



GETTING THE REVERSAL...Blue Devil Brian Bulger uses a switch to get a reversal on Watchung Hills Warrior Ben Corbin in his 170-lb bout during the North Jersey, Section 2, Group 4 semifinals. Bulger claimed a 19-4 technical fall.

Warrior Matmen Defeat Blue Devils, 31-24

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bailed us out. Ellis [Opoku] wrestled well. Mike Kalimtzis wrestled very well even in a defeat. Some of us looked sharp, and some of us not so much. We gave away one at 220. We gave away one at 113. In a seven-point match, you can't be giving them away." Blue Devil Head Coach Glen Kurz said.

The Warriors knotted the team score, 18-18, when Alex Murray grabbed a 7-2 decision over Nick Velez at 126-lbs. At 132-lbs, Matt Coppola claimed a 10-2, majority decision over Matt Barber.

At 138-lbs, Opoku recorded a dump takedown and an escape to defeat Anthony DiRosa, 3-1. Mike DeVito pinned Brian Farrell in 1:30 with a half nelson at 145-lbs to give the Warriors a 28-21 lead.

Blue Devil Colin Barber improved to 24-2 when he recorded three

takedowns and a reversal to win by 7-3, decision over Kyle Murray at 152-lbs. The Warriors sealed the victory in the final bout when Mike Corroccia recorded four takedowns and an escape to defeat Mike DeLouisa, 9-2, at 160-lbs.

"Overall, I thought my kids wrestled OK. They just need to be a little bit better to win a sectional semifinal. Watchung Hills is very good. It's a great program. No shame in losing to them. [Head Coach] Dan Smith does a great job. Their kids are always ready to go. The fact that we were in there at the end shows this program is heading in the right direction. Are we where we need to be? No! But we are getting there," Coach Kurz said.

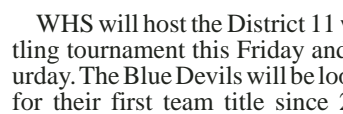
Just two days before, the Blue Devils knocked off third-seeded Franklin,

31-27, to advance to the semis to face the Warriors.

"Those are the first real true like top-20 caliber teams that we are hanging around with. The Brearley win was nice. The Roselle Park win is nice. But these guys are legitimate teams, and we hung around with them at the end, so we will take it," Coach Kurz said.

BOUQUET SEQUENCE:
170: — Bulger (W) d Gomes, 5-0
182: — Cline (W) md Ancazco, 9-1
195: — Oral (W) p Fornellos, 5:26
220: — Carbajal (W) d Knepper, 8-6
OT
Hwt: — Kania (W) d Rizzolo, 4-2 4 OT
106: — Pollera (W) p Fuller, 5:02
113: — Solis (W) d Aldana, 5-3
120: — Magaldo (W) d Kalimtzis, 7-3
126: — Murray (W) d Velez, 7-2
132: — Coppola (W) md Barber, 10-2
138: — Opoku (W) d DiRosa, 3-1
145: — DeVito (W) p Farrell, 1:30
152: — Barber (W) d Murray, 7-3
160: — Carroccia (W) d DeLouisa, 9-2

Devil's Den WHS Again Hosting District 11 Tournament



By BRUCE JOHNSON
Specialty Writer for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WHS will host the District 11 wrestling tournament this Friday and Saturday. The Blue Devils will be looking for their first team title since 2009, when the current seniors were freshmen. That title ended a 14-year drought since the school's previous district title in 1994. WHS has won 25 district team titles in its history.

It's been a good winter for coach Glen Kurz's troops. They've been runner-up at the Nutley Maroon Raider Invitational, the Roselle Park Panther Invitational and the Union County Tournament.

They also qualified for team sectionals, only the third time in Kurz's 14 years as coach. The other years were 2006 (lost to Edison) and 2009 (beat Piscataway, lost to North Hunterdon). This year WHS upset Franklin, 31-27, on a pin by Colin Barber and Mike DeLouisa's, 6-5, win in the final two bouts, then fell to second-seeded Watchung Hills, 31-24.

After Saturday's loss to Somerville, the winningest wrestling team in school history finished a 20-5 dual meet season. WHS broke the old mark of 16 on the weekend of Feb. 3-4 when it swept New Providence, Bridgewater-Raritan, Carteret and Shore Regional. The previous mark had been reached four times: 1980, 1990, 2009 and 2011. Here's a capsule look at each of those teams:

1980: Coach Gary Kehler's team went 16-1 and won Union County, District 12 and North 2 Group 4 titles.

The lineup: Marc Wolin (101), Matt Shields (108), Neil Palmer (115), Brian Deegan (122), Vinny Hurley (129), John Pinto (135), Phil Gottlick (141), Paul McDonough (148), Jesse Shubitz (158), Dan Annascollo (170), Lowell Higgins, Harry Bourque and Mike Giacone (188 and heavyweight).

1990: Coach Don MacDonold's team went 16-2 and won Union County, District 11 and North 2 Group 4 titles.

The lineup: Paco Gonzalez (103), Chris Jordan (112), Marcus Elias (119), Paul Jordan (125), Glen Kurz (130), John Povalac (135), Chris Edling and Raju Vernugopal (140),

Chris Wojcik (145), Scott Coren (152), Roger Sullivan (160), Tim Martin (171), Ken Marsh (189), Eric Klezer (heavyweight).

2009: Coach Glen Kurz's team went 16-2 and won the District 11 title.

The lineup: Mike Kalimtzis (103), Troy Skibitsky (112), no 119, Nick DeFreitas (125), John Barnes (130), Christian Barber (135), Joe Panarese (140), Brian Henry (145), Sam Reichbach (152), Rob Grandstrand (160), Bill Kim (171), Alan Workman (189), Zach Frantz (215), Joe Kania (285).

