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David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times

HEADING FOR THE TOUCHDOWN...Blue Devil Jackson Simcox, No. 44, prepares to stiff arm Tiger linebacker Guirvenson Guillaume, No. 3, on his way to a five-yard touchdown in the fourth quarter.

Tigers Hold Off Blue Devils, 14-6, in Grid Semis

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opportunities, while the 6-4 Blue Devils ended up earning their touchdown drive that began with a punt returned 13 yards by Matt Catanzaro to the Westfield 48. From there, running back Jack Curry scooted 14 yards to the Tiger 38 then limped to the sidelines and was replaced by Jackson Simcox, who carried six of the nine remaining plays, ending with a five-yard touchdown to the right pylon with 4:56 left in the game. The other three plays were passes by quarterback Zach Kelly and one of them was caught by receiver Chris Boutsikaris for 12 yards.

But both teams' defenses were stars. The Blue Devils limited the Tigers to just 33 rushing yards in the first quarter and cornerback Bret Robertshaw recorded a pair of interceptions on Dolbrice's first two passes. With the exception of the two big runs, the Tigers added only 43 more rushing yards in the second quarter.

Curry carried 12 times for 60 yards in the first half, while Simcox added three yards and Kelly completed four of 11 passes for 23 yards. In the second half, Curry added 83 yards on 14 carries to end up with 143 yards

to record sacks, which included an eight-yard sack by Prybylski, the Tigers managed only 56 rushing yards in the second half.

"It's not about that to me. Getting all the stars in games, it's not about that. It's about doing my job, so everyone else can do what they have to do. If I plug up my holes, they are going to have to bounce outside and there will be someone right there waiting for them," Williamson said. "Our defense played great. Two big plays. The one was off a turnover. We just couldn't get anything started offensively in the first half. We finally got it going in the second half. It was just a little bit too late," Coach DeSarno said. "The kids could have quit. Down 14-0, and they didn't. They battled. We gave them a game." Coach DeSarno said.

The Tigers and the Blue Devils got nowhere offensively in the first quarter then on the fourth play of their first possession of the second quarter, Phipps slipped through for his touchdown run. Kelly hooked up with Elliott for an eight-yard reception on the Blue Devils' next possession, but

effort to tie the game, but three running plays and five incomplete passes later, Linden took over on downs and took a knee to run out the clock.

"We gave it a shot, we gave it a shot, we gave it all we got. And that's all I can ask of my team. They gave it everything they got," Williamson said.

The Blue Devils' final shot of the season would be the annual Thanksgiving Day Classic against the Plainfield Cardinals in Plainfield.

"I think we can take it to them. As long as we keep playing hard, do what we got to do, good day at practice, we can do it," Williamson said.

Westfield	0	0	0	6	6
Linden	0	14	0	0	14

SMITH ALL-CONF. 1ST TEAM, MEDEIROS LED SCORING

Cougars Suffered Growing Pains in Boys Soccer Season

By ALEX LOWE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

To say that that 2014 was a trying year for fans of the Cranford High School boys soccer program would be an understatement. The Cougars finished with an unimpressive 3-14-2 overall record. This performance came on the heels of a 7-12-1 mark in 2013. However third year head coach Greg Campbell knew coming into this season that he was faced with the very beginning stages of a total rebuilding effort.

"Our team for 2014 was much less experienced than the previous edition," said Campbell. "It was not just that we had a lot of underclassmen on our roster playing key minutes for us. It was also that we had a lot of older players, who were getting their first significant playing time. This overall lack of experience showed at different times of the season."

Whenever a team embarks on a rebuilding effort, the early returns are not going to be pretty. This was certainly the case for Cranford. The

ited with two.

A SHOT ON GOAL: Any time a player makes an attempt to take a shot that does or would enter the goal is considered a Shot on Goal. This includes shots that bounce off the goals, shots stopped by a defender, or shots saved by a goalkeeper.

