



David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
GUARDING VERY CLOSELY...Blue Devil Chris Boutsikaris, left, sticks very close to a Highlander as teammate Owen Murray, No. 23, guards another Highlander in the first round of the Union County Tournament in Westfield.

Blue Devil Boys Sing Highlanders in OT, 48-44

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it coming. I saw the kid looking, staring down. I just jumped it. I was right there and finished it."

Since he became eligible in mid-January, Wright has been steadily blending in well with his teammates, especially under the boards where he grabbed nine rebounds and created two steals. He also netted 11 points and had a pair of assists.

"Yes! As soon as I came in, it's been great. I've played with these guys up until eighth grade, so the transition wasn't that hard. We have been playing pretty well right now. You can see that our chemistry is definitely there. I love these guys," Wright said.

Dylan Elliott finished with five points and added five rebounds, an assist and a steal. Owen Murray had five rebounds and two points, Nick Mele finished with five points, two steals and a rebound, Chris Sweeney had three rebounds and Eric Shor had two, while Chris Boutsikaris banged a 3-pointer and Ben Schuman hit a 2-pointer.

The 11-10 Blue Devils defeated the 7-12 Highlanders in their first

meeting at Berkeley Heights but could not find the net in their second meeting in Westfield on January 28 that ended in a 48-45 setback. In both meetings, the Highlanders exercised an effective defensive harassment, but this time the Blue Devils gave them a dose of their own medicine, especially in the second quarter where they were trailing, 9-6, at the beginning but ended with a 17-8 run to take a 23-17 lead at the half. Several steals led to Highlander fouls and the Blue Devils sank 10 straight free throws to end the half.

"Our offense has been getting better and better, but we know that our defense is still our number one concern. If we can create steals on defense, pressure their big man to get steals, we can get points off that," Kane said.

"They were playing pretty physical and Dave was fighting them back. He did well," Wright said.

Rob Imbalzano led the Highlanders with 16 points and point guard Javon Reis-Wilson finished with 11 points. Vic Candoloro netted eight points, Jon Iorio and Chris Marzo

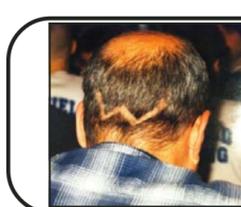
each put in four points, and Pat Mahoney added one.

Imbalzano scored the last eight points of the third quarter, which included a 3-pointer, to inch the Highlanders two points closer, 31-27, entering the fourth quarter.

The Blue Devils actually stretched their lead to 39-33 with 4:57 remaining, but the Highlanders battled back to tie it at 39 with 3:08 on the clock then took a 42-39 lead with 1:29 left. Mele hit a free throw and Kane sank two free throws to tie it again with 1:04 left. The Highlanders took the entire minute looking for an opening then with :04.2 remaining, Mele stole the ball and quickly shuffled to Kane, who fired a desperation shot from half court, but it fell just short at the buzzer, forcing overtime.

"I knew it was a little short when it left my hand, but I was still hoping that it would go in. Fortunately, we came away with the win, and that's all that matters. It's a credit to all of our players. They work very hard every day in practice," Kane said.

Gov. Liv.	9	8	10	15	2	44
Westfield	6	17	8	11	6	48



Devil's Den

Way Back Machine ... To the Summer of 1980

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

With snow still covering the ground at Tamaques Park, it may seem like a strange time to take the Way Back Machine to the summer of 1980. But it's always a good time to talk about Westfield baseball, and baseball at Tamaques Field 2. And the summer of 1980 was another of those high-light times.

For over 100 years, good teams and good players have represented Westfield. Two of them—Jeff Torborg and Jeff Stember—were good enough to reach the majors. Dozens of others played professionally, several reaching Triple A but not grasping the brass ring. The high school team has played in two of the last three state finals, and has won more Union County Tournament titles than any other school. Post 3 American Legion and the semipro Hawks (1928-58) and Merchants (1962-84) were always county and state powers. The Merchants, in fact, ended the Woodbridge Rec's reign of dominance in the Union County League that summer.

