



David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times  
**FEELING THE PINCH...**Blue Devil Matt Isabella, No. 24, wedges his way between two Cardinals. Westfield pinched out a 2-1, overtime victory.

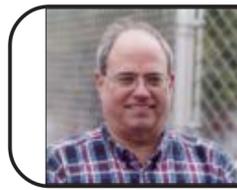
## Blue Devils Win in Overtime, Nip Cardinal Soccer Boys, 2-1

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great save on a direct kick. The Blue Devils totaled seven shots on goal to the Cardinals' four. All three of the Blue Devils' first-half shots were taken within the first 20 minutes. The first was a shot that was drilled into the middle of the crossbar off the foot of junior Pat Tresnan. The third shot hit sacred territory with 27:21 left in the half when senior Danny Strauss took a pass from junior Tom McManus, took two light taps and sank the goal. From that point, the Blue Devils' offense descended into the twilight zone. Ball direction was random, balls were sailing out of play when they should not have and the Cardinals sensed the chaos. Then, with less than four minutes remaining in regulation, Cardinal Solomon Manu penetrated the right center and slanted his shot into the netting. "Once that goal went in, everybody said, 'whoa!' Then everyone picked it

up and started playing well again but you can't wait until a goal to pick it up," cautioned O'Brien. Pick it up they did! In the first overtime, the Blue Devils regained the knack of setting up organized plays but had yet to get more than one good shot at the goal. Their pressure paid off in the second overtime when Irving Flood and Flood found the net. "Mike Irving made a great heads-up play to Andy Flood, who hit a great shot to the corner," said coach Kapner. Cardinal goalie Jose Rambraw finished with four saves and the Blue Devils held a slight 5-4 edge in corner kicks. "We played very well for 15 minutes in the beginning and very well for 15 minutes in the overtime. We got to work on that middle," chuckled coach Kapner. "Winning teams know how to win when they are not playing well."

Plainfield	0	1	0	0	1
Westfield	1	0	0	1	2



## Devil's Den Winning's The Only Thing? Sorry Vince, Not In The Den

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

It's been debated over the years whether or not Vince Lombardi actually said, "Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing." Or if he's responsible for other sayings like, "There is no room for second place. There is only one place in my game and that is first place." Or "If you can accept losing, you can't win." Or "A school without football is in danger of turning into a medieval study hall."

For the late, great coach's sake, let's hope they were all misquotes.

Now, understand that my father was Vince Lombardi before anybody knew of Vince Lombardi. As a little league coach in the early 1950s down in the Long Branch area, Hob Johnson's teams were nothing if not winners. In fact, it's a good thing we won most of the time or there wouldn't have been much unbroken furniture in the Johnson household at 6 Clifton Ave. We're talking about a guy (think Robert Duvall in the Great Santini) who got in the face of my eighth grade baseball coach in West Long Branch for holding me out of a key game because I hadn't made up a geography test! I can still see The Hobber screaming in the guy's face: "He can take the (freakin') geography test after the big game!"

Anyhow, The Hobber, who actually worshipped the ground that Paul Brown walked on, not Lombardi, would not like how his oldest son turned out as a coach, other than the wins and state titles. (By the way, long before Lombardi I recall the Hobber saying something like, "There are only two places you can finish: first place or last place, which is everything that's not first.")

The subject of winning came up at our recent Hall of Fame meeting, in discussions about candidates for the individual and team categories. While some individuals and teams had awesome credentials, there were a couple that had fallen short of winning a state championship. It was argued, both ways, whether that should or shouldn't be a major criteria, if the person/team had excellent credentials other than being a state champion. I, of course, argued that it shouldn't matter and I, of course, was the lone dissenting viewpoint.

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- SPF/Irvington Football
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Which got me to thinking of a bus ride back in 1997, up Route 1 from Trenton State College in Ewing back to Westfield. The WHS boys swim team had won state championships in 1995 and '96, but the '97 team came up short against Shawnee in the state final. During the ride, co-captain Steve Kapuscinski cornered me and asked this rather tough question: "Would you, as a coach, rather have your team swim all personal best times, and yet come up short in the state final, or would you rather they don't perform up to their potential, but still somehow manage to win the state title?" You have to know Steve Kap to understand why he's the only guy who would think of a question like that.

Anyhow, my first response was that I'd rather my team all swam personal best times and we won the state title, like in '95 and '96. Then, after thinking about it for a few minutes, I said, "Kap, if my dad were alive today and he called me tonight, I know he wouldn't be asking me how many personal bests we had or if we'd swum really well. He'd say, 'Did you win?' And I also know that 15, 20, 30 years down the road, nobody is going to know how well we swam when they look up who won the 1997 state championship. It's just going to say 'Shawnee.'"

Then I added, "But to be totally honest, Kap, and my father would be rolling over in his grave if he ever heard that I said this, but if those are my two choices, I'm good with every kid on my team swimming personal best times, and whatever happens, as far as winning or losing, happens."

OK, so how far into the minority does that put me? I'm now officially on the record as agreeing with the old cliché: It's not whether you win or lose, it's how you played the game.

