



BENNETT MEMORIAL CHAMPS...The No. 1 ranked Blue Devil boys tennis team won the Bryan Bennett Memorial Tennis Tournament at Delbarton on April 22. Pictured, left to right, are: front row; Dean Thompson, Justin Snyder and Co-Captain Jon Ramalho; standing, Coach George Kapner, Graeme Stahl, Greg Luppescu, Evan Eisenberg, Akis Evangelidis, Ravi Netravali and James Chu.

Blue Devil Netmen Prove They Are Tops in State

Playing without the services of first singles player Kevin Shallcross and second singles player Ravi Netravali, the No. 1 ranked Westfield High School boys tennis team displayed its extraordinary depth by winning the Bryan Bennett Tournament at Delbarton on April 22. The 9-0 Blue Devils won the title for the first time since 1996 by defeating No. 2 Cherry Hill East, 3-2, in the championship game.

Earlier in the week, April 18, the Blue Devils shutout AL Johnson, 5-0, with Netravali competing at first singles. The next day, in a regular season game against Millburn, Netravali was unable to play due to an injury but the Blue Devils prevailed, 3-2, with James Chu jumping up to second singles to record a victory and Greg Luppescu moving to third singles and recording a victory. Akis Evangelidis and Dean Thompson won at first doubles.

With Netravali still injured and Shallcross competing at a U.S. Tennis Association event in California, Chu, Luppescu and Evangelidis

jumped to first, second and third singles, respectively, but the Blue Devils still managed to defeat No. 16 Ramapo, 3-2, in the Bryan Bennett quarterfinals on April 21. The Blue Devils stepped it up another notch by defeating defending champion Millburn, 4-1, in the semifinals.

QUARTERFINALS:
WESTFIELD 3, RAMAPO 2
 First singles: Chris Carcione (R) d Chu, 6-3, 6-0
 Second singles: Drew Friedberg (R) d Luppescu, 6-2, 6-4
 Third singles: Evangelidis (W) d Taylor Hallman, 6-0, 6-1
 First doubles: Justin Snyder and Graeme Stahl (W) d Mike Shwartz and Matt Sobel, 6-0, 6-3
 Second doubles: Dean Thompson and Evan Eisenberg (W) d Xander Porter and Kirk Tsalialis, 6-2, 7-6 (3)

SEMIFINALS:
WESTFIELD 4, MILLBURN 1
 First singles: Will Kendall (M) d Chu, 6-1, 6-1
 Second singles: Luppescu (W) d Josh Israel, 4-6, 6-4, 6-4
 Third singles: Evangelidis (W) d Mike Roth, 6-4, 5-3
 First doubles: Stahl and Snyder (W) d Bob Renner and Andrew Klugman, 6-4, 6-0
 Second doubles: Thompson and Eisenberg (W) d Ben Schoenberg and Auri Moaven, 6-2, 6-4

CHAMPIONSHIP:
WESTFIELD 3, CHERRY HILL EAST 2
 First singles: Ravi Yegya-Raman (C) d Chu, 6-0, 6-1
 Second singles: Ross Silverberg (C) d Luppescu, 6-2, 6-2
 Third singles: Evangelidis (W) d Max Rubin, 6-4, 6-0
 First doubles: Stahl and Snyder (W) d Nick Yegya-Raman and David Bernstein, 6-1, 6-4
 Second doubles: Thompson and Eisenberg (W) d Jon Chalik and Dan Kim, 6-2, 6-4



Devil's Den WHS, Penn Relays: A Lot Of History Lost in the Mail

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

Since April 21, 1895, the Penn Relays — an annual track and field festival for high school, college and other premier amateur athletes around the world — has been a rite of spring. And it's been a big weekend for athletes at WHS since Bob Duncan became the school's track coach back in 1930.

But there will be no WHS athletes down at the University of Pennsylvania's Franklin Field this weekend, when the 113th annual event takes place. Thanks to the U.S. Postal Service.

"We had a snail mail snafu," long-time track coach Jack Martin said the other day. "We sent our entries, for the 4x1(00) and 4x4(00) relays, on March 28. The entry deadline is April 3. But they didn't get there until April 6. And they are very nit-picky about their deadlines. The Penn Relays is a big part of Blue Devil track history, but we won't be there this year."

Winning a Championship of America race at the Penn Relays is about the biggest thing an athlete, or relay team, can accomplish, maybe even bigger than winning a state title, given that athletes come from all over the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico and many other places.

