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ROONEY 15 PTS; SHAPIRO 13 PTS, 10 RB; CROWLEY 10 PTS

Blue Devils Fall to Cardinals In 80-77, OT B-Ball Thriller

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

Westfield and Plainfield engaged in an outstanding back-and-forth battle that went to overtime before the hosting Cardinals finally prevailed 80-77, in a boys basketball game played on January 31 at Rico Parenti Gym. Donyae Council and Jamarques Lawrence each scored 18 points to lead Plainfield to the victory.

In a clash which featured 24 lead changes with neither team ever building more than a seven-point advantage, it was Plainfield that was on top when it mattered most. The Cardinals featured three sophomores and two freshmen in their starting lineup yet managed to even their season mark at 9-9.

"Plainfield has got guards everywhere," said Westfield Head Coach Jim McKeon. "They are young and deep and they are going to be good for a lot of years to come. We probably should have won in regulation but you know, they made a play at the end and hats off to them."

The two up and coming Union County rivals stood tied at 55-55 after three quarters. The Blue Devils scored on back-to-back 3-pointers by Sebastian Ferrero and Griffin Rooney to take a 67-62 lead with 3:35 left in regulation. But Plainfield roared right back eventually taking a 68-67 lead with just over a minute to play. Rooney connected on a free throw to tie the contest at 68-68 with :51 remaining. Then the Blue Devils seemed to be in great shape for the win after Matt Crowley stole a pass and converted a lay-up to give Westfield a 70-68 lead with just :29 remaining.

A Plainfield turnover set the Blue Devils up to ice the game but here is

where the Cardinals demonstrated their will to win. Justus Williams stole the Westfield inbounds pass and found Tyejuan Taylor under the basket for the game-tying score with 0:11 on the clock. Westfield had a shot to win it but Crowley's drive into the lane was blocked with :05 remaining and a desperation half-court heave by Council fell short forcing overtime.

In overtime, Westfield once again surged to the lead. A basket by Ferrero followed by a three-point shot from Crowley gave the Blue Devils a 75-70 lead with 2:30 left on the clock. But Plainfield came back again, scoring six points over the next minute to grab a 76-75 lead. Blue Devil Jacob Walsh converted a free throw to tie the game at 76-76 with 1:36 remaining.

Then Lawrence drained a 3-pointer from the corner to put the Cardinals in command 79-76 with 1:11 to play. Westfield had a chance to cut the lead or even tie it but Crowley turned the ball over when he slipped trying to drive along the baseline causing the ball to bounce away out of bounds with :24 left. After the teams exchanged free throws, Plainfield held an 80-77 lead with :19 left on the clock.

Westfield's Tommy McGuire stole the ball away and got off a 3-point attempt that missed with :16 still remaining. McGuire stole the ball again but got called for a travel as he tried to set up for a tying shot with :06 to go. Incredibly, the Blue Devils stole the ball yet again with :02 left but Tommy Kane's desperation half-court shot missed allowing Plainfield to finally claim the hard fought victory.

"We started out kind of slow," said McKeon. "When they get chaotic we can't play that game. That is

Plainfield's game. They like to play that way. They are scrappy, they are athletic and they just made one more play than us today. I'm not mad at our kids. I think they played their butts off. We've been in a lot of close games and we were hoping one would go our way."

With the loss, Westfield fell to 7-10 despite looking very good in many of those defeats. The Blue Devils were led by Rooney (15 points), Hank Shapiro (13 points, 10 rebounds), and Crowley (10 points, 10 assists).

"Westfield is a tough team," said Plainfield Head Coach Michael Gordon. "They gave us everything they had. We knew they would bring it because we played them earlier this season and it was a close game then too, although much lower scoring. Matt Crowley is a special player for them. Our kids are young and they met the challenge that Westfield brought tonight."

Plainfield was especially effective throughout the game at hitting open players on the low blocks for lay-ups. It was a match-up problem the Blue Devils tried to deal with in many different ways but could never quite solve.

