

BLUE DEVILS HAVE LARGE NUMBERS, TIGHT TOP 9

Blue Devil X-C Girls Expect Healthy Internal Competition

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

Year-in and year-out, the Westfield High School girls cross-country teams have had large turnouts of personnel and have had plenty of success with the "tight pack" mentality of their top runners. This season, 70 girls have trampled the course and many are already making huge strides.

Last year, the Blue Devil girls finished with a 9-1, duel meet record, with their only loss being to Cranford. They placed second in the Watchung Conference and second in the Union County race, both won by Cranford, featuring standout Laura Gallo, and also placed second behind Bridgewater-Raritan in the state sectionals, which the Blue Devils had won in 2003 and 2004.

"We had a good record. The kids were a little upset that they couldn't defend their state sectional title but we were constantly changing our lineup due to injuries," said Blue Devil Head Coach Thom Hornish, in his 35th season. "We are much deeper this year. We had a great summer, in terms of pre-season training. The captains did an outstanding job."

The senior captains who have done that outstanding job are Nicole DiBenedetto, Beth Budnick, Jenn Danielsson and Hope Skibitsky.

The Blue Devils have an "A" and "B" training group of 18 strong, "that are really in good shape. We are looking to improve upon what is a good record at this point," said Hornish.

As in previous years, the Blue Devils may have had no superstars but they have found success in a tight knit pack mentality. Presently, they do not have a number-one runner but Danielsson has a proven track record, as do seniors Kim Legones, Ayn Wisler, DiBenedetto and Marissa Goldner, and juniors Rose Driscoll, Caitlin Burke and Marissa Mumford. Sophomore Liz McCarthy will also be in the mix.

"I would not want to single anybody out because every one in that front

eight are proven runners. Jenn was a state sectional champion. Anyone of them could step up. It's going to be healthy internal competition," said Hornish who added, "The pack is very good! It's nice to have a number 1 runner, particularly like the boys had

fully by the end of the season, we are looking to go with five people as close to 20 (minutes) (3.1 miles) as possible," said Hornish.

When the county tournament comes, the Blue Devils can expect stiff competition from Cranford with Gallo lead-



David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
CAPTAINS AND COACHES... The Blue Devil girls cross-country team captains and coaches are ready for a successful season. Pictured, left to right, are: captains Nicole DiBenedetto, Beth Budnick and Jenn Danielsson (Hope Skibitsky is not pictured); back row, coaches Shannon Stone, Jen Buccino and Thom Hornish.

in Jeff Perrella, but you have to have six runners behind that number 1. If necessary, I would trade that number 1 runner to have a tight pack of seven runners who will run in the top 15. What we have right now is a group of runners who are probably within 30 seconds, 60 seconds of one another.

Presently the top pack of runners has been averaging between 6.5 to 7 minutes per mile.

"We are ahead of last year. Hope-

ing the way, Summit under the direction of WHS graduate Neil Scharma and Union Catholic under the direction of WHS graduate Mary Korfmacher.

"I see the counties improving significantly. The state sectionals, Bridgewater-Raritan! We are going to be gunning on them. Then Group 4 is Group 4. They are strong across the board, north to south," Hornish noted.

The Blue Devils will open against Kearny on September 12 at Hudson County Park in Kearny where they will compete in the St. Dominic Invitational at Lincoln Park in Jersey City on September 16.

Devil's Den

It's a Long Road Back, And It Starts Saturday

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



Linden, Saturday, 1 p.m., at Kehler Stadium. The Tigers vs. the Blue Devils.

I can only hope everybody in Westfield is as excited about the upcoming football season as me. Linden is a preseason pick as a top Watchung Conference team, so if Jim DeSarno's club can pull off the "upset" in his first game as coach of the Blue Devils, it will get some of those fair-weather fans back aboard the bandwagon. Rome wasn't built (or rebuilt) in a day, and neither will WHS's football reputation.

(If you're like me, you can see that a win Saturday, with Cranford and Kearny next up on the schedule, could mean a 3-0 record into the bye week.)

Remember, once upon a time, Bob Duncan (1930s) and Joe Freeman (1940s) put WHS squarely on the New Jersey football map. The 1950s were a great time in America—the growth of rock and roll music, doo-wop music, Happy Days and all that stuff—but not a good one for WHS's football teams. By the time Les Zorge came from Ohio in 1957 to resurrect the program, things were pretty low (one winning record in the previous six years). Zorge's first team went 3-6, then 4-5 and 5-4 before his last team went 7-2. But it wasn't just their record. It was in the attitude. The team was a bunch of roughnecks, tough guys, and that was the reputation Zorge wanted. (He didn't want his players shaking hands with an opponent, unless spitting into it first.) When he left after the 1960 season, the cupboard was well stocked, and the little league program was in full force.

Gary Kehler took over and the rest is history. For nearly two full decades, WHS was year-in, year-out one of the state's premier teams. Not because they were bigger (they never were) or faster (sometimes they were), but because they had that confidence, that knowledge that they would find a way to win. Of course, that works both ways. And this group of Blue Devils needs to get back that confidence, to know they can find a way to win, rather than find a way to not win.