"That happens in this game sometimes. The boys gave a tremendous effort out there. I think anybody, who watched the game knows who the better team was. That's all we can ask. To get to the big dance, to get to the big show, there's no such thing as losers. One of them gets to lift the trophy. That's the only difference," Raider Head Coach Tom Breznitsky said.

The game was not without some controversy, however. Less than five minutes into the second half, Wahtuse eluded a defender while running down the left-center. As he approached the end line, he ripped a parallel shot that hit goalkeeper Yates and ricocheted into the net for an apparent goal to tie the score. The Raiders' euphoria was very brief, however, when a referee ruled that Wahtuse was over the yellow line when he took his shot, so the goal was negated.

According to Wahtuse, "I wasn't out of bounds at all. I didn't know what he [ref] was calling. As soon as I beat the defender, I knew I had a enough time to whip it in and that was what I did. It was clearly in bounds. I

didn't know what he was looking at. The keeper made a mistake and it went in."

"I was warming up getting ready to go back in. Everybody started screaming. I turned around and saw a goal and was ecstatic. One-one! We are back in the game and I knew we were going to win. If it counted as a goal, it definitely would have turned the momentum," Lipshitz said.

"It's kind of difficult to see that yellow line in the sun. That's one of the bad things with a yellow line. It's hard to see from all the way over there if it's over the yellow line," Coach Breznitsky said.

"Without a doubt, we were the better team. Our policy is possession.



David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times

GETTING WAY UP IN THE AIR...Raider Jassiem Wahtuse, No. 11, gets way up in the air to kick the ball in the Group 4 championship game against Washington Township at Kean University on November 23.



David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times

TAKING THE HANDOFF...Blue Devil Jack Curry, No. 27, takes the handoff from quarterback Zach Kelly, No. 14.

and Kelly completed five more passes for 53 yards. Receiver Sean Elliott had a pair of receptions for 22 yards and Boutsikaris finished with four receptions for 49 yards.

Due to the intensity of the Blue Devils' defense and senior co-captain/defensive lineman, and unsung hero, Harry Williamson's ability to plug up the holes to allow linebackers Jackson Simcox and Luke Prybylski

Dobrice, from his defensive back position, jarred the ball loose and recovered it at the Westfield 45, setting up his touchdown run. From that point, the Tiger's ground game was halted.

"The first half, I couldn't really stop the inside, but around the second half, they couldn't do anything inside. They had to bounce around to the outside. They didn't score at all the second half," Williamson

After the Blue Devils forced the Tigers to punt, their offense had one last chance to cover 71 yards in an

Probitas Verus Honos

Cougars Battled Tough Schedule

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Michewicz. "She contributes both defensively and offensively and helps hold the team together. Her tactical vision of the field is impressive. She finished the season with eight goals. She is a leader for the team on the field and players look for her to generate the attack. Siobhan McGovern is a target forward and our go-to player on offense. She combines well with players around her to create scoring opportunities."

McGovern led the team with 10 goals on the season. Teammate Julia Madsen paced the team with seven assists followed by Hart with six assists and McGovern with four.

On defense, goaltender Dana Acocella recorded 50 saves for the year and had a standout 10-save performance against Westfield during a 1-0 loss on September 30. While the overall team defense was not always great, there were some strong per-

formers who helped steady the ship. Maya Lawler (Second Team All-Conference), Caroline McCaffery (Honorable Mention) and Claire Ciemenicki (Honorable Mention) were strong players on defense.

As was the case at the end of last season, the Cougars will suffer some key graduation losses heading into next year. But the losses will be targeted to areas of leadership and not be as broad and numerous as the 10 varsity players lost heading into 2014.

"Captains and seniors Elyse Mackenzie, Shannon McGovern, and Corinne Savulich were leaders on and off the field for our team," said Michewicz. "Next year Cranford will be one of the top teams in the county. We have most of the starting lineup returning. Girls who were on varsity for the first time this year now have the experience necessary to compete at a higher level next year."