But you would be hard-pressed to find a more talented group than the 1980 PAL team that returned high class baseball back to T-2 and dominated the Intracounty League (ages

(5-0), Gary Moore (3-0, before signing a minor league free agent contract), Bob Cullen (2-0, 4 saves).

Providing strength off the bench were Kurt Gillhaus, Joe Shea, Tom Della Badia, Fred Murphy, Dondi Chambliss and Roger Brewster.

"The problem, and it's a good problem to have, is that we had too many good players," Della Badia said.

Della Badia was doing double duty that summer, and for several others, as a player-coach of a second Westfield entry in the semipro Union County League. His father Joe was an all-county shortstop at Bloomfield High in the '50s and coached the WHS swim team to national prominence in the mid-'60s.

Ironically, on Aug. 5, 1980, the 6-foot-5 Stember got his only major-league start for the San Francisco Giants against the Houston Astros in the Astrodome. The right-hander tossed three innings and allowed one earned run. He was just 22, but never threw again in the big leagues.

SWIM UPDATE

Maybe the highlight moment of the 25th state championship win by the boys swim team Sunday came after the meet—a 103-67 rout of Cherry Hill East—when the girls

BASKETBALL UPDATE

Junior Jackie Knapp scored 26 points Friday as Westfield (20-2) avenged an earlier loss to Springfield, advanced to the UCT semifinals and set a school record with their 20th victory of the year. (They won No. 21 on Saturday vs. Elizabeth.) If they won Tuesday against Union, the Blue Devils would play Friday night for the title. Sophomore Olivia Luzzi scored a career-best 27 points in their UCT opener against Rahway. Knapp, who last winter tied Amanda Markowski's school single-season record for steals, had 11 steals to go with 15 points. The girls also open play in the state tournament Tuesday against visiting Dickinson.

The boys open play in the state tournament on Tuesday at East Orange. Their run in the UCT saw them go 1-1, beating Berkeley Heights in overtime and losing to Union, 43-42. David Kane scored 15 and 17 points in those games.

WRESTLING UPDATE

Five WHS wrestlers advanced to the Region 3 tournament, including District 11 winner Nick Velez. But it was "coulda, shoulda, woulda" for coach Glen Kurz. Three Devils finished second—Johnny Fuller, Matt Barber and Jarek Gozdzieski—while Kevin Frega advanced with a third place. But three more lost in the consolation finals—Chris Hoerle, Jack Miller and defending champion Nick Kalimtzis.

HOCKEY UPDATE

The hockey team fell to Summit 3-0 in Saturday's Union County Cup final. The chippy, penalty-marred game was scoreless with 12 minutes to go. WHS beat Summit in the 2013 final, but lost in the finals of 2010 and 2011.

IN PASSING

Al Leonzi passed away on Feb. 19 after a brief illness at the age of 71. Leonzi was a teacher-coach in Westfield for four years, 1966-69. He was the varsity wrestling coach in 1969 when Gary Kehler was hospitalized with hepatitis. He also was a varsity assistant football coach for two years.

The 1968 football team was 7-2, but it did start the school's record 48-game unbeaten streak in game 4 vs. Scotch Plains-Fanwood. Dick Zimmer and Leonzi took over the next two weeks—29-0 over Rahway and 34-0 over Nutley—before Kehler returned. The next loss wouldn't happen until late in the 1973 season. Leonzi's wrestling team went 9-3 and won the District 12 championship with six individual winners—Tony Glennon, Bill Kenny, Rick Adelaar, Pete Adelaar, Bill Dunham and Frank Jackson.

Faithful reader Norm Swenson of Scotch Plains informed us of the passing last month of classmate Dave Butler (SPF, '74) in South Carolina. The 57-year-old Butler was a standout from the "early days" of the SP-F swim team, along with Swenson, Wayne Whitty, Wayne Hoffman and Dave Morgan. In three Union County championships at the Westfield Y, Butler swam on a winning free relay in 1972, a winning medley relay in 1973, and as a senior placed second in the 50 (to WHS's Sherb Naulty) and third in the 100 (to Pingry's Ray McDaniel, a Westfield resident, and Mark Vejnoska). Butler had three children with his first wife, Pam Yawger, a 1976 WHS graduate and a member of the gymnastics and swim teams.



