



David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times. The Raider gymnastics team huddle together before their practice session.

# Raider Gymnasts Aim To 'Set the Bar High'

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

"Set the bar high," is where this year's Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School gymnastics team is taking aim. Led primarily by a solid veteran group of juniors, the Raider squad of 11 girls seeks to improve upon their highest team score of last year.

Another goal in sight would be improving their performances in the Cougar Invitational and the Union County Tournament (UCT). Last year, the Raiders placed third in the Cougar with a team score of 97.775 and third in the UCT with a team total of 101.925. To accomplish that goal, each individual must step up.

"We have four juniors returning. Three out of the four of them will be competing all-around this year. Gina Pelosi, Jessica Colineri and Lindsay Robinson! Victoria Shack will be on vault and she has been working very hard. We expect that her scores will probably go up from last year," said Raider Head Coach Lisa Cerchio.

Last year, Pelosi and Colineri brought in most of the Raiders' points because Robinson spent a large portion of her time nursing an injury.

"Lindsay is not returning from an injury, so we are expecting her to have a really good season," Cerchio said.

Also returning is senior Allison Lasher, who, "is expected to do well on beam," according to coach Cerchio.

"I'm really looking for the juniors to come out strong like they did last year. We lost four seniors from last

year and they really helped with the morale of this team and helped us place third at the Cougar last year. So, we are hoping that this year's seniors will step up to the plate as last year's seniors did," said coach Cerchio.

In addition to Lasher, seniors Kristen Spirko, Jennifer DiGiuseppi and Elyse Nussenfeld are expected to provide depth and morale.

The three Raider sophomores, Annie Rubin, Tori Berman and Joelle Pisaurro were on the team last year and, "some of them are doing anywhere from two to four events this year," Cerchio said. "They will feel the heaviness of the load but mostly the juniors will take the brunt of it."

Coach Cerchio feels the Raiders' strongest event will be the vault.

"We have a large lineup of girls who can vault. Victoria has been working on a harder vault and so is Lindsay. We are hoping that they will pull through with some nice scores," Cerchio said.

Coach Cerchio considers the balance beam to be the most difficult event. "We have a lot of difficulty. It's just a matter of sticking it. I really feel, when you go to a meet, everything comes down to beam. A beam will make or break a meet," she said.

The Raiders will host Wayne Hills and Dayton in their season opener tomorrow, September 19, at 3:45 p.m.

"The goal of our team is to do better than we did last year. We had a season high of 102.15, which is our highest in four seasons," Cerchio said. "You have to set the bar high!"



# Devil's Den Just Trying to Help Find a Way for Wil

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

Being 5-years-old is supposed to be about going to school for the first time, having all your friends over for birthday parties, eating ice cream and cake, watching Elmo, Big Bird and Cookie Monster on Sesame Street and mostly just having fun.

Being 5-years-old isn't supposed to be about finding out, six days after your birthday, that you have osteosarcoma, a rare and malignant form of bone cancer that affects just four in one million every year, mostly young children between the ages of 10 and 20.

But that's what being 5-years-old has become for Wil Kehler, the son of Doug Kehler (WHS, '85) and his wife, the former Lane Priscoe ('85), Wil is one of the triplets - along with brother Jackson and sister Laurajane - who came into the world and added to the enjoyment of the final years of Gary Kehler, the WHS coaching legend who passed away last December 7.

The grandmothers and some friends are helping as much as they can, but Doug had to step down as an assistant football coach at WHS and also give up the extra money his tutoring job provided, so that he could be home to

deal with Jackson and Laurajane; Lane had to give up her job so that she can be with Wil every day as he deals with 30 weeks of treatment and 19 weeks of chemotherapy at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York.

After three months of chemo, Wil will undergo either limb-salvage surgery (hopefully), or above-knee amputation to repair his leg after removal of the tumor. Either option will result in intensive physical rehab and future surgeries to account for his growth. While his sarcoma team at Sloan Kettering offer good prognosis, the road to get there will be long and difficult.

And that's where some family and friends of Doug and Lane have come together, to do what they can to help. A letter has been drafted by a committee that includes Glen Kehler, Vicki Priscoe Spurr, P. Jeffrey Christakos and Lee Hale, which will be sent out to about 400 current and former Westfielders, asking for any help they can provide. Whether it's \$5 or \$50 or \$500, every little bit will help and it all adds up. Although not tax deductible, all contributions will be directly used to help the family.

This isn't the first time the people of Westfield have been asked to help out in this way. It wasn't that long ago that Paul Jackson and the late John Byrne, both WHS '79, were hit with serious illnesses and their friends, former classmates, and Blue Devil fans in general came through in a big way. And when wrestler Chris Campbell needed financial help to train for the Olympics, he got a huge boost from his hometown.