"Let's put it this way, there are a lot of state champions, but not many Championship of America winners," said Martin, who ran a leg of the winning Championship of America two-mile relay for St. Mary High School (Manhasset, Long Island) in 1964. "Westfield has, if not the most, one of the most impressive records of any New Jersey school at the Penn Relays."

Twice WHS athletes have reached that highest of highs, a Championship of America victory, a 440 relay under coach Walt Clarkson in 1978 and a distance medley relay under Martin back in 1995. There have been many seconds, and quite a few "fastest American team" when a Canadian or Jamaican team won, and "fastest in New Jersey" results.

Westfield's first big showing came in 1932, when Duncan's medley team finished second. After a third in the medley in 1933, the mile team of Bill Clark, Art Fischer, Griggs Smith and Wellington Ross was third in '34 with a 3:31 clocking.

After a second in the mile in '35 and a fifth in '36, WHS came within a lost shoe of a first in 1937. When leadoff man Walt Horner was passing the baton to Pump Vella, the football

star was spiked and lost one of his shoes, having to run his quarter mile on the cinder track with just one shoe, as WHS fell from second place to seventh. Bernie Jones brought WHS closer and Hall of Fame anchor Bob McCoy nearly caught the anchor from Brooklyn's Bishop Loughlin, settling for second in a school record 3:27.3.

With George Tift on the anchor leg, WHS finished fourth and fifth the next two years, qualified again in 1946, then didn't do much for quite a few years.

In 1973, Westfield's 440-relay team of Keith Davis, Marvan Palmer, Kenny Blackwell and Daryl McMillar ran a 43.0, finishing second to Kingston High School from Jamaica in the West Indies. In 1977, the 440 team of Shawn McMillar, Butch Woolfolk, Glenn Miller and Frank Kelly won the consolation and became the school's first plaque winner since 1940. They went 42.0 after qualifying in 41.8.

The following year, after leading the WHS football team to an 11-0 season, Woolfolk and Kelly were back as two of the state's premier sprinters, and the team of Allen Smith, Kelly, Brian Gray and Woolfolk captured the school's first Championship of America plaque, clocking 42.1 in the 440 final (after tying the school record 41.8 in the heats).

Greg Gorski took over for Clarkson as the head coach in 1979, with Martin in charge of the running crew (he would become head coach in 1992). Here are some of WHS's best Penn performances in the '80s:
 1981: Second in distance medley (to Brooklyn's Bishop Loughlin) with Dave Fitzgerald, Rich Forbest, Russ Savage and Cliff Sheehan.
 1982: Medaled in distance medley with Andy Jacob, Barron Chambliss, Brian Bernstein and Fitzgerald.
 1983: Medaled in distance medley with Greg Kasko, Kelvin Blanton, Bernstein and Jacob. Also won section of mile with Kevin McGorty, Billy Byrne, Blanton and Wayne Tiller.

WHS sent teams to Philadelphia every April, but it wasn't until 1995 that WHS, now under Martin, would again reach the top of the mountain. That's when the team of Lawrence Ho, John O'Brien, Ted Kilcommons, and sophomore anchor Matt Elmuccio captured the Championship of America distance medley.

The next two years WHS came close but had to settle for a trio of "fastest among" finishes. In '96 it

was the distance medley of Mike Krug, Steve Dennis, Ho and Elmuccio that finished second to Ireland's Institute of Education, and in '97 both the distance medley of Krug, Dennis, Ryan Stefiuk and Elmuccio and the two-mile of Frank Ianni, Stefiuk, Krug and Elmuccio earned medals.

In 1998, the two-mile qualified for a fifth straight trip to Philadelphia, but it was five more years before another WHS team qualified. Individually, Mike Woods took a fourth in the pole vault in 2005 and last year Jeff Perrella was sixth in the 3,000 meters.

And that brings us to this year, and no Blue Devils competing at the Penn Relays. Martin said WHS will definitely be there next year, one way or another.

"I plan on overnighting our entry, if I have to," he said. "Or I'll drive it down and hand-deliver it. But the Blue Devils will be there."

BASEBALL UPDATE
 The 2006 WHS baseball team took an 8-2 record into Tuesday's game at Livingston. We bring this up because the record through nine games last year, with one of the most potent offensive machines anybody has seen in a while, was ... 8-2. Last year's veteran team had four-year standouts Mike Murray, Tom Ricciuti and Mike Diaz, and several other veterans to rely on. This year, except for Justin Olsen, it's a whole new cast of characters and it's been a different player(s) every game who has delivered.