The past 21 years with Ed Tranchina (19 years) and Jim Benedict were mostly good times. Occasionally WHS was very good, but almost always good. And people should not forget

that, though there are a lot of "short-term memory" people out there.

Anyhow, be out there Saturday. Don't wait for a couple of wins to jump on the bandwagon! Get on the bandwagon now. There are plenty of seats available. Wear your blue and white. Be proud. Remember, "Devil Pride Is City Wide."

FINAL SCRIMMAGE

While the "final score" of last Friday's game scrimmage was Livingston 24, WHS 12, you had to be happy for the most part if you're a Blue Devils fan.

All of Livingston's offense came from its passing game, with four-year starting quarterback Tom Fischer and a couple of good (and very tall) wide receivers. They scored three touchdowns and set up a field goal. The biggest negatives to the WHS pass defense were: a) not enough pressure on the quarterback, and b) how many times it let Livingston run the same screen pass on long-yardage situations to pick up the first down.

Offensively, again without tackle Matt Ince, WHS moved the ball almost at will, up and down the field. Two offensive drives in the first half resulted in two touchdowns. Ryan Yarusi and Pete Cornell both ran well, and Tom Bonard hit a couple of clutch passes along the way.

Perhaps the most impressive thing about the scrimmage came in the third period, after WHS had fallen behind 24-12. In the past two years, that might've spelled trouble, and led to a landslide of points by the opposition. This time, with Mark Boyd in to get some work at quarterback, WHS drove nicely down the field before a botched handoff from Boyd to Yarusi gave the ball back to Livingston. But the team pulled together and drove 50 or so yards before that happened. It shows that maybe when the going gets tough this year, the guys will be tougher and find a way to put together a back-breaking drive of their own.

(When the jayvees took the field, heralded Ricardo Johnson rocked the joint with an impressive 75-yard touchdown jaunt. That got many of the fans in the stands yelling for more playing time for the talented sophomore, who then nonchalantly hit block on pass protection the next two plays.)

Defensively, Tyrell Simmons moved

up to end, which, with John Dugan and John Dilorio also playing well at end, might allow defensive coordinator Kenny Miller to move Ince inside to tackle, giving a break to Santo Nardi, Ryan Scanlon and J.T. Sheehan. That's seven solid guys for the four spots up front.

Will Harbaugh and junior Scott Newman will be the inside backers, backed by Malcolm Allen and Pat Stanley. On the outside, Yarusi and Joe Vall-Llobera are two highly athletic defenders, backed by Cornell, C.J. Patella and Jack Meagher.

Although the secondary was burned for the three long TDs by Livingston, it looked much better than against Long Branch, Bayonne and Somerville. Eddie Simmons and Mike Henry were on the corners, with Sean Ferro safety. That can be a solid group.

That defense will have to come up huge against Linden, with its multi-talented quarterback Jerry Jones, and the offense will probably need at least three scores to put away the Tigers. But don't be surprised when it happens.

CARVER TO BE REMEMBERED

There will be a small, informal service for the late Doug Carver at the First Methodist Church next Wednesday (Sept. 13) at 11:30 a.m. Doug, who passed away last spring, was a two-year starting forward on the 1962 and '63 WHS teams that went a combined 45-6. If you can make it, bring along a Doug story or remembrance.

UPCOMING MILESTONES

The 2006-07 season should see some fairly significant moments, including:

The baseball team has 981 "known" victories in over 100 years. But there are few available records from 1900-16. Unofficially, WHS probably already has 1,000 victories, but officially they need 19.

Kevin Everly is 88-107 since becoming the boys basketball coach. With 12 wins this winter, he will join John Lay (179), Joe Siverio (119) and Neil Horne (107) in the 100-win club.

The girls basketball team has 294 victories since the program was resurrected by coach Kathy Luckey in 1973. There were, of course, many wins back in the 1910-25 era, led by the legendary 1924 team that played Lawton, Okla., for the "national" championship in Roselle Park.

The girls cross-country team has posted 193 victories during its 26 years under coach Thom Hornish.

The first field hockey victory this fall will be No. 300 in the team's 35th year.

The ice hockey team is eight victories shy of 100 since the program began in 1995.

The girls swim team will reach 300 victories with its second this winter. Given the talent on what might be the strongest girls team in school history, that shouldn't take long.

With all three singles players returning, the girls tennis team (599-106) should quickly reach lifetime victory No. 600. This program also began under coach Luckey.

Individually, George Kapner begins the year with 785 coaching victories, No. 1 all-time at WHS. It would take a great boys soccer season for him to reach 800 this fall, although 15 wins has been done many times before, and this season is supposed to be a nice one for the booters. But if Kapner has to wait until the spring the boys tennis team, barring an epidemic, will definitely put him over the top real quickly.

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

NEW WESTFIELD LISTING!



