



David B. Corbin (2007 Section Finals) for The Westfield Leader and The Times
GETTING WIN NO. 100...Raider senior Sal Gano picked up his 100th career win in his 125-lb bout against Warren Hills.

Raider Matmen Hit 20 Wins, Regained District 11 Crown

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

by placing third in the regions at 135-lbs. He also was a Johns Goles and a district champ, placed second in the UCT and finished with a 29-9 record. "We knew we had something special in Ricky. After losing to Seton Hall, he did a little soul searching and pulled it together. When he beat Mraz, you could see that he realized that he was making it to the states," commented Scholz.

Junior Trevor Cannon, who wrestled 125 last year, notched a district title at 152-lbs and finished with a 24-11 record.

"Trevor puts all his heart out on the mat. With his style of wrestling, when he's on top and puts legs in, you are not getting out. It will be exciting seeing him next year, 152-pounder, maybe 160," said Scholz.

Filling in for the injured Johnny Loomis, junior heavyweight Joe Blaes stunned them all by winning the district title.

"Joe will do anything you ask. He beat all three guys in the districts," commented Scholz.

Veteran seniors Dave DeNichilo (160-lbs) and Joe Bachi (171-lbs) both placed second in the districts and finished with respective records of 23-7 and 17-14.

"Dave put everything that he had out there. He put together a nice campaign. Joe, I put wherever I needed him. I appreciate everything they did for us for the four years," said Scholz.

Senior Mike ZamZam was a Goles champ at 171-lbs and finished 12-5. Junior Keith Baker (215-lbs), a district champ last year, finished 23-11 and placed third in the district and junior Billy Jacobs (189-lbs) placed second in the districts and finished 16-9. Seniors Damian Gibbs (135-lbs), Al Nassiri (189-lbs) and Chris Pflaum (215-lbs) each contributed

four years of effort. Sophomore Mike Ferrara (130-lbs), in his second varsity season, placed second in the district for the second time, placed second at John Goles and finished with a 19-14 record.

"Mike, I put a lot of faith in. Because Sal was at 125, he was at 130. Once he got used to the weight class, he was able to hold his own. He's the guy who loves to be in the big spot (crucial bouts). He feeds off the energy of the crowd," said Scholz.

Freshman Tristan Bundy (112-lbs) showed a lot of promise, placed second in the district and finished with a 21-13 record.

"The wins were good quality wins and the losses were by a point or two. He was that close. To get four matches in the regions was great," said Scholz.

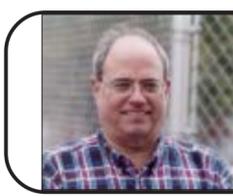
Freshman Mike Ridge, who had his biggest win against Warren Hills, placed second in the district at 140-lbs and finished with a 13-9 record. Sophomore Dave Casmas totaled 29 bouts at 103-lbs and freshman Dawan Gaines experienced 15 bouts at 119-lbs.

"I'm happy about next year. I have some good freshmen coming up, plus the guys this year are going to be more experienced. With Keith Baker, Cannon, Blaes, Loomis leading the campaign up top and some JV's filling in, I'm excited," said Scholz.

Reading is Good For You



goleader.com/subscribe



Devil's Den Banyasz: Forgotten Hero Of Long-Forgotten Time

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

Several years ago, a woman came into CJ's Extra Innings to buy some baseball cards for her grandson or nephew. She paid with a check and the last name, Banyasz, jumped out at me.

"Do you have any relatives named Steve who played sports at Westfield High School a long time ago," I asked. "Yes, I do. Steve was my father," she said. "But how did you know that?"

Once upon a long-ago time, the late 1920s and early '30s, one of the biggest names in WHS sports was Steve Banyasz, especially the big two, football and baseball.

After missing most the 1929 football season with a broken collarbone suffered in the opener against Summit, Banyasz starred in the 1930 backfield with Hall of Famer Lee Waring, Mac Wright and sophomore Dom Urciuoli as WHS went 6-0-2 and won the first of the school's 14 sectional titles. It was arguably the most talented of several outstanding backfields coached by Hall of Famer Bob Duncan.

But baseball was Banyasz's sport, and it was also the big sport in town, dating back to the 1890s, when Westfield had a team in the Central New Jersey Baseball League, managed by Charlie Coddling. They played their games at spacious Drake Park, where the centerfield fence was reportedly over 500 feet from home plate. Drake Park extended from Park Street to what is now Washington Street, between Summit Ave. and the Boulevard.