Last Friday's win over Newark East Side and its ace, Manny Melendez, was a perfect example of how the current team is creating history. Trailing 7-6 in the sixth, Mike Venezia singled with one out, went to third on a wild pitch, and scored on Tommy Bonard's single. Bonard then stole second, went to third on an overthrow and scored on Kevin Hennessey's single. Three singles equals two runs. That's the kind of math coach Bob Brewster learned from Professor Norm Koury, famed for his "no hits equals two runs" theory of baseball run-productivity.

Monday's 12-8 loss at Elizabeth sounds like something for "Ripley's Believe It or Not" or maybe "The Twilight Zone," as the Minutemen scored 11 runs in the bottom of the seventh, capped by a tie-breaking grand-slam home run!

LACROSSE UPDATE
 Saturday's match with Ridgewood might not have produced a victory, but it was mad fun to be there at

Devil of the Week Akis Evangelidis Tennis

Tamaques School, with a huge crowd (including former WHS lacrosse star Dave Brown and his three kids, plus all kinds of past, present and future WHS athletes and graduates) and awesome intensity. Ridgewood won 12-8 in a brutally hard-fought game, but there was no reason to think that if/when the teams meet again deep in the state tournament, possibly even the Group 3 final, the result won't be reversed. And coach Gerry Benaquista's club showed its toughness by bouncing right back on Monday with a quality 8-7 win over Hunterdon Central.

TENNIS UPDATE
 Last Thursday the WHS tennis team ended a 19-match losing streak against Millburn (coach George Kapner was 0-18 vs. the Millers) with a gut-wrenching 3-2 victory. With Ravi Netravali sidelined by an ankle injury (he's expected back for this weekend's Union County and Westfield Invitational tournaments), James Chu moved up to No. 2 singles and Greg Luppescu filled in at No. 3 and both sophomores provided key wins. Dean Thompson and Akis Evangelidis were dominating at first doubles.

Then over the weekend at the Bryan Bennett Memorial Tournament at Delbarton,

WHS captured the championship, and did it without No. 1 singles Kevin Shallcross (at a USTA tournament in California) and Netravali. And they did it with 3-2 wins over fifth-ranked Millburn and second-ranked Cherry Hill East.

With Chu and Luppescu moving up again to Nos. 1 and 2, WHS got all its points from Evangelidis at No. 3 singles, and the doubles pairings of Graeme Stahl-Justin Snyder and Thompson-Evan Eisenberg.

DEVIL OF THE WEEK
 This week's free sub from Al the Owner at Westfield Subs (261 South Avenue East) goes to Akis Evangelidis. Forced to move up from doubles to No. 3 singles, the junior tennis player (who didn't even earn a letter a year ago) came through with two clutch straight-set victories on Sunday against solid opponents from Millburn and Cherry Hill East as WHS captured the Bryan Bennett Memorial Tournament at Delbarton.

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

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Plans Available for your review, being finalized. Center Hall Colonial. Twelve Plus Well Proportioned Rooms, Dream Kitchen with Granite counters, Breakfast Room, Stainless Steel Appliances. 4/5 Twin Bedrooms. Master Suite with quiet sitting area, walk-in closets, bath with huge glass enclosed "Rainforest" shower and Jacuzzi Tub. 2nd Floor Laundry Room. Many Custom Features and appointments you would expect in this range of residence, oak floors, exceptional millwork, possible game/entertainment rooms at the lower level, complete landscaping and exterior lighting. Nice footprint and 101' wide Property...\$1.6 range.



New Construction. Sunlight fills this pretty 10 rooms plus Colonial featuring a classic "Sun Room" off the Kitchen and Family Rooms, Ideal "Homework Central". Slider to a patio and fenced yard. Custom features including walk up full attic, large 2nd floor Laundry Room. Master Suite with fireplace, cathedral ceiling conservatory and exceptional bathroom. Great lower level entertainment areas with 1/2 bath \$1,250,000. **DIRECTIONS: South Avenue to the Boulevard, passing Jefferson school, jog left/right to 1730 Boulevard. SEE SIGNS.**

Letter on file to the builders, **"I could not be more pleased, the home you built for us is World-Class in all respects. I commend you on your follow up service. I would strongly recommend you to anyone."**



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