Gymnasts Nip Raiders in Tri-Meet**

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

Raider freshman Gina Pelosi took first in the vault with a score of 9.1 and senior Natalie Capoccia took top honors on the balance beam with a mark of 8.5, but it was the visiting A. L. Johnson Crusaders who nipped the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School gymnastics team, 99.2-98.7, in a Tri-Meet on October 5. Jonathan Dayton finished with a total of 31.5.

The young Raider squad has been toying with breaking the 100-team total mark since a 104.1-99.5 loss to 13th-ranked Westfield on October 3 and Pelosi, along with the entire squad, has been showing signs of improvement.

"She has gotten very strong on vault. She really pulled through. She found her way through the team. When they come in as freshmen, everybody is a little nervous and not too sure of themselves. Her scores have gone up every meet as everybody on our team has," said Raider Head Coach Lisa Cerchio. "We started off our season where our team all-around was like 92 and we just went against Westfield and we were 99.5. I can't ask for more. They are practicing hard. They are sticking their beam routines. They do what

they need to do. I'm proud of them."

Another strong freshman, Lindsay Robinson, did very well at the Westfield meet, placing second on the uneven bars with an 8.45, fifth on the floor at 8.55 and fourth All-Around with a 33.0 total. Robinson has also qualified for the state sectionals in all four events.

Pelosi also placed third on the uneven bars at 8.0 and took second All-Around with a total of 32.8 behind Crusader Marissa Rusin, who had a total of 34.8. Capoccia, who also tied teammate Annie Smith for third on the floor exercises with a score of 8.0, was third All-Around at 32.7.

"Natalie is having a tremendous season again. She qualified for all four events to go to the state sectional meet," commented Cerchio.

Rusin took first on the floor with an 8.6, followed by teammate Brie Fernandi at 8.5. Rusin also captured first on the uneven bars with a score of 8.8, followed by Smith at 8.15. She also placed second in the vault with a 9.0 and Fernandi, who took third on the beam at 8.3, placed third with an 8.8.

"I would be very happy if we would break 100. It would be a major accomplishment for our team and I think it would give them a lot of confidence for the future meets," said Cerchio.

**Blue Devil Gymnasts Outdo Lady Raiders, 104.1-99.5**

The Westfield High School gymnastics team, ranked 13th in the state, grabbed a 104.1-99.5 victory over Scotch Plains-Fanwood in Westfield on October 3 to improve its record to 6-0. Blue Devil freshman Jenna Rodrigues won two individual events and had the highest All-Around score of 35.2.

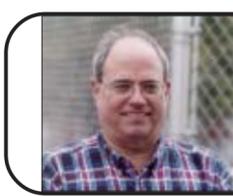
Rodrigues headed a 1-2-3 Blue Devil sweep in the floor exercises with a score of 9.2. Claire Macdonald (third in the All-Around at 34.0) was second with a 9.1 and Kelsey Greenfield, who took second All-Around with a 34.25, was third at 9.0. She also took top honors in the balance beam with a score of 8.8, followed by Greenfield, teammate Lacy Cummings and Raider Natalie Copoccia who tied for second with an 8.65.

Raider freshman Gina Pelosi grabbed first on the uneven bars with a score of 8.55 followed by teammate Lindsay Robinson (fourth All-Around at 33.0) at 8.45 and Rodrigues at 8.4. Pelosi also placed first in the vault with an 8.9 followed by Rodrigues at

8.8 and Cummings at 8.5.

Competing for Mt. St. Mary's Academy but not involved in the team score was Katherine Gelinne, a Westfield resident, who finished with an All-Around total of 34.5, which would have been second. She also scored 8.85 on beam, 8.7 on uneven bars, 8.6 on vault and 8.35 on floor.