In 1903, the colorful Red Waller was the ace of the Westfield staff, and the games were now played at sprawling Recreation Park. There was a covered wooden grandstand in the area which is now a bus parking lot to the east of the old Lincoln School on Westfield Ave., and deepest centerfield was near Rahway Ave., where the Field House (built in 1936) now stands. Charlie Denman managed that Westfield club which once lost a 3-0 decision to St. Mary's of Plainfield after the Queen City club, apparently tired of losing to the Westfield nine, reportedly hired a team of professionals, including ace lefthander Eddie Plank of Connie Mack's Philadelphia Athletics. A week later, New York Giants Hall of Famer Christy Mathewson pitched an exhibition at Recreation Park. His batterymate was Jack Warner, a former member of the Westfield nine.

That was part of the town's history and tradition in baseball when Steve Banyasz got to Westfield High School, then located on Elm Street. And he

immediately established his part of that tradition. Playing their home games at Recreation Park, Garwood's Unami Park and Cranford's Nomahegan Park, WHS did not have great success during Banyasz's two seasons, going 6-7 and 5-6. But the hard-throwing right-hander did strike out a then-school record 17 batters against Roselle Park in his junior year and also had one of the team's four home runs. As a senior in 1931, Banyasz hit .262, with another home run, and was a pitcher-shortstop, flanked by his fellow football backfielders: Waring (catcher), Urciuoli (second base) and Wright (third base).

After high school, Steve and his brother John continued playing semi-pro baseball from 1931-42, in the Plainfield, Tri-City, Union County Industrial, Union County and Staten Island leagues. He was known as one of the hardest throwers in the area. Banyasz, who was inducted into the Union County Baseball Hall of Fame in 1987, was a lifelong resident of Garwood (before regional schools opened in Springfield, Clark, Kenilworth and Berkeley Heights, Garwood and Mountainside kids went to WHS) and owned BandB Liquors in Garwood from 1948-2000.

We mention all this because two weeks ago, Steve Banyasz passed away at the age of 95, a long-forgotten legend of a long-ago time in WHS sports.

BREW XXV: 11 DAYS ... Speaking of WHS baseball, the 2007 season, No. 25 for coach Bob Brewster, begins in 11 days — Monday, April 2, at Plainfield. Here are some of the things that were going on in the world when Brewster took over from Pete Lima in the spring of 1983: Seatbelt use by drivers and front-seat passengers becomes mandatory. Tennis superstar Bjorn Borg retires after winning his fifth straight Wimbledon title.

President Ronald Reagan proclaims 1983 the "Year of the Bible" and calls the Soviet Union, the "evil empire." M*A*S*H ends its 11-year, 251-episode run on television.

Sally Ride becomes the first American woman and Guion Bluford the first African-American in outer space.

The famous George Brett "pine tar incident" at Yankee Stadium.

The first Nintendo Entertainment System goes on sale in Japan.

The first Hooters restaurant opens up in Clearwater, Fla.

Microsoft Word is first released. U.S. troops invade Grenada.

Martin Luther King Day is established.

Gandhi wins best picture of the year. The introduction of noise-free compact discs signals the end of the vinyl record era.

Bon Jovi and the Red Hot Chili Peppers are formed. The Who disband.

Beach Boys drummer Dennis Wilson dies.

Michael Jackson rules the charts with "Billie Jean" and "Beat It," but Toto wins album (Toto IV) and record ("Rosanna") of the year at the Grammys.

WINTER UPDATE

Mike Venezia picked up a couple of school basketball records this winter, for 3-pointers in one season (53) and in a career (109). Both Venezia and Tom Bonard (36) broke the old mark of 34 treys set by Marc Kozlowsky in 1994. The first year that high schools used 3-pointers was 1987-88 (Dave Brown led WHS that year with nine), so it's only speculation to wonder how many 3-pointers sharpshooters like Dick Myers, Steve Wright, Timmy Goski and Spud Monroe would've made.

Venezia will be playing in the 29th annual North-South All-Star Game Saturday, 2:30 p.m., at the Ritacco Center on the campus of Toms River High School North.

After re-checking the final stats, Bonard actually had 168 assists this winter, breaking by two his year-old school mark for assists in a season, and giving him a school record 437 for his career.

Just finished reading "Pistol" by Mark Kriegel, and I'd strongly suggest that, a) you read it yourself, and b) you visit www.youtube.com and keyword Pete Maravich. There are several different mixes and whichever you pick will be an amazing five or six minutes, watching Pistol Pete's near-perfect shooting form, unreal dribbling and outrageous passes.

