



WRESTLING FOR THE BALL...Blue Devil Scott Toresco, right, Raider Xavier Noel-Brooks, No. 14, and Blue Devil Danny Mitchell, left, wrestle for possession of the ball. The Blue Devils nipped the Raiders, 52-51, on December 18.

TORESCO NETS 24, HESS 4 3-POINTERS, RAMOS GETS 16

Blue Devil Cagers Win Clash With SPF Raider Boys, 52-51

By FRED LECOMTE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Two rivals, two young teams and high emotions set the stage before a packed house at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School on December 18. Raider sophomore Lee Ramos had a good evening in the scoring column, however it was senior forward Scott Toresco's defensive intensity and offensive success that gave Westfield a 52-51 victory.

Toresco bucketed 24 points, senior guard Keegan Hess connected with four 3-pointers and finished with 12 points and Nick Mele sank seven points, including one 3-pointer. Danny Mitchell scored 10 points, while Dave Kane and Chris Sweeney contributed one point each.

Ramos, a point guard, came off the bench and chilled the Blue Devils with 16 points, including nine points from the stripe and a 3-pointer. Senior co-captain/forward Tom Bonacum followed with 12 points,

Roselle Catholic Stops Lady Raider Cagers

The Roselle Catholic high school girls basketball team improved to 3-0 with a 49-36 victory over Scotch Plains-Fanwood on December 20. Senior Taylor Sebolao led the 1-2 Raiders with 14 points.

Blue Devil Icemen Ice Summit Hilltoppers

The Westfield High School ice hockey team erupted with three goals in the second period and added another in the third period to sting the Summit Hilltoppers, 4-3, at Warinanco Rink in Roselle on December 18. Jeremy DeDea netted the 2-0 Blue Devils' first goal and Nick Grawehr (Chris Kattak assist) followed with the second goal. Jon Macik (Grawehr assist) made the score, 3-1. Macik then made the score, 4-1, early in the third period before the 4-1 Hilltoppers answered with a pair of goals to make the game tense.

including one 3-pointer. Forward Quaryee Bull bucketed eight points, while seniors Matt Greenberg, Xavier Noel-Brooks and Kevin Raszka combined for 15 points.

"I knew this would be a battle. These are two rivals, two very good teams. We struggled in our opener and won, but I knew we would be much better tonight. It's been a long emotional day for me, and I was hoping this would end on a nice note tonight, but we have to get better. We allowed them to stay in the game at the end, whereby we could have put it away and our guys know that. Tomorrow, we're going to focus on finishing games better and make things a little less stressful for me," said Blue Devil Head Coach Daryl Palmieri, who just became the proud father of a baby girl.

"I told them that they were going to get better, and we made steps already since the first game. We gave every single ounce. We left everything we could at the end and we just ran out of time. Defensively, we did a good job. They did a good job in the second half and tried to make sure they got him (Toresco) the ball; He's their key guy. Greenberg did a fabulous job; guards were excellent with 11 steals, so we were very active," Raider Head Coach Dan Doherty said.

An offensive drought and control of the boards in the opening quarter placed the 1-1 Raiders on the short side of a 12-9 score. Toresco sank a pair of lay-ups and Hess nailed a 3-banger.

Each team exercised a fast-break style of game in the second quarter, but the Raiders poured it on strong to gain a 15-9 edge to overtake the lead at the halfway mark, 24-21. Raszka banged a 3-pointer. Bull and Ramos combined for eight points.

The Blue Devils found the seams in the third quarter and outscored the Raiders, 15-10, to take a 36-34 lead. Toresco dominated the boards and stuffed in nine points. Hess banged a pair of 3-pointers.

The Blue Devils took a brief eight-

point lead in the fourth quarter. Bonacum then triggered a 3-pointer and a jumper. Ramos's fired successfully from long range and sank three from the stripe to narrow the gap to 50-48. Toresco hit inside, making the score 52-48. Ramos sank three free throws to make it a one-point game with seconds remaining.

"I thought the biggest thing was the scoring by our guard. Ramos played great as a sophomore. We have a younger team, they are all stepping up, growing, maturing. Our defense is our strongest point and, as you can see, we can play with anybody. Westfield is the favorite to win the conference; we lose to them by one. We are going to get stronger as the year goes on, so let's see what happens," said Bonacum.

"It's just having a good time playing basketball. It's a fun sport and it gives me smiles. Our defense was really good; we had a lot of blocked shots, but the fouls we ended up with really killed us. Offensively, there were a lot of gaps in the zone. I just got it, pushed up to the smaller defender, tried to draw the foul and finish. It was a barn burner; we got the win and that's all that matters," said Toresco.

"I think we were up seven at one point, but we are going to be a little hit and miss at times. Ramos stepped up and did a very good job. Bonacum; teams are just collapsing on him with two or three guys every single time, so it's going to be tough for other people to step up, but they're starting to get it," said Coach Doherty.

"The zone gave us some trouble early on. We regrouped at halftime and just went over how we had to be aggressive; we had to attack the middle of the zone and get some open looks. Eventually, we started to make some shots that were not going down in the first half, and then we turned it up defensively. Our press there bothered them a little bit and caused some turnovers that allowed us some easy baskets," concluded coach Palmieri.