WAY BACK MACHINE...The 1980 Westfield PAL baseball team went 23-1 and captured the Union County Intracounty League championship. Front row (from left): Rich Cotter, Tom Della Badia, Bob Hearon, Jim Piantkoski and Brad Bonnetti; second row: Kurt Stock, Kurt Gillhaus, Owen Brand, Roger Brewster, Kevin Morris and Tom Ripperger; third row: general manager Chuck Archdeacon, Bob Cullen, Jim Kontje, Dondi Chambliss and manager Joe Della Badia; back row: Joe Shea, Jimmy Mike (now Brewer) and Keith Colicchio. Missing from photo: Dave Saltzman, John Byrne and Fred Murphy.

16-to-19). Most of these players had learned the fundamentals as 10-and-unders playing for Bob Brewster Sr. and Pat Papaccio in the early 1970s. They won a Union County Tournament title under WHS coach Pete Lima in 1978. And they enjoyed a seven-year (1979-85) reign of terror in the ICL that saw them go 133-23, including 23-1 in 1980. The only loss came against Roselle Park.

Put together by general manager Chuck Archdeacon and managed by Joe Della Badia ('77), Westfield had most of the players from that '78 county champion team, plus a couple from the next two high school teams.

The batting order (stats include playoffs):

- ss Owen Brand (.408, 31 hits, 1-0)
- cf Jim Piantkoski (.371, 7 triples)
- c Bob Hearon (.414, league MVP)
- lf Keith Colicchio (.432)
- 3b Rich Cotter (.319)
- dh Jim Kontje (.385, 21 RBI)
- rf Dave Saltzman (.354) or of John Byrne (.419)
- 1b Tom Ripperger (.306) or 1b Kurt Stock (.350, 3-1)
- 2b Brad Bonnetti (15 walks)
- p Kevin Morris (8-0), Jimmy Mike

team formed two rows and created a archway for the boys to walk under as they left the College of New Jersey's pool area. The girls team, which had won the last three state Public A titles and 64 straight meets, had been upset in the sectional final. But they were there to support the boys team, which won its third straight title. It was just a nice moment of team/school spirit.

It was also cool to hear senior captain Tyler Lessner, whose 59.92 win in the 100 breaststroke clinched the meet, talk about winning the 25th title. "It was amazing this week hearing from all the alumni telling us how proud they were of us carrying on the legacy of Westfield swimming," he said. "It's amazing that 30, 40 years down the road, they still care. It makes you feel part of something bigger than yourself. I know I'll always have my individual achievements, but 30 years from now I won't remember any times, and I'll always remember holding that trophy."

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Westfield Baseball League Spring Tryouts 2014 Major & Pony Leagues Only

Majors: (5th & 6th grades)

Date	Time	Event	Location
3/15	9-11:30	Hitting	The Ballpark
3/16	9-12	Fielding	Sid Fey Field
3/22	9-12	Fielding	Sid Fey Field
3/23	9-11:30	Hitting	The Ballpark

Players (5th & 6th graders) who were on a Majors team last year do not need to tryout again. You will automatically be placed on a team.

Ponys: (7th thru 10th grades)

Date	Time	Event	Location
3/15	11:30-1	Hitting	The Ballpark
3/16	10-12	Fielding	Sid Fey Field
3/22	10-12	Fielding	Sid Fey Field
3/23	11:30-1	Hitting	The Ballpark

Players who were on a Pony League team last year and all 9th & 10th graders do not need to tryout again. You will automatically be placed on a team.

If you do not wish to try out for a Major or Pony team you will be automatically placed on either an International or Mustang team.

The Ballpark is located at 1 Silver Ct., Springfield NJ.
 973-376-9295