



BLUE DEVIL VETERANS...The Blue Devil veteran gymnasts, pictured, left to right, are: front row: Lacy Cummings, Allie Barba and Jenna Rodrigues; back row: Tina Chabrier, the Blue Devil "Devil", Kelsey Greenfield and Natalie Golikov.

GOLIKOV, GREENFIELD, CHABRIER TO LEAD DEVILS

Blue Devil Gymnasts Look To Top Stellar 2007 Season

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

Lofty goals have been set by this year's Westfield High School gymnastics team but all of the firepower, and more, exists to outdo the stellar accomplishments of last year's team. Not only do the Blue Devils return all of their top performers but also they have added several talented freshmen to work on their newly acquired spring floor exercise mat.

"We are the only team in the county that has a spring floor. I'm sure every team in the county is going to be excited because it's going to benefit them in the counties. It's been a fight for 10 years and we finally got the support," said Blue Devil Head Coach Melissa Bryan.

Leading the team of 13 gymnasts are senior team captains, Natalie Golikov, Kelsey Greenfield and Tina Chabrier, who "work well as a trio. They bring a lot of team spirit and unity," Bryan said. "We are deeper than we were last year. We are more motivated to earn back the sectional title and we are looking to being seen more in the states."

Last year, the Blue Devils had their best performance of the year with a 107.875 to win the Cougar Invitational and Jenna Rodrigues, now a junior, broke the meet record of 36.875

set by Cranford's Bridget Murphy in 2003 with a 36.925 total. She took top honors on the uneven bars with a 9.0 score and turned in a great score of 9.45 to win the balance beam.

Next, the ninth-ranked Blue Devils set a WHS team-total record despite losing, 113.125-110.425, to third-ranked Bishop Ahr on October 8. Placing 2-3 in the all-around, Lacy Cummings, now a junior, and Rodrigues turned in fantastic totals of 37.425 and 37.25, respectively. A week later, the Blue Devils captured their second consecutive Union County Gymnastics Tournament title with a 109.425 team total. Cummings took all-around and won vault with a 9.8 score. Rodrigues took second all-around and first on floor exercise.

On November 3, the Blue Devils exceeded their WHS record when they placed second with a total of 110.675 to Bishop Ahr's 112.775 total at the North Jersey, Section 2 tournament in Montclair. Cummings won the vault with a superb 9.8. Cummings went on to win the NJSIAA state gymnastic title in the vault with a score of 9.85 and the Blue Devils finished ninth in the team totals with a score of 107.75.

Surpassing those outstanding team totals will take an all-out team effort but, along with Greenfield and Chabrier, who, according to coach

Bryan, "was a powerhouse on beam. Her eloquence and execution is terrific," junior Allie Barba, who was injured at the beginning of the season last year, is "showing strength. She has increased her difficulty all around."

In addition to the solid group of veterans, freshmen newcomers Sarah Shields, who has "fine all-around skills", Anna Graziadei, whose strength is her "tightness and her execution", and Caitlin Johnson, who has "a lot of definition and execution" according to Bryan, should be strong. Although junior Claire Stevens-Haas may root from the sidelines due to an injury, junior Jamie Bornstein, sophomore Kelly Bohlinger and freshmen Abbie Goldring and Elizabeth Steller will contribute added depth.

"This year my girls' goal is to beat that score of 110.675. It's going to be difficult but I think it's very obtainable. Last year we were a bit intimidated with Bishop Ahr because we have never gone up against them in a dual meet," coach Bryan said. "The fact that we have a spring floor is going to increase our points and our team scores. My team is coming in very enthusiastic and motivated. The girls have already increased their difficulty. Their confidence has increased."

Blue Devil Tennis Girls Shift Lineup for Successful Season

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

Four Union County Tournament (UCT) champions return to the Westfield High School girls tennis team this season and, although the complexion of the lineup has shifted somewhat for first-year head coach Frank Geiger, it should be another fine season.

"We have a lot of girls who have worked really hard over the summer and it shows. We have a lot of depth through our varsity squad. I feel comfortable swapping the girls at pretty much any position," said Geiger, a 2002 Governor Livingston graduate, who was the UCT first singles champion that year.

Last year, the Blue Devil girls narrowly defeated a tough Kent Place team for the UCT title and Tara Criscuolo, a UCT third singles champ in 2006, grabbed her second title, this time at second singles. Criscuolo, a junior, has stepped forward to play first singles.

Sophomore Deborah Wu, a UCT second doubles champion last year, has taken over the second singles spot and freshman newcomer Marilyn Kowalski has earned the third singles position. Sophomore Samantha Borr, who played first singles last year, will play first doubles with sophomore Morgan Murphy and sophomore Melissa Morawski and senior Amanda Simmons, both UCT doubles champions last year, will play second doubles.

One of the Blue Devils' goals is to repeat as UCT champs but coach Geiger has a good handle on the competition.

"I think Kent Place again. Governor Livingston! I know they can pull a strong team. First, second singles are usually pretty good up there. We have a strong team. Tara, coming off second singles last year, now first singles. I'm expecting her to do well. Having Melissa and Amanda, who were doubles champions last year, I'm expecting them to do well also," he said. "Being a first-year coach, I told them a goal would be to go over 500. With these girls it should be no problem. Then I told them we would like to repeat what we did last year and go a little further in the state tournament. Last year they finished, at least 17-3. If we could improve on that, it would be great."

With a squad of 14 varsity players, the internal competition for positions was fierce but according to Geiger, "I'm pretty set with the lineup. If I see someone, who is working hard and is getting stronger, I will give them chances to play more matches but,

being that the counties comes soon, I really don't want to change it too much because it would mess with the seedings."

The Blue Devils began their season

with a pair of 5-0 shutout matches, beginning with Montclair on September 9, coach Geiger's first victory as head coach, and Plainfield on Sep-

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Blue Devil first singles player Tara Criscuolo

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