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DRILLING THE BALL DOWNFIELD...Cougar senior Albert Gargiulo, No. 18, drills the ball downfield before Blue Devil Dave LaVelle, No. 2, can get to the ball.

Cougars struggled offensively all season, scoring just 26 goals down from 43 in 2013. There were some terrible losses dotting their ledger like a 7-0 loss to Elizabeth and a 10-0 thrashing at the hands of state powerhouse Scotch Plains-Fanwood.

But there were also rays of hope that point to brighter days ahead.

Among their wins, the Cougars could boast of a 3-2 home victory over Summit on October 23 that avenged an early season loss. Most impressively, Cranford stunned eventual state sectional champion Governor Livingston, 5-2, on September 20.

We called up a freshman, Andrew Rojo, to play goal and the move really helped us in both areas."

In his baptism by fire, Rojo would go on to record 69 saves on the season. The actual varsity level game experience for the freshman figures to be a big help to him and the team next season.

"You can't replace actual game experience," said Campbell. "Especially at that position. I had been hearing good things about Andrew and what he was doing at the JV level, but you don't know how that's going to translate once they move up. Now

we expect him to be a cornerstone as we improve." With Rojo in goal and with many young players getting their feet wet this season, the future bodes well for the Cougar program. Freshman Matt Medeiros led the team in points with five goals and two assists. Sophomore Jakub Iwaniuk also scored five goals. Matthew Perino, Addison Chang and Trey Pasqual are three other sophomores, who received significant playing time this season. Meliadio will be a returning senior, who gained valuable experience playing both midfield and striker positions after making the switch from goaltender.

Defender/midfielder Michael Smith will return for his senior season after earning First Team All-Conference honors this year. So the cupboard is certainly not bare for Campbell as he looks back on the 2014 campaign with an eye towards the future.

We dominated the whole game. Just couldn't one in there," Wahtuse said.

"We got the one. He called it back for some incredibly odd reason. The guy with the flag took the draw away from this game. It's tough when the referee determines the outcome," Assistant Coach Joe Mortarulo said.

"This season is not a failure because we lost. We accomplished everyone of our goals except winning this championship," Lipshitz said. "I couldn't be prouder of our team. They dedicated their whole season. We pushed each other, pushed myself."

Sc. Pl.-Fanwood	0	0	0
Washington Twp.	1	0	1

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Cougars Thrash West Essex, 35-7

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presses me the most about his development as a player."

Schetelich's 80-yard scoring burst electrified the home crowd and broke the spirit of the visiting Knights.

"The play was a Jet read," said Schetelich. "I faked the ball to Luke Christiano, who sold the fake really, really well. I think his selling job was the single most important factor on the play. Their entire front chased him leaving me with a huge gap up the middle. Once I cleared that first level of defense, there was nothing between me and the end zone."

Speaking of Christiano, his numbers were not too shabby either. Aside from rushing the ball five times for 34 yards and a touchdown, Christiano also had four receptions for 154 yards and the 85-yard score. Christiano hauled in a pair of interceptions as well, including an incredible, leaping, one-handed theft in the third quarter that drew oohs and ahhs from the assembled Cougar faithful.

"They ran a double reverse flea flicker type of play," said Christiano of the interception. "I just dropped back deep trying to protect the middle of the field and I saw the receiver crossing over into my area. He actually got behind me but I managed to go up and get the ball at its highest point. That is what you are taught to do."

West Essex (6-5) avoided the shut-out when quarterback Luke Magliaro connected with John Agolia on a 41-yard scoring strike late in the final quarter. By that point though, many starters were already done for the night.

Schetelich rushed the ball 20 times for 175 yards and scored three touchdowns. As a passer, he completed five of seven for 161 yards and had the 85-yard touchdown pass to Christiano. The Parsippany Hills Vikings, possessors of a 9-2 record, defeated Summit, 14-0, in order to earn their spot in the championship game.

West Essex	0	0	7	7
Cranford	21	14	0	35

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