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THE WEEK IN SPORTS

Sports Section
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THOMAS SAVES 21; YARUSI NETS 4 GOALS, 2 ASSISTS

Blue Devil Lax Boys Topple No. 4 Chatham Cougars, 9-8

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

Senior goalie Ben Thomas gave a performance for the ages, and the rest of the No. 9-ranked Westfield High School boys lacrosse team rose to the occasion, offensively and defensively, to topple No. 4 Chatham, 9-8, at Gary Kehler Stadium in Westfield on May 2.

Facing two of the most dangerous attackers in the state, the Blue Devils' defense adjusted well to shut out the 9-2 Cougars in the second quarter and limit them to one goal in the fourth, while Thomas made 14 of his 21 saves in those quarters. The 8-2 Blue Devils scooped 26 ground balls, and senior middle Chris Mattes gave the offense opportunities by winning 15 of 20 faceoffs. Cougar goalie Tom

Polise made 10 saves. "Seventy-five percent of the faceoffs against the No. 4 team in the state! Those possessions are invaluable. We have one of the best faceoff men in the state, and that is going to give us an advantage," said Blue Devil Head Coach Gerry Benaquista.

"Without those guys in front of me, CJ Patella, Will Harbaugh, Kevin Maus, Eddie Kane, Jack Meagher, Jeff Mysel! Chris Mattes! I can't even count the faceoffs he won. It was a complete family effort," expressed Thomas.

"Early in the game, we were getting mismatched," said Benaquista. "But then we settled down. We switched up our defense and Ben stayed consistent through the whole thing, controlling all the changes. We

did a good job today, and Ben is the quarterback of the defense."

Midfielder Ryan Yarusi scored four goals, two unassisted, and assisted attacker Tim Werner (two goals) in what turned out to be the winning goal. Attacker Joey Simone netted a goal and had three assists. Harry Bernstein (one assist) and Luke Baran each scored a goal. Cougar star Pete Coleman and teammate Bill Eisenreich flicked in three goals apiece, while Ryan Babakian and Paul Ughetta each added a goal.

"Our offense played unreal - Ryan Yarusi, Joey Simone, Luke Baran, Harry Bernstein - and we have a freshman Timmy Werner coming in and throwing in two big goals," commented Thomas.

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PERFECT! PERFECT! PERFECT!...Blue Devil Evan Shapiro, center, was swarmed by his teammates after he pitched a "Perfect" game in a 6-0 victory over Summit in the first round of the Union County Tournament in Westfield on May 5.

OLSEN, ANTONELLI RIP 3 HITS EACH; SHAPIRO, 2 HITS

Shapiro Fires 'Perfect' Game, In 6-0 Devil Win Over Summit

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

Junior Evan Shapiro tossed just 69 pitches to complete a seven-inning perfect game in Westfield's one-hour and twenty-five minute, 6-0, victory over Summit in the first round of the Union County Tournament in Westfield on May 5. Shapiro struck out six Hilltoppers and received fine defensive support from his infielders.

Only three Hilltoppers managed to loft a Shapiro pitch out of the infield and all three were grabbed by centerfielder Sean Ferro. Third baseman Mike Venezia grabbed four grounders and fired first for the putouts. Shapiro grabbed three grounders back to the mound and caught a bunt popup. Shortstop Mike Melillo converted two grounders to putouts and second baseman Kevin Hennessey did the same.

As the game progressed into the later innings, there was a hint of demeanor change in the entire team. When did Shapiro sense something was up?

"When I got into the sixth inning, nobody was really talking to me that much. In the seventh inning, when everything was kind of falling into place," answered Shapiro just as he became the victim of a Gatorade ambush led by Peter Antonelli and company. "I felt like all I had to do was throw strikes and everything will work out."

Blue Devil Head Coach Bob Brewster recalled a few five-inning perfect games against Shabazz but no seven-inning games. In 1995, Chris Williams tossed a no-hitter in the first round of the UCT, but not perfect. "In the county tournament, to throw a perfect game is something special.

Evan hit the spots all day. He had all his pitches going the way he wanted them. It was a pleasure to watch him pitch."