**WESTFIELD 104.1, SPFF 99.5**  
VAULT: 1. Pelosi (SPF) 8.9, 2. Rodrigues (W) 8.8, 3. Cummings (W) 8.5, 4. Macdonald (W) 8.4, 4. Jessica Colineri (SPF) 8.4, 6. Greenfield (W) 8.3, 7. Robinson (SPF) 8.1  
UNEVEN BARS:  
1. Pelosi (SPF) 8.55, 2. Robinson (SPF) 8.45, 3. Rodrigues (W) 8.4, 4. Natalie Golikoff (W) 8.3, 4. Greenfield (W) 8.4, 6. Tina Chabrier (W) 8.15, 7. Macdonald (W) 8.05  
BALANCE BEAM:  
1. Rodrigues (W) 8.8, 2. Greenfield (W), Cummings (W), Capoccia (SPF) 8.65, 5. Macdonald (W) 8.45, 6. Robinson (SPF) 7.9, 7. Pelosi (SPF) 7.65  
FLOOR EXERCISE:  
1. Rodrigues (W) 9.2, 2. Macdonald (W) 9.1, 3. Greenfield (W) 9.0, 4. Claire Stevens-Haas (W) 8.65, 5. Robinson (SPF) 8.55, 6. Capoccia (SPF) 8.3, 7. Cummings (W) 8.2, 8. Colineri (SPF) 8.15  
ALL-AROUND:  
1. Rodrigues (W) 35.2, 2. Greenfield (W) 34.25, 3. Macdonald (W) 34.0



**Devil's Den**  
**Tough Loss Whets Appetite For Road Trip to Irvington**

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

I can't wait to go to Irvington Saturday!

Those are eight (nine depending on how you count contractions) words I never thought I'd say in the same sentence. But WHS football has that kind of hold on me. And it's true. I can't wait.

Last Saturday's wild 35-30 loss to Union only whetted my appetite to see more of this year's WHS team.

A negative guy would point to Union's 500 yards of total offense and Westfield's 129, or maybe he'd nag about some shoddy tackling, and the secondary being torched for over 200 yards by a quarterback wearing black socks.

Go ahead and jump off the bandwagon if you want.

But I choose to see how a bunch of tough kids hung with a much bigger and much faster opponent. How they were constantly playing come from behind, and actually coming from behind! How we had a huge crowd on our side of the field, while Union had more players suited up than fans in the stands. (The Union band was small, too, but surprisingly good!)

One thing that will have to be addressed soon is playing time for sophomore Ricardo Johnson (see Devil of the Week below). A stranger wandering in off the streets to watch Saturday's game would have wondered why somebody who ran two kickoffs back for touchdowns was not in the offensive backfield all the time. It's a good point, although there is decent talent ahead of Johnson at tailback in senior captain Ryan Yarusi and junior Malcolm Allen. And fullback is pretty solid too with George Cornell, Joe Vall-Llobera, Ryan Brand and Tyrell Simmons.

Johnson is a bit undersized, so taking the constant pounding of the Watchung Conference as a sophomore would be asking a lot. But his talent is undeniable, so don't be surprised if first-year coach Jim DeSarno starts calling him the ball more each week.

(Almost 30 years ago, coach Gary Kehler had a similar situation, trying to find a spot for converted wide receiver Butch Woolfolk prior to the 1977 season. Kehler ended up moving halfback Dave Tomalonis to left guard. Woolfolk, a much bigger and faster version of Johnson, set a school single-season record for touchdowns, and Tomalonis made All-County at guard as Woolfolk's lead blocker most of the time.)

This week's opponent, Irvington, has won the past two meetings against WHS, after WHS had won the three previous games. Though the Campers (or Blue Knights, as they prefer being called these days) have attempted to add a running game to their repertoire this year, they live and die with strong-armed QB Osvaldo Berjulet. Last year he threw four touchdowns against WHS, while also being intercepted four times.

The Devils need to put more pressure on Berjulet then they did on Union's James Melody. And, equally as important, they need to keep possession of the ball for longer stretches. The more you have the ball, the harder it is for the opponent to score.

Irvington has struggled more than expected this season, edging SP-F 7-6 and just sneaking past Linden 23-21. They're talented, but definitely beatable.

And so it's on to Irvington... where it can be sunny and cloudless all over New Jersey, but it always seems like it's dusk there.

**MANY HAPPY RETURNS**

For those wondering, WHS has twice had two kickoff returns for touchdowns in a single game, but not by one player. In 1994, both Brian Ciemiecki (97 yards) and Erwin Lyght (86) returned kickoffs for TDs at Kearny. (Ciemiecki also returned a punt 56 yards for a touchdown that day.) In 1990 against Summit, both Kent Burke (80) and John Fox (84) had TD kickoff returns.

Both Glen Kehler and Keith Davis had two kickoff returns for touchdowns in a season, Kehler in 1974 against Middletown (85) and Plainfield (95), Davis in 1972 vs. Cranford (86) and Plainfield (85).