Offered at: \$749,900

This stately 1914 Victorian Colonial is both spacious and welcoming. Upon entry, the foyer opens to a Living Room with natural chestnut trim, Family Room/Office, and a Formal Dining Room with wood burning stove. An updated Kitchen has a separate Breakfast Room with sliders opening to a deck overlooking the deep fenced in yard. A half Bath off the Kitchen offers true family atmosphere. The second floor has a newer Master Bedroom and Bath with great closet space. Two additional Bedrooms and main Bath are also featured on the second floor. The third floor offers two large finished rooms plus room for storage. Located in one of Westfield's most convenient neighborhoods, it offers close proximity to schools, recreational facilities, shopping and all major forms of New York City transportation.



Kay Gragnano
Sales Associate
908-301-2036: Office Direct
908-233-7922: Fax



WESTFIELD OFFICE 209 CENTRAL AVENUE 908-233-5555

DISCOVER
why 15 million homeowners trust their homes to
STATE FARM.



Christine Cozenza, Agent
2 Elm Street
Westfield, NJ 07090
Bus: 908-233-9100
christine.cozenza.cpn@statefarm.com



LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR, STATE FARM IS THERE.®

State Farm Fire and Casualty Company
State Farm General Insurance Company - Westfield, NJ
State Farm Fire & Marine Insurance Company - Westfield, NJ
State Farm Indemnity - Columbus, IL
PF0608 12/04

Century 21 Taylor & Love, Inc.



OPEN HOUSE 1-4PM

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2006

737 NORMAN PLACE, WESTFIELD, NJ

This elegantly appointed colonial in Stonehenge features 3 bedrooms, woodburning fireplace, gleaming hardwood floors and an exceptional new high end designer kitchen. Many extras and amenities. Beautifully presented for the discriminating buyer. Directions: Rahway Road to Shackamaxon to Norman Place.



436 South Avenue, Westfield, NJ
908-654-6666 ext. 229
CARMEN IMGRUND



Century 21 Taylor & Love, Inc.



WESTFIELD - \$2,200,000

Great opportunity for the discerning buyer. Custom colonial to be built in heart of Wychwood. 4 bedrooms, 3 1/2 baths, dramatic entry, sunken great room, master suite with balcony and 3-car garage with private access from street.



WESTFIELD - \$1,699,000

Stunning grand center hall colonial, recently renovated in period style, offers 4 bedrooms & 2 full & 2 half baths. Features include: all new Pella & Marvin windows, crown molding, hwd floors, 2 fireplaces w/new mantel & much more.



WESTFIELD - \$1,200,000

Rare opportunity to own a unique victorian apartment building in downtown Westfield. Six units plus five car garage. CBD zone - first floor can be retail. Washer/Dryer in Basement. Six gas furnaces. Call today for more information.



WESTFIELD - \$749,900

Move-in condition, completely renovated custom ranch, offers 3 bns, & 2 full baths. Features include living rm w/vaulted ceiling, family rm with wet bar, CAC. Call today.



WESTFIELD - \$599,900

Traditional, charming colonial offers 4 bns, & 2 1/2 baths. Features include living rm with fpl, chestnut trim, 1st fl den/TV rm, & kitchen w/bkfst nook. Walk to town.



WESTFIELD - \$539,000

Pristine, move-in condition home in Tamaques Park neighborhood. 3 bns, 2 full baths, recent improvements, newer furnace, replacement windows and deck.



WESTFIELD - \$539,000

Charming cottage style colonial offers 3 bns, 2 1/2 baths. Features include hardwood flrs, updated eat-in kitchen, living rm with fpl & french doors. Much more.

Weichert

Elegant Homes Presents
the Pinnacle in New Construction



Westfield... A rare opportunity to own a distinctive custom Colonial. A beautifully landscaped 1/2 acre property will host this 6,000 SF gem. Exquisite unparalleled design, luxurious amenities and an enchanting setting combine to deliver an unsurpassed level of excellence. This prestigious 19-room Classic includes a Grande master suite with fireplace, sitting room, his & her walk-in closets, spa like bath & steam shower with seat & body sprays. 5 additional large bedrooms, 6 full & 2 half baths and 2 solid oak staircases add convenience to luxury. Formal living room with wet bar, dining room, library with fireplace, family room with fireplace will all be appointed with custom inlays in the hardwood floors & complemented with custom designed ceilings. An oversized designer kitchen with French doors to a magnificent terrace will also include granite tops, pantry, and a butler's pantry adjoining itself to an elegant dining room. A finished basement will complete this classic with over 2,750 SF, a full bath, enormous wet bar, rec room, sauna, exercise room and more. Work with the builder now to make this house your home! Call Ralph for more details: 908-591-6283 \$3,400,000 (052001359)

Call For More Information!



Invite Ralph in, and he'll bring results!

Ralph Rapuano
weichert.com



WESTFIELD OFFICE / 185 Elm Street / 908-654-7777

Taylor & Love, Inc.

436 South Ave., Westfield, NJ



908-654-6666 * 800-222-0507

c21tl@aol.com