The first critical play came in the fifth inning when first baseman Mike Cappiello's foot was drawn off the bag but he had the wherewithal to put the tag on the runner before he reached base. At the start of the seventh, Shapiro had to scramble to his right to grab a dinker and fire to first for the putout. But the most critical one came on the last play of the game when Hennessey shifted to the right to field a grounder but the ball took a tricky hop to the right. He quickly reached out with his right hand, grabbed the ball and threw to first in time to seal the perfect game. "Hennessey just saved the day with that," commented Shapiro, whose record stood at 4-1.

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ONE OF THE BEST IN NEW JERSEY...Blue Devil Chris Mattes, No. 11, won 15 of 20 faceoffs in the 9-8 victory over No. 4 Chatham on May 2.

SPF'S RAGAN, SAPIENZA, DOLIBER, BINER WIN 4X1,600

Raider Boys Defend UC Title At Union County Track Relays

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

Aroused by a special winning performance in the 4x1,600 meters, the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School boys track & field team won its second straight Union County Relay championship, totaling 88 points at Hub Stine Field in Plainfield on May 5. Westfield finished second with 78 points and Union Catholic placed sixth with 40 points.

The Raider boys 4x1,600 team of Mike Ragan, Dan Sapienza, Pat Doliber and Adam Biner and Blue Devils Alex Tarlow, Kevin O'Rourke, Brendan Berkowitz and Evan Friedman went down to the final stretch before a winner could be decided. Tarlow jumped out in front in the leadoff leg and stayed in front when he handed off the baton to O'Rourke, who opened up a huge lead by the time he handed off to Berkowitz. Midway through the third leg, Doliber began closing the gap until he was only one stride behind Berkowitz at the time of the baton transfer. It then became the Friedman and Biner show. After the second lap, Biner began to extend a lead and crossed the line first in 18:31.5 followed by the Blue Devils at 18:44.8. All four Raiders recorded PR times.

"Doliber! We ran him on third leg

because we felt that he could make up a lot of distance there. He did his job. Everybody did his job," said Biner. "When I got the baton, I knew it was us and them. Evan is a strong runner, definitely one of the best in the county. I knew I couldn't leave it until the end. I made the conscious decision to take it at the end of two laps and run away. I was running for my coach (Jeff Koegel, whose grandfather had recently passed away). He had a rough week. This one was for him."

"It meant a lot to me that my boys won the 4x1,600 and that they fought back from being that far back to do so. The boys knew that winning that race would mean a lot to me. There's a lot to be said for running on emotion," said Raider Head Coach Koegel.

Kyle Rowbotham, Tom Pennella and Mike Chervenak led the Raiders to victory in the 400 intermediate hurdles with a time of 2:52.2. Pennella, Matt Flood, James Sensor and Rowbotham placed third in the shuttle hurdles with a time of 1:04.5. Blue Devils Adam Bergo (42'6.25") and Malcolm Allen took second in the triple jump with a distance of 82'11.25" but Rowbotham had the meet's longest leap of 44'7" to help his team take third at 82'0.5.

Although Union Catholic Vikings Mike Suarez, James Pierce, Garrett

Ellis and Chris Pageron won the 4x400 with a time of 3:22.7. Jason Zelesnik, Kyle Grizzard, Mike Katz and Rowbotham finished fourth in 3:26.2 to help clinch the meet for the Raiders, along with Pennella (13 feet) and Sensor placing second in the pole vault at 24'6" followed by Blue Devils Eric Brandman and Mike Porch at 24 feet. "We ran our fastest time of the season. These four points plus the pole vault points locked the meet for us," said Koegel.

Raiders Steve Wenson, John Badala and Mike Allemen won the shot put with a distance of 149'9.5". Wenson had a PR toss of 45'3" and Allemen had the best shove of 57'10.5". Blue Devils Erik Anderson (47'8"), John Dilorio and Ryan Salmon placed

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Camp Director: Maggie McFadden
For More Information call: 732-873-5399
Email: mmcfadden@westfieldnj12.org

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For girls entering grades 3-9
July 2, 3, 5 & 6 2007
Time: 9:00 am to 12:00 pm
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