WHS senior P.J. Harley qualified for the U.S. Senior National Swimming Championships in the 1,000 freestyle with a 9:24.93 at sectionals two weeks ago at Harvard. He will swim the 1,000 and 1,650 when the country's top swimmers (Olympians, NCAA champions) convene March 26-April 1 in East Meadow, N.Y.

Chris DeLaFuenta, a WHS sophomore, had a series of lifetime bests at sectionals and last week at N.J. Junior Olympics: 52.48 in the 100 butterfly, 2.22 in the 200 individual medley, 48.70 in the 100 free, 1:45.04 in the 200 free, plus a 1:01.40 100 breaststroke relay split. (And we hear that "DeLa" combined with Berkeley Aquatic Club teammates Tom Hansen

Devil of the Week
Will Return
On April 12

and Nick Van Nispen to do a rousing National Anthem during JO's last weekend at Rutgers.)

Matt Meserole set a couple of state age-group records at the YMCA State Championships at Rutgers. The WHS freshman went 54.66 to win the 13-14 100-yard backstroke and 1:59.59 to capture the 200 back. He also did a lifetime best 55.39 in the 100 butterfly.

The wrestling match between WHS and SPF back on Jan. 5 was the 50th meeting between the two rivals. Scotch Plains won 59-15 but Westfield, which last won in 2001, leads the overall series by a 30-20 margin.

DIXON TO BE INDUCTED

Tamecka Dixon, the daughter of WHS Hall of Famer Boo Bowers, will be among the inductees in the first Linden Athletic Hall of Fame class, Sunday, April 29, at Amicis III Ristorante, Linden.

Dixon lettered in basketball at WHS as a freshman then transferred to Linden and led the Tigers to back-to-back state titles in 1992 and '93. After an All-American career at Kansas, where she was Big 12 Player of the Year in 1997, she is now in her 11th year in the WNBA.

Among the other inductees will be baseball's Eddie Kasko, former NFLer John Charles, track standout John Moon, three-sport star John Beriont, softball legend Margaret (Toots) Nusse and Millie Deegan, a member of the "A League of Their Own" Rockford Peaches of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League.

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

Remember When:

WF Blue Devils Stun Raider Matmen, 39-29

A highly improved Westfield High School wrestling team stunned rival Scotch Plains-Fanwood, 39-29, on January 17, 2001.

The Blue Devils got several key victories to pull out the win. At 112-lbs, Joe DeCampo got a third-period escape to nip Eric Connolly, 3-2. At 125-lbs, John Leonardis clamped Nick Bruno in a cradle in 3:45. Ethan Powell commanded a 10-5 decision over Charlie Lee at 130-lbs and heavyweight Chris MacKay wiggled out of a nearfall to defeat Andrew Loomis, 10-5.

In Westfield...



BURGDORFF REALTORS ERA

Visit us at
www.burgdorff.com to see all our homes for sale.

If you're thinking of selling...

find out why Burgdorff, ERA listings sell 33% faster and for nearly 1% more than other area brokers.

*Based on GSMLS averages for the period of 3/01/05-3/01/06/ For the towns of Cranford, Fanwood, Mountainside, Scotch Plains and Westfield.



CRANFORD \$449,900
Front porch Colonial! Charm and updates include CAC, newer roof, deck to paver patio in fenced yard, new powder room, boxbeam ceiling in Dining Room, hardwood floors, Living Room fireplace with bookcases, good storage. A comfortable place to call home.



FANWOOD \$475,000
Ranch with 3 Bedrooms, 1.5 baths, Family Room with skylights, Recreation Room with wet bar.



SCOTCH PLAINS \$549,900
Home sweet home! Fabulous Colonial! Updates include Kitchen, 2 baths, windows, siding, hardwood floors, fireplace, finished basement. Much more.



WESTFIELD \$899,900
Charming, impressive Colonial offers 4 Bedrooms, 2.1 baths, top location, new, fabulous Kitchen and baths, CAC, natural chestnut trim.



WESTFIELD \$1,250,000
Heart of Wychwood. Gracious 4 Bedroom Colonial embellished by beautiful features and classic design.



SCOTCH PLAINS \$684,000
Impeccably maintained and updated home on 1.17 acres. One floor living at it's best.

For all your mortgage needs Call ERA Home Loans at 888-421-3813
WESTFIELD OFFICE • 600 North Avenue West • Westfield, NJ 07090 • (908) 233-0065

welcome home

15 Offices Throughout New Jersey
Owned and Operated By NRT Incorporated