The word on the street is that Paul (No. 66) Harbaugh is setting up a major fundraiser for Saturday night, November 29, at Temple Emanu-El. There will be music, food, drinks and many items up for sale via a sports auction. We'll have more on that later, but mark your calendars now!

And if you aren't among the 400 who will be receiving those Wil Kehler Fund letters, you can still help out by sending a contribution to P. Jeffrey Christakos, Westfield Wealth Management, LLC, 415 South Avenue West, Westfield, NJ 07090.

### FOOTBALL UPDATE

All WHS football fans had to be pretty happy with Saturday's 33-8 opening win over Shabazz at Newark's Untermyer Field. Tony Dilorio and Ricardo Johnson were brilliant, the offensive line opened massive holes, and the defense was outstanding, particularly the front four.

## Devil of the Week Ricardo Johnson Football

### IN THE GENES

The headline jumped out off the page: Hunton could be Patriots' answer.

The story was about a 6-foot-9 right-handed relief pitcher named Jon Hunton, who recently was added to the roster of the Somerset Patriots, an independent baseball team that plays in Bridgewater.

The last time I'd seen the name Hunton in a headline, it was 1965 or '66 in *The Westfield Leader*, and it was when Rich (Roscoe) Hunton was tearing up the local YMCA basketball league for the legendary Franklin Bowlers.

Could it be? A quick look at the 2008 WHS Alumni Directory provided the answer: Yes! Jon Hunton is indeed the son of Richard and Linda Hunton, North Plainfield.

Roscoe was a 6-foot-6 lefty with a pretty good shooting touch (and, it should be noted, an even better touch on the bowling alleys). He played junior varsity basketball in 1964, where "The Section" would chant "Roscoe, Roscoe" late in a game, trying to get their favorite into the game. In two years with the Bowlers, Hunton became a record-setting scorer and rebounder in the YBA.

(In a clever reworking of the early 1966 Simon and Garfunkel hit song, Hunton, who also went by the nickname "Rock," is said to once have sung, "I have no need for defense, defense causes pain, it's shooting and it's scoring I proclaim, I am the Rock, I am an island.")

Elsewhere, Randy Winn of the San Francisco Giants, the son of Dwight Winn (WHS, '62), is among the batting leaders in the National League. He was hitting .312 with 163 hits, at this writing.

The best player on the SP-F football team is Marcus Green, a 6-2, 225-pound fullback/linebacker, and the son of former WHS halfback Tim Green ('74). The younger Green loves to block, which shouldn't come as a surprise, since his dad helped open many huge holes for Jim Reid and Glen Kehler in the fall of 1973.

Two assistant coaches on the football staff at Long Branch High School are Nick and Derek Tranchina, the sons of former WHS coach and current AD Ed Tranchina. Nick handles the offensive and defensive lines for the Green Wave, while Derek is working with the freshmen.

### IN PASSING

The Den was saddened to read of the Sept. 5 passing of Dick Weiler, to a heart attack at the age of 79. A former swimming and lacrosse coach at the Pingry School, Weiler's 1962 swim team pulled off a 54-41 win over a WHS team was riding a state-record 59-meet win streak. Following the loss, WHS ran off another 45 straight wins.

(WHS coach Walt Clarkson was so distraught by the loss that, when the Wallace Pool opened up the following year, he made his team practice and swim meets at the old Rooke Pool until the Pingry meet, where a rather excited WHS won by a rather lopsided 61-34 margin.)

Weiler, who started the lacrosse program at Pingry, was a former resident of Fanwood, where he was an ordained deacon of the Fanwood Presbyterian Church.

### DEVIL OF THE WEEK

This week's winner of a free sub from Al the Owner at Westfield Subs (261 South Avenue East) is Ricardo Johnson. The senior halfback ran for 188 yards and three touchdowns, both career bests, in WHS's 33-8 win over Shabazz.

*The Devil's Den* appears Thursday in *The Westfield Leader* during the school year. Contact us with comments, complaints and suggestions at [bj1019@aol.com](mailto:bj1019@aol.com). Win or lose, [WHS4EVR!](mailto:WHS4EVR!)

## Devil Boys Get 2nd At Roxbury XC Inv't'l

The Westfield High School varsity boys cross-country team, with a total of 41, placed second to Mendham (13 total) at the Roxbury Invitational on September 13. The Blue Devil boys won the sophomore race with a total of 26 ahead of Watchung Hills at 71 and placed second in the freshman race with a 40 total behind Mendham at 19.

Ryan Scraduto crossed eighth in the varsity race with a time of 16:49.9 followed by Julian Applebaum at 16:54.2. Andrew Kirma crossed second in the sophomore race with a time of 17:19.9 followed by Zach Lizmi at 17:27.6. Sam Tooley finished ninth at 18:06.8. John Kirma finished third in the freshman race with a time of 13:36.1. David Carville crossed sixth at 13:52.2 and Jack Leahy was seventh at 13:56.3.

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