Red MacCloskey returned a punt (50) and kickoff (60) for touchdowns in a 1943 game against Roselle. Four days later MacCloskey quit school and enlisted in the Marines.

And way back in 1909, Wilson Sisserson returned two interceptions for both WHS touchdowns in a tie with Rahway.

**OUT OF STATE UPDATE**

Massillon rebounded from losses to Ohio's top two teams to post a 27-12 victory over a tough Akron Buchtel last Friday night. A win this weekend against another toughie, Warren Harding (5-2), coming off a 17-7 win over top-ranked St. Ignatius, would most likely qualify the 4-3 Tigers for the Division 1 playoffs.

The Neshaminy (Pa.) Redskins, however, came up woefully short against Pennridge, 33-13, at Heartbreak Ridge. With North Penn and Pennsbury still to come, the 'Skins' road to the playoffs just got a lot tougher.

**DEVIL OF THE WEEK**

The winner of this week's free sub sandwich at Westfield Subs, 261 South Ave., is football player Ricardo Johnson. The speedy sophomore did something that had never been done in 109-plus years of football at WHS when he returned two kickoffs for touchdowns in the same game. He had returns of 92 and 89 yards last Saturday during WHS's wild 35-30 loss to Union.

Previous Devils of the Week are Eddie Simmons (football) and Lane Maloney (tennis).

**TRIVIA ANSWER**

Brian Butts brought the second-half kickoff back 88 yards for a touchdown in a 21-0 win over Linden in 2002.

*The Devil's Den appears Thursday in The Westfield Leader during the scholastic season. Contact us with comments, complaints, suggestions or newsy notes at bj1019@aol.com. GO DEVILS!*

**Raiders Seeded 2nd In UCT Boys Soccer**

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School boys soccer team received the second seed for the Union County Tournament, which began its preliminary round on October 10. No. 3-ranked Union received the top seed and Elizabeth, the defending champion, received the third seed. Westfield received the fourth seed.

Union Catholic, Plainfield, Cranford and Governor Livingston received seeds five through eight, respectively. The first round is set for this Saturday, October 14, at the field of the higher seed. The quarterfinals will be held at Williams Field in Elizabeth on October 21, beginning at 10 a.m. The semifinals will be held at Williams Field on October 28 at 6 and 8 p.m. and the championship will be held at the same location on November 4 at 8 p.m.

**Raiders Get Top Seed For UCT Girls Soccer**

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School girls soccer team received the top seed for the Union County Tournament (UCT), which will begin its first-round action on October 14 at the field of the higher-seeded team. The 19th-ranked Raider girls are the defending UCT champions.

Westfield, Cranford and Union Catholic received seeds 2-3-4, respectively. The quarterfinals will be held at Governor Livingston on October 21 at 10 a.m., 12 and 4 p.m. Linden will host the semifinals on October 28 at 5 and 7 p.m. and the championship will be played on November 4 at 6 p.m. at Williams Field in Elizabeth.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

If the playoffs had been held before last weekend's game, my dream of WHS playing at Phillipsburg's Maloney Stadium would have come true? WHS was seventh in power points, P'burg second. But it can still happen, and I'm not planning on dying until I see the Blue Devils at P'burg!

**UCT TIME**

The Union County Tournaments start Saturday for the WHS boys soccer, girls soccer, field hockey and volleyball teams. Coach Bev Torok's volleyballers look to have the best shot at winning among the WHS teams, with Scotch Plains the favorite in both soccer tournaments and Oak Knoll the top contender in field hockey.

WHS will be the host site of the UCT volleyball semifinals (Oct. 25) and finals (Oct. 27). If you haven't seen Anna Koehler, Tara Daly, Molly Williams, the Roudebush sisters, Caroline Fallon and Cyndil Mathew in action, you should stop and check it out. It's pretty intense stuff. The Devils lost to Bridgewater-Raritan, 25-23, in the fi-

**Blue Devil Boys Daze Soccer Farmers, 3-1**

The Westfield High School boys soccer team boosted its morale in a big way by dazing No. 3 Union, also the No. 1 seed for the upcoming Union County Tournament, 3-1 in Union on October 9.

Tom Parkinson, Vince Clark and Roberto Olivares netted goals for the 4-5-2 Blue Devils and freshman goalie Adam Fine was credited with seven blocked shots. William Collins scored the 11-1 Farmers' only goal.

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