Westfield	12	9	15	16	52
Sc. Pl-Fanwood	9	15	10	17	51

Blue Devil Swin Girls, Boys Stop Raiders

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"I swam something a little bit different. I swam the 100-fly, which is different, so I was really pumped going into that. The breaststroke was fine. It normally feels good. I felt a little more comfortable in it and had fun," Thompson said.

The Blue Devils swept the 100-backstroke with Basil touching first at 1:01.82, followed by Diamontopolis at 1:06 and Bangs at 1:06.15.

"Scotch Plains is always our rival, but we have a lot of great young kids coming in. Our sophomores, juniors and seniors all got stronger. A lot of people had really great times today," Baldwin said.

"I think this year, we are looking pretty good. Hopefully, we will do good things. We definitely have a lot of work to do, but it's looking bright. If we keep up the hard work we could have a good run at the states," Cronin said.

"Our girls did an amazing job. We went in with high spirits. We really showed that as a whole with our energy. They [Westfield] are very good. Our girls are friends with them. We get to train with them during the season. It's great to see us compete against each other here," Thompson said.

The Raider boys won the first event, the 200-medley relay with Alex Skoog, Jeff Peart, Matt Marino and Ryan Gajdzisz touching in 1:40.12, followed by Blue Devils Stephen Husch, Aram Barmakian, Tyler Lessner and Max Shin at 1:40.41, and Jack Rose, Dan Myers, Noah Styles and Ryan Daniel at 1:44.35.

Lindros touched first in the 200-free at 1:45.51, followed by Raider Skoog at 1:49.03 and Luke McGrory at 1:49.42. Lindros also touched first in the 500-free at 5:05.23, followed by McGrory at 5:07.93 and Raider JB

Walling at 5:16.71.

Lessner, Lindros, McGrory and Matt Daniel touched first in the 200-free relay at 1:30.81, followed by Shin, Barmakian, Nick Constantine and Sean Beattie at 1:34.08, and Raiders Peart, Adam Bransky, Walling and Matt DeBiase at 1:37.87.

Lindros, Husch, McGrory and Daniel also touched first in the 400-free relay at 3:18.89, followed by Raiders Gajdzisz, Skoog, Walling and Bransky at 3:28.75, and Blue Devils Ryan Daniel, Alex Penn, Connor Moore and Constantine at 3:32.53.

Matt Daniel touched first in the 50-free at 22.27, followed by Shin at 23.36 and Beattie at 23.61. Daniel also touched first in the 100-free at 48.02, followed by Gajdzisz at 48.26 and Constantine at 52.73.

"Today was definitely an important win for our team. I think we really built a lot of momentum here

going into the county meet for another county title. We are part of a really impressive history of swimming. Not only are we defending our title from last year, we are defending 23 state titles and a lot of county titles," Daniel said.

Raider Skoog touched first in the 100-backstroke at 54.40, followed by Husch at 54.7 and Rose at 57.6. Gajdzisz touched first in the 200-Individual Medley at 1:59.45, followed by Lessner at 2:05.53 and Myers at 2:06.5. Husch took top honors in the 100-butterfly at 53.52, followed by Raiders Peart at 55.73 and Marino at 56.89. Lessner touched first in the 100-breaststroke at 1:02.03, followed by Peart at 1:03.43 and Barmakian at 1:03.82.

"It was definitely a team effort. Everyone swam well. Everyone swam 100 percent. That's something we can really be proud of," Daniel said.



WINNING THE 200IM...Raider Ryan Gajdzisz touched first in the 200-individual medley with a time of 1:59.45.

Lady Blue Devils Rout Roselle Cagers, 54-15

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extensively from the second quarter on also made huge contributions. Junior Elizabeth Ponce sank six second-half points and added three rebounds, a steal and an assist. Freshman Olivia Luzzi, who played in every quarter, totaled eight points, three rebounds and two assists. Junior guard Chrissy

Ferrara, not only provided effective defense, but also added two points, two rebounds and a theft. Freshmen Rachel Mattessich scored four points and Sophie Koglin had three rebounds and a pair of assists.

"Everybody got in the game. It's good, because it gives them experi-

ence to play at the varsity level. We have our sophomores out there. We have two seniors out there. You have Colleen and Emily Brucia. They are big sisters to them," Coach Marino said.

On December 14, the Lady Blue Devils were stunned by New Providence, 47-36, with the hot shooting of Sydney Morang, who sank 32 points, so it must have been a wakeup call.

"She just was on. She was hitting everything. We were trying to slow her down a little bit, but she managed to get inside the paint on us and made things happen," Coach Marino explained.

So the Blue Devils wasted no time with the Rams and converted a pair of steals to four quick points within the first 30 seconds of the game. By the end of the first quarter, the Blue Devils seized a 19-7 lead with Knapp leading the way with seven points, and Scott and Friedman each netting four points.

The second quarter ended in a 15-1 wipeout. This time, Scott and Luzzi led the way with four points each to stretch the Blue Devils' lead to 34-8 at the half.

Knapp, Luzzi, Ponce and Mattessich each sank two points in the third quarter then the Blue Devils silenced the Rams with a 12-3 run in the fourth quarter.

Roselle	7	1	4	3	15
Westfield	19	15	8	12	54



LOOKING TO GET A PASS INSIDE...Blue Devil Carly Friedman, No. 22, attempts to get a pass inside against the Roselle Rams in Westfield on December 18.

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