



David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
EFFECTIVE IN THE AIR AND ON THE GROUND...Blue Devil quarterback Tony DiIorio passed for a TD and ran for a TD against Union. See other pictures on page 18.

Blue Devils' 'D' Plow Under Union Football Farmers, 16-0

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adjustment was for Joe to blitz. He read it perfectly. Great instincts on Joe's part," said Blue Devil Head Coach Jim DeSarno. "The defensive effort was awesome tonight. I don't think they (Union) did too much offensively. Our big push this week was about being tough, hit hard. We feel like these are the big boys, the Unions, the Irvingtons and the Elizabeths. Union is still Union. We haven't beaten them in a long time. We issued them a challenge and the kids stepped up."

Linebacker Tom Mruz recovered a Farmer fumble in the third quarter and later jarred the ball loose from running back Reggie Swinney, giving Blue Devil linebacker Scott Newman the opportunity to pounce on the ball. Mruz also shared a five-yard sack with defensive tackle Ryan Scanlon. Safety Emanuel Mills and outside linebacker Chris Sheehan recorded interceptions. Da John Reeder made a saving tackle on a kickoff and on another kickoff Pat Gray delivered a body slam before the return man could get his wheels churning.

The 3-1 Blue Devils totaled 209 rushing yards and running back Ricardo Johnson chewed up 187 of those yards on the ground — 124 in the first half — on 35 carries. Quarterback Tony DiIorio had a one-yard TD run and had six completed passes in 14 attempts for 91 yards, including the eight-yard TD pass to Vall-Llobera. Johnson had a five-yard reception, Sheehan had one for 25 yards, wide receiver John Wilt hauled in a 13-

yarder and fullback Ryan Brand grabbed a 10-yard reception.

Farmer quarterback Dion Nesmith completed four of 18 attempts for 31 yards, including two interceptions, and was held to negative 20 yards rushing. Swinney totaled 17 yards.

John DiIorio's safety came with 5:53 remaining in the first half. After the 0-4 Farmers kicked off to the Westfield 34, Johnson dashed 47-yards to the Farmer 19 on the first play. An offensive interference call moved the ball to the 29. After an incomplete pass, Johnson galloped 22 yards to the seven. A personal foul against Union moved the ball to the four. Johnson added a three-yard run then DiIorio hooked in for the TD with 3:44 left in the half. Scanlon nailed the point after.

The Blue Devils' next TD came on a 14-play, 69-yard drive that included a 25-yard strike to Sheehan and was concluded when DiIorio hooked up with Vall-Llobera for the eight-yard TD with 4:07 remaining in the game. Scanlon added the point after.

Numerous offensive penalties throughout the game did, however, hinder the Blue Devils' progress.

"We got sloppy and careless. Thank God we have a bye week! We really got to work on it. But the kids got rid of those mistakes pretty quick and we had that great drive at the end. We caught them on one little screen play to Sheehan then Joe 'V' improvised on a play," said coach DeSarno.

Westfield	0	9	0	7	16
Union	0	0	0	0	0



Devil's Den A True Renaissance Man Should Not Be Forgotten

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

It's a pretty safe bet that 99.99 percent of WHS every day have never heard of Paul Robeson. People who drive down Downer Street and look at the street sign in front of the A.M.E. Church that says "Paul Robeson Corner" must wonder who he was.

The recent voting for the Westfield Athletic Hall of Fame saw Robeson place 14th among 16 nominees in the Old-Timers Category. Three people gave him a 5, meaning he should be up for immediate induction; four people gave him a 1, meaning he shouldn't even be considered for induction. For those who are wondering what the heck I'm talking about, here's a brief glimpse at a multi-talented man, who was decades ahead of his time.

Paul Robeson lived in Westfield from 1906 to 1910, and attended school in Westfield; there's a famous picture of him (he is called "Chicken" Robeson in the outline) with the 1910 WHS baseball team. Back in the early years of the 20th century, he helped his father build the A.M.E. Church on Downer Street. Later his father was transferred and the family moved to Somerville, where young Paul became arguably the greatest athlete in that school's history.

Following high school, Robeson went to Rutgers, where he became an All-America football player and was the senior class valedictorian (and the first black to achieve both). He is the greatest athlete in Rutgers history. He played several years of professional football when the NFL was in its infancy, but then he moved on to acting, singing and — here's where it gets dicey — human rights.

He became famous as an actor, including a lead role as "The Emperor Jones," and also is probably

most known to many people for his version of "Ol' Man River" in the musical "Showboat." He also battled — quite loudly at times — the ways of the Jim Crow world, and the blatant racism that still existed in the United States. He eventually left the U.S. for Russia, where he felt that blacks were treated more as equals than they were in America. Some felt he was a champion of communism, a much-dreaded word in the late 1940s and early '50s as the infamous Senator Joe McCarthy led his witch-hunt for "commies and reds."

Without walking in his shoes, it's tough to imagine what Robeson went through, and why he did and said the things he did and said. Imagine yourself growing up in the 1920s, '30s, '40s, your white teammates don't want you on their team, you can't enter buildings in the same front doors as your (white) friends, you can't eat in the same restaurants, you can't drink from the same water fountains and swim in the same pools (does this part sound familiar?) as your (white) friends. And don't you dare even be thinking 'bout dancing with a white woman. Folks would be looking for some rope and a tree! Yes, even in the North!