2011: Coach Glen Kurz's team went 16-7.

The lineup: Mike Kalimtzis (103), Nick Velez (112), Anthony Aldana (119), Pat Currie (125) and Keith Peterson (130), Nick Rotondo (125-130), Ellis Opoku (135), Troy Skibitsky (140), Colin Barber (145), Christian Barber (152), Brian Bulger and Mike DeLouisa (160), Erik Gozdieski (171), Kieran Cline (189), Luke Gibbons (215), Kyle Kania (285).

SWIMMING UPDATE

What a wild 48 hours for WHS swim coach Jeff Knight. On Sunday, Jan. 29, both his girls and boys teams captured Union County championships. Two days later, Jan. 31, the boys handed Cranford a 115-55 dunking, the Cougars' first loss. And the girls retained their No. 1 ranking with a down-to-the-wire 87-83, victory over No. 2 Immaculate Heart Academy.

Oh yeah, and Jan. 31 was also the fourth birthday for his son Ryan!

The girls' victory over IHA was a long time coming. They had lost the first eight meetings with the Blue Eagles. From 2001-05, the five losses were by an average score of 118-52. After a two-year absence, the teams met from 2008-10 and IHA won those three meets by a much tougher 93-77 average.

Probably unnoticed by a lot of fans was the quiet but highly effective move Knight made with senior sprinter Loren Ball, who ranks No. 8 all-time at WHS in the 50 free and No. 12 in the 100 free. Figuring WHS could take second in the medley relay and win the 4x50 free relay without her, he had Ball anchor both of the 'B' relays, where she helped the team earn a pair of thirds. Each of those thirds was worth two points... every single point counts in an 87-83 meet.

After those tension-packed 48 hours, it's quite likely Knight and Ryan were singing and dancing to "Cotton Eyed Joe" late into the night.

Looking into our crystal ball, although there are potential pitfalls along the way, the state Public A boys final should be a match-up of WHS and Bridgewater-Raritan. And if it happens, the meet will likely be much closer than the 95-75 early-season win by the Devils. Anchor Matt Daniel pulled out firsts in both free relays back in December; reverse those results and it's still WHS, but by a slim 87-83 margin. The boys, eliminated the last two years by Bridgewater in the sectional finals, have extra incentive: a state title victory would break a stalemate with Metuchen St. Joseph for the most team championships, both currently with 22.

The WHS girls should also reach the final in Public A, but their opponent could be any of several solid teams. Best guess is it will be Cherry Hill West, although Bridgewater-

Raritan, Hillsborough, Montgomery or West Windsor-Plainsboro South could surprise.

The SP-F boys won their first state title last winter and are the team to beat this year. The Little Tigers of Princeton have some serious senior-laden talent, but questionable C-lane depth. And don't overlook Summit, Haddonfield and Moorestown, all high-quality teams.

The Blue Devils dominated the Union County Jayvee Championships on Feb. 3, winning 15 of the 16 individual races. Picking up firsts for WHS were:

Boys: seniors Lawrence Keating (200 free, 1:56.00) and Tim York (100 fly, 1:01.15), sophomores Tommy Pyle (200 IM, 2:15.87), Sean Battie (50 free, 24.28; 100 free, 53.63), Sam Hayes (500 free, 5:16.07) and Mark Trinkle (100 breast, 1:09.43), along with freshman Jack Rose (100 back, 1:56).

Girls: senior Jess Cronin (200 IM, 2:26.45), junior Courtney Han (100 free, 59.85), sophomores Julia Diamantopolous (50 free, 27.10) and Rachel Fan (100 fly, 1:10.28; 100 breast, 1:22.18), and freshmen Katherine Duffy (200 free, 2:15.00) and Caitlin Collins (500 free, 6:16.68). The only event WHS didn't win was the 100 back, and junior Michaela Cavanaugh was a close second in 1:11.37.

BASKETBALL UPDATE

The boys basketball team was only 5-16 after tough losses to Elizabeth, Linden, Dunellen and Union. Seniors Ozan Yucetepe, Nate Mitchell and Aswad Turner have played very well. And the team's future looks seriously bright with underclassmen like juniors Keegan Hess, Scott Terosco and Henry Smith, sophomores Mike Andronicos, Dylan Elliott and David Kane, and freshmen Sean Elliott and Danny Mitchell, a recent transfer from St. Peter's Prep.

Senior Carolyn Maguire has played well for the 8-11 girls, but it's the team's youth - junior Colleen Gallagher, sophomore Carly Friedman, and freshmen Lillian Scott, Jaqueline Knapp, Jamie Miller and Megan Mondon - that has been opening eyes.

ATTENTION: DINNER TIME

Several years ago we did a Devil's Den where WHS athletes, coaches, graduates, teachers, parents and town residents sent a list of the three people from any time in history they would like to share a dinner table with. It's time to do it again, so anybody reading this - ANYBODY! Not just WHS, but SP, Holy Trinity and internet readers - is invited to send a list of three people they'd like to dine with, and please send as soon as possible. This will be in a Devil's Den next month, if we get enough response. I'd really like to hear from all the senior WHS athletes, especially team captains. Send to bj1019@aol.com and make the subject line "three to dinner." You can include reasons for the invitation, or you can keep it simple, for instance, here's a sample table: Bruce Johnson ('63): Charlie Chaplin, Jack Kerouac, Paul Robeson.

The Devil's Den appears every Thursday in *The Westfield Leader* during the school year. Contact us with comments, complaints and suggestions at bj1019@aol.com. And remember, win or not, Wsh4evr!

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