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THE WEEK IN SPORTS

Sports Section
Pages 11-17

MEREDITH, DEVISIO, HESSEMER NAMED CAPTAINS

Raider Soccer Boys Take on Challenges with New Look

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

Outdoing the achievements of last year's team will be quite a challenge for this year's Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School boys soccer team, since the 2005 squad won the North Jersey, Group 3, Section 2 title and advanced to the Group 3 championship game where it was defeated, 2-0, by No. 1 Ocean City at The College of New Jersey. The 2005 Raiders were known as a sizable, physical team but this year's smaller squad will find its success through quickness and technique.

Last year, the Raiders relied heavily on the one-two combination punch of

senior big men Jeff Bell and Sean Young, both 6'4", to set up most of their scoring. Bell's accurate throws allowed Young to net 16 goals and 11 assists.

"Last year, we had six or seven kids well over six foot. This year, we have three. It's a much smaller team but it's a totally different team, too. Last year's team wasn't quite as technical, quite as a finesse team. This group is much more technical, on the ball, better fitness, which is hopefully going to make up for the lack of size," said Raider Head Coach Tom Breznitsky, whose 31-year soccer coaching career includes a 527-117-38 record, 10

Union County (UCT) titles, 20 Watchung Conference titles, 13 Group 3 Sectional titles and seven State Group 3 titles in 12 appearances.

More good news comes in the fact that the Raiders have 15 returning lettermen, including four-year starting goalie Bryan Meredith—First Team All-State last year. Meredith and juniors Mike DiVisio and Brian Hessemmer have been named team captains.

Assisting Meredith defensively, will be Hessemmer as the sweeper. "That's nothing new to Brian because he played sweeper for his club team," said Breznitsky.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14



ON A ROLL DURING A SCRIMMAGE GAME...A Pingry player goes on a roll during a scrimmage game with the Raider boys on August 31 at Park Middle School in Scotch Plains.

BADALA, PENNELLA, BRAND, CAMPBELL TO LEAD

Schedule Presents Challenge To Veteran Raider Gridgers

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

Last year's Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School football team happened to end up on the short end of the good luck scale and finished with a 3-7 record. After a "game to remember" 32-29, overtime victory over rival Westfield, the then 2-0 Raiders were burned six straight times—outscored by a total of only 26 points—in games that very well could have made them 8-0—if the good fortune would have been on their side.

This year, the Raiders return a large group of talented, hardworking veterans who must tackle a challenging schedule. Sometimes, though, experience attracts good luck.

"Great group of kids! Bring their lunch pails! Go to work! Getting better every day, which is what we talk about! That's all I can ask," said Raider Head Coach Steve Ciccotelli.

Offensively, the Raiders are looking to junior Mike Chervenyak to head the quarterbacking duties. Experiencing very limited playing time

last year, Chervenyak tossed a 21-yard touchdown pass to Nehemiah Burney-Porter in a 40-18 victory over Montgomery.

"Quarterback was a question mark. Mike Chervenyak is doing a good job. We are pleased with what he's done in camp so far and scrimmage wise," said Ciccotelli.

Seniors Tom Pennella and Greg Brand, who have been selected team captains along with Colin Campbell and John Badala, will be in the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14



SOLID TACKLING AGAINST THE INSIDE RUN...The Blue Devil interior defensive line gang tackles in a scrimmage game against Somerville in late August. The Blue Devils host Linden in the season opener this Saturday at 1 p.m.

YARUSI, HARBAUGH NAMED BLUE DEVIL CAPTAINS

Blue Devils Making Progress Toward Grid Season Opener

By DAVID B. CORBIN
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Three scrimmages has given Westfield High School football Head Coach Jim DeSarno a good idea of what is needed to be done to prepare for the home opener against a strong Linden team this Saturday, September 9, at 1 p.m.

"So far we have a really good hardworking group of kids. They have bought into the program. We improved. We struggled a little bit in our first scrimmage but we stressed on some things to get better at and we did," said DeSarno. "The second scrimmage was a lot better. Our run offense was pretty good. Our run defense was good. We had a couple of breakdowns in the secondary and let up some big plays, which is a concern right now. We went back to the drawing board after the scrimmage and worked on that all week."

Looking to get their team into smooth working order are senior Co-Captains Ryan Yarusi (Tailback/outside linebacker) and Will Harbaugh (Guard/inside linebacker).

"Neither are really flashy but they are two kids who are going to be on the field the whole time. They are two good leaders, two guys that our younger kids can look up to and use

as an example of how to play the game," commented DeSarno.

Senior Joe Schurig will snap the ball to seniors Tom Bonard and Mark Boyd who have been vying for the

starting quarterback position.

"Tom is a sparkplug. That's what I like about him. He can make things happen. He's an all-around athlete

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

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