

Union County Wrestling Preview - December 19 Issue

THE WEEK IN SPORTS

Sports Section Pages 9-12

SRS - KANTERMAN, McLEAN, NOCK, FERNANDEZ, KALNINS

Depth in Lineup Could Benefit Cougar Matmen This Season

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

Team depth provided by a very strong PAL program has been a major factor why the Cranford High School wrestling team, despite graduating a number of talented athletes through those years, had been able to win five straight Union County Tournament (UCT) titles. Nothing has really changed this season. Several fine athletes have graduated but the Cougars will have talented wrestlers to fill in those vacated slots.

"That's important to have that kind of depth," Cougar Head Coach Pat Gorman said. "This year we have 11 freshmen, so where we have guys who have been around starting on varsity, we have newer guys starting

right behind them. And a lot of those guys have wrestled for years in the program, so if they are not starting as freshmen, they are going to be making an impact as sophomores. Now the kids that were freshmen are sophomores and they will be jumping in the lineup."

Last year the Cougars may have been considered to finish either second or third in the UCT but a super performance throughout the entire lineup earned them their fifth straight title. The Cougars went on to advance to the semifinal round of the North Jersey, Section 2, Group 4 Tournament and finished with a 15-5 record.

This season the Cougars have only five seniors in the starting lineup with Evan Kanterman (170-lbs), Justin

Alpaugh-McLean (182-lbs), Max Nock (160-lbs), Pat Kalnins (120-lbs) and Will Fernandez (113-lbs) but they also return a number of sophomores and juniors with varsity experience.

"We are not real senior heavy but we have a lot of guys with experience," Coach Gorman commented.

Last year Kanterman, who played defense on the football team, competed at 170-lbs and placed second in the UCT, third in the district and fifth in the region to finish with a 31-10 record. Alpaugh-McLean competed at 182-lbs and placed fifth in the UCT and third in the district to finish 19-15.

"We definitely have a good outlook for this year. We are holding the bar

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David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times

EXPECTED TO HAVE A GREAT SEASON...Cougar senior Evan Kanterman, front, is expected to have a fine season at 170/182-lbs. Last year Kanterman finished second in the UCT, third in the district and finished 32-11 at 170-lbs.

BOWLES, ROBINSON, LARMORE EXPECTED TO EXCEL

Raiders Return Experienced Group of Wrestlers This Year

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

One year more of varsity experience may pay off for the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School wrestling team this season. Last year the Raiders began with a handful of seasoned wrestlers and the remainder were thrown into a baptism by fire but fared well by winning 11 of their final 12 regular-season matches to receive the sixth seed for the North Jersey, Section 2, Group 4 Tournament and finish with a 16-12 record.

The Raiders graduated three of their best wrestlers with Alex Oslislo, Zach Zimmerman and Eddie Smith, all upper weight wrestlers, but have what

Head Coach Marc Fabiano believes to be worthy athletes to fill in the vacancies. Additionally the Raiders have depth and several athletes from the football team to go with two region qualifiers and an NJSIAA qualifier.

"This year again, another solid big room. We have about 60 kids but the best thing is we have a lot of returners that were behind a lot of our upper classmen studs, Eddie Smith, Zach Zimmerman, Alex Oslislo. They were wrestlers that couldn't crack the lineup but right now just as good as those guys. We are returning a very strong class," Coach Fabiano said.

Of that group filling those upper weight vacancies will be junior Larry

Shoyoye a defensive lineman on the football team, who will slip into the 220-lb slot. Sophomores Rob Mehorter and Rob Lerner will fill the 182-lb and 195-lb slots, respectively.

According to Coach Fabiano, "Other guys in our lineup, who I think are going to be big surprises this year are in our upper weights. Larry Shoyoye! Great football player, very tough. He surprised a lot of people on the football field this year and contributed to the team's success and a lot of people are going to be surprised when they see him on the mats this year with what he can do."

The Raiders return strength in the

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David B. Corbin (February 2019 files) for The Westfield Leader and The Times

LOOKING TO GO TO AC AGAIN...Raider junior Brandon Bowles, top, who qualified for the NJSIAA Tournament in Atlantic City last March at 113-lbs is looking to qualify once again this season at 120/126-lbs.



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David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times

RETURNING VARSITY BLUE DEVIL GIRLS...Pictured left to right are: Grace Klag, Caroline Dwyer, Chloe Kreusser, Emma Pietrewicz, Charlotte Dursee and Ali Lisanti. Not pictured is senior Faith Dobosiewicz.

RETURNERS - DOBOSIEWICZ, LISANTI, KREUSSER, KLAG

Blue Devil Lady Cagers Return Bulk of Team & Youth Talent

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

History was made last year when the Westfield High School girls basketball team knocked off Roselle Catholic twice during the regular season and again in the Union County Tournament (UCT) semifinals, which was the first time ever that they took out the Lady Lions three times in one season, and they achieved it with a predominantly young squad that finished with an 18-9 record. Although a pair of key seniors have graduated, that young squad returns this season and those vacancies should be filled in with a smooth transition.

Sam Stravach and Lily Maz, who have graduated, were the team leaders last year and according to Head Coach Liz McKeon, "If I have learned anything, it's tough to replace anybody but the good thing is that I have been lucky enough is they play as a

team. There's no one we need to fill in for. It's just everyone stepping up to a different role. We got the majority of our team back but we also have some young girls who are rising to the occasion as well."

Senior Faith Dobosiewicz, a Second Team All-State soccer player this fall, will be a solid wall again on the court. Her toughness really sparkled in the tough games, especially in the

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BLAZEK, PETGRAVE, CORREA RETURNING STARTERS

Cougar Cagers Look to Turn Close Losses to Wins This Year

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

Very close games defined the Cranford High School boys basketball team 2018/19 season and the Cougars found themselves on the short side of many of them but despite having a multitude of juniors and

sophomores on the squad, they finished with a very competitive 11-12 record.

Last year the Cougars experienced stinging losses to the Governor Livingston Highlanders, 57-54, Hillside Comets, 62-60, Metuchen Bulldogs, 55-53, and Hanover Park Hor-

nets, 61-59. But the biggest burn came in a 77-74, overtime setback to the New Providence Pioneers in Cranford where the Cougars overcame a 13-point halftime deficit to send the game into overtime.

"We had like six games we lost by

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RETURNING VARSITY COUGAR BOYS...Pictured left to right are: Adam Kutzer, Arjun Petgrave, Dennis DeMarino, Joe Carrea, Devin Haughey and Jack Connolly. Not in photo is senior Cole Blazek.

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Wishing you peace and joy this holiday season!

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