But think about it. Competing is what you do, all the time. In sports, in school, in work, in relationships. Sometimes you win, sometimes you don't, but always you compete.

As I write this, I'm finishing a book about the history of the Chicago Cardinals football team (now the Arizona Cardinals). In it is a poem written by Billy Dewell, captain of the 1947 Cardinals team that won the NFL championship. He wrote it for a 50th reunion of that team in 1997 and it goes like this:

The game is played, the race is won.  
 The bout is fought, what is it that's won?

The pain is endured, the victories are fun.  
 Defeats are accepted, what is it

that's won?  
 The fame is fleeting ... the prize is competing.

Now, this isn't to say anybody should be happy when they don't win. Anyhow who is, or thinks they are, a competitor knows that not winning just makes you compete even harder, train even harder, push yourself even harder.

Back in 1990 or '91, an international all-star wrestling match took place in Pittsburgh. Former WHS state champion Chris Campbell, at age 36, was making a comeback after a long retirement from the U.S. wrestling team. In a match against an unbeaten Russian legend named Makharbek Khadartsev, Chris was taken down early and abused by the Russian, losing 11-0 or 15-0. After the match Chris was given one of those huge "checks" like at a golf or tennis tournament. He took it, walked off the stage and stuffed it into a garbage can.

Having driven all the way to Pittsburgh through a snowstorm, I wasn't sure if I should track down my old little leaguer. But we went out later that night, had a few Iron City beers, and at the end of the night Chris quietly said, "Next time, he's mine."

Sure enough, at the world championships a few months later in Japan, Chris handed Khadartsev the first loss of his entire wrestling career. It turns out that Chris was more upset about being humiliated in Pittsburgh than about losing. Somewhere along the line, hopefully from his old little league coach, he had learned that, while competing is what sports are truly all about, winning does make it more enjoyable.

**CAMPBELL FOR DEFENSE**  
 Speaking of Chris Campbell, he turned 53 last Friday, just a couple of days after suffering a rare loss. No, he is no longer wrestling. But he was on the arbitration board for American cyclist Floyd Landis' doping case appeal.

Chris cast the long negative vote as the arbitration panel ruled 2-1 that Landis had used synthetic testosterone to aid his remarkable comeback in the 17th stage of the 2006 Tour de France race. He will now be stripped of his title, pending more appeals. Campbell is a corporate lawyer living in Fairfax, Calif., just north of San Francisco. He serves on the International Court of Arbitration for Sports.

**FOOTBALL UPDATE**  
 The Blue Devils head to Union tomorrow night for a 7 p.m. game with the Farmers, who are 0-3 under first-year coach Brian Sheridan. WHS hasn't beaten Union since a 28-21 win on Nov. 9, 2002, when Brian

## Devil of the week Tony DiLorio Football

Butts scored three second-half touchdowns, and is only 3-7 against them in the last 10. Overall, Union leads the 45-game series 27-18.

WHS's last win at Union was 17-6 in 2001, but you have to go back 20 years for the previous WHS win at Union, 17-14 in the 1981 regular season. Union then started a 17-game win streak over WHS with a 14-0 playoff win at Giants Stadium. Among WHS's tough losses during the streak were 12-7 in 1982, 10-2 in 1991 (when Sheridan stopped Mike Catenacci at the goal line on the game's final play), 14-7 in 1997, 20-19 in 2003, 14-3 in 2005 and 35-30 last year.

The Den says: WHS 20, Union 7. By the way, those 34 first-period points WHS put up in last Friday's 44-7 win over Kearny were the most in school history. The old mark of 29 came against Hillside in 1972.

**IN THE GENES**  
 Marcy Kessler ('85) earned the No. 1 singles spot on the WHS girls tennis team as a freshman in the fall of 1981. This fall, Marcy's daughter, Samantha Borr, is playing No. 1 singles for the Blue Devils. Marcy won the Union County second singles crown as a sophomore (teammate Kathy Federici captured No. 1 singles). Samantha and her WHS teammates will be looking to capture the Union County Tournament today and tomorrow at Plainfield. WHS has won the title 11 times, including the past two years.

Ironically, WHS's No. 1 singles player the past three years, after playing No. 2 as a freshman, was Nikki Reich, the daughter of former WHS standout Sylvia Bartok ('80). Sylvia was captain of the 1979 team that went 20-0, won the state Group 4 title and posted 17 5-0 shutouts (losing just 3 1/2 sets all fall). WHS went 23-1 and captured the 2005 state Group 4 title under Nikki's junior year.

**DEVIL OF THE WEEK**  
 For the second time in three weeks, the winner of this week's free sub from Al the Owner at Westfield Subs (261 South Ave. East) is Tony DiLorio. The junior quarterback ran for three touchdowns in the football team's 44-7 victory over Kearny. He became the first person in the school's 110 years of football to score three touchdowns in a single period. Lee Waring scored twice and passed for a third touchdown in one quarter of a 1930 game against Bound Brook, and that was matched in 1995 by Brian Ciemiecki against Scotch Plains-Fanwood.

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](mailto:bj1019@aol.com). **GO BLUE DEVILS!**

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