Before there was Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, there was Paul Robeson. Before there was Jackie Robinson and Jim Brown and Muhammad Ali, Paul Robeson was battling the unequal treatment of blacks. He hung with the famous black writers and musicians at night, and fought for equal rights during the day. He questioned whether blacks should fight and die in World War II for a country, which did not give them equal rights to the white soldier fighting and dying next to them. Was he wrong for thinking that? No. But apparently he was wrong for saying it, because he was forever branded by the government and media. He died in 1976, a lonely man in Philadelphia.

You want to know how badly he was blackballed? Well, if you could find a copy of the Walter Camp All-America football team from 1917 or 1918 that existed before Robeson was blackballed, you would see his name on the list. After the blackball, the government had Robeson's name permanently erased (where's Fox Mulder and the X-Files when you need him?) from the records, so any post-1950 list of the 1917 or 1918 All-America teams will not show "End: Paul Robeson, Rutgers." Those are the only years there are just 10 All-Americans listed, instead of the normal 11.

On a national or international level, there is nobody who ever lived in Westfield, or attended WHS, who has

gone on to leave their mark as Paul Robeson has done. He was Jim Brown, before Jim Brown was born. He was Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods, if Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods had the clyones to step up and get involved with civil rights. He was Jesse Jackson back when being Jesse Jackson still meant something.

Does Paul Robeson deserve to be in the WHS Athletic Hall of Fame? It probably depends on which side of the fence the voter sits, left or right. But he is somebody who people in Westfield should at least be aware of. And his memory and achievements should not be erased as easily as his All-America status once was.

FOOTBALL UPDATE
When was the last time WHS shut out Union? On Sept. 29, 1979, tackle Paul (No. 66) Harbaugh led the charge in a 20-0 WHS victory at steamy Recreation Field; it should be noted that this was followed by shutout wins over Elizabeth and Scotch Plains.

Last Friday night's 16-0 whitewash was actually the seventh time WHS has blanked the Farmers, the previous times being in 1930, 1950, 1951, 1952 and 1977.

Speaking of shutouts, the most in the post-Gary Kehler Era (i.e., since 1982), was in 1991, when the Devils posted four — Kearny (13-0), Scotch Plains (6-0), Rahway (13-0) and Plainfield (28-0) — under coach Ed Tranchina and defensive coordinator Ron (Gunga Din) Barner.

The school record for shutouts in one season is eight, set in 1977, although the 1931 team posted seven shutouts and allowed one TD to Cranford in the season-finae. And many people feel the unbeaten 1971 team was the best defensive group of the Kehler Era, with five shutouts and four games allowing just six points, including 7-6 at Montclair and 12-6 over Plainfield in the ice, snow, sleet, freezing rain and mud of Recreation Field.

Also against Union, junior Ricardo Johnson stepped up for the injured Malcolm Allen (calf) and showed he can handle the load with 35 carries, second most in school history, for 187. Glen Kehler lugged the leather 37 times for 219 yards against Linden in 1974.

Now there's a bye week for Jim DeSarno's 3-1 club to get ready for the biggest (non-Scotch Plains) home game in years, Oct. 13 against Irvington, which figures to come into the game unbeaten ... and ready to be rocked.

HOT TIMES FOR GYMNASTICS
There are a lot of big meets for the WHS gymnastics team this fall, but three of the biggest — two dual meets

Devil of the Week Paige Roudebush Volleyball

and one invitational — will take place within four days of this article. This past Tuesday (too late for deadline), coach Melissa Bryan's club traveled to Scotch Plains-Fanwood. WHS will be on the road again Monday, facing defending state champion Bishop Ahr in Edison. And tomorrow night is the Cougar Invitational at Cranford.

Bryan's club will be the favorite to repeat as Union County champions (Oct. 19 at WHS) and state sectional champs (Nov. 3), especially considering that the score they put up (108.575) in their opener was more than a half-point higher than last year's season-best. In fact, this could just be the group that finally earns the school's first state team title in gymnastics.

Key performers include: Jenna Rodrigues, Lacy Cummings, Tina Chabrier, Claire Stevens-Haas, Allie Barba, Natalie Golikov and Kelsey Greenfield.

THIS AND THAT
Congrats to the girls tennis team and veteran coach Ed Tirone for picking up the first of what hopefully will be a couple hands-full of county championships this year. Sophomore Tara Criscuolo won her second straight UC title, moving up to second singles this time. A sweep at doubles over second-place Kent Place was the difference, with Kim and Melissa Morawski winning at first and Amanda Simmons and Debbie Wu capturing second. It's the 14th county title for the girls, and third in a row.

That must've been some volleyball match between WHS and SP-F last week. WHS won 2-1, but the total games were even closer than that: 66 for the Devils and 62 for the Raiders.

What an awesome job by the WHS cross-country teams last week against SP-F. Word is that SP-F's girls went 1-3-4, but WHS went 2-5-6-7-8-9-10-etc. Coach Thom Hornish has one of his deepest teams ever and, given some of the great teams he's had in his 27+ years, that's saying something. The guy's teams have quietly captured 14 county and seven sectional championship teams.

DEVIL OF THE WEEK
This week's free sub from Al the Owner at Westfield Subs (261 South Avenue East) goes to volleyballer Paige Roudebush. The senior outside hitter had eight kills, five digs and two blocks in a 2-1 win over Scotch Plains-Fanwood, and also contributed eight kills and five digs against Kearny, a 2-0 victory.

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

See photos of Sports:

- on www.goleader.com
- UCT Girls Tennis
- SPF/Plainfield Football
- Westfield/Kearny Football
- Westfield/Linden Girl Soccer
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