"That play worked for them because they had the guards that were able to break down our guards and penetrate the lane and get to the rim," said McKeon. "Then they had the guy on the block who was able to step up into the open area for the pass. We had to switch up the defense a couple of times to combat that. We went to the press, and switched to zone and went man-to-man in an effort to keep them off balance."

Westfield	13	19	23	15	7	77
Plainfield	17	12	26	15	10	80

TRIARSI GETS FIRST IN 55H, LAWRENCE 1ST SHOT PUT

Blue Devil Girls Place Second; Boys Seventh at Section Track

The Westfield High School girls indoor track team placed second at the North 2, Group 4 Championships held at the Bennett Center in Toms River on February 3. The Lady Blue Devils had a total of 52 behind the Ridge Red Devils, who placed first with a 79 total. The Westfield boys placed seventh with a total of 20, while the Ridge boys captured the title with a total of 62.

For the girls, Blue Devil Lauren

Triarsi took top honors in the 55-meter hurdles with a time of 8.82. Triarsi recorded a time of 8.73 in the preliminaries. Teammates Julia Csorba at 9.39 and Abigail Knaut at 9.62 finished 7-8. Triarsi also placed fourth in the high jump with a clearance of 4-8 and Csorba placed fifth at the same height.

Blue Devil Erica Lawrence won the shot put with a shove of 36-4.5 and Julia Rickert placed fifth with a

shove of 31-2.5. Isabel Boufarah crossed second in the 800 with a time of 2:21.88, followed very closely by Katie Hamilton at 21.89. Molly Stogner crossed 12th at 2:40.24. Caroline Collins finished fourth in the 1,600 with a time of 5:21.86 and Grace Endy finished sixth at 5:28.03. The Blue Devils took fifth in the 4x400 with a time of 4:13.32.

Sarah Hacker placed fifth in the 3,200 with a time of 11:38.73, followed by Sammy Salz at 11:48.69. Liz Bielen finished ninth at 11:59.07. Leah Norton placed eighth in the pole vault with a height of 9-0. Caroline Bielen finished 11th in the 400 at 1:02.93 and Marie Koglin finished 17th at 1:05.5.

In the boys' meet, Jake Saltzer finished fourth in the 400-meters with a time of 51.7, followed by Ajay Olson at 51.96. Steve Zucker finished eighth at 52.98. The Blue Devils also placed a close second behind Elizabeth in the 4x400 with a time of 3:26.99. Matt McIntyre finished fifth in the 55-meter dash with a time of 6.77.

Cooper Brennan finished fifth in the 800 with a time of 2:01.79 and Ronnie Melao finished 16th at 2:08.98. Kevin Yucetepe finished sixth in the 3,200 with a time of 9:54.36 just ahead of Will McGlynn at 9:57.69. Zach Spergel finished 14th at 10:22.13.

Will Loggia finished seventh in the 1,600 with a time of 4:34.4 and Jack Maranz crossed eighth at 4:37.67. In the pole vault, Max Owens placed eighth with a height of 10-0. Sean Root took sixth in the shot put with a shove of 42-9 and Jack Cioffi placed ninth in the high jump with a clearance of 5-6.

Probitas Verus Honos

Blue Devils Fall to Raritan, Mendham in Mat Tri-Meet

The Westfield High School wrestling team competed against some heavyweights in a tri-meet in Westfield on February 2 and came out on the short end of a 55-16 setback to 13-5 Raritan (seeded second in Central Jersey Group 2 behind powerhouse South Plainfield) and 35-27 to 13-3 Mendham (top-seeded in North 2, Group 3).

Against Raritan, Blue Devil Luke Jacobs won by 12-2 majority decision over Alex Auletta at 106-lbs. Quinn Gimblette pinned Aidan Dennehy in 1:22 at 113-lbs and Luke Hoerle pinned Matt Vargas in 40 seconds at 120-lbs. At 160-lbs, Luke Scanlan dropped a tight 3-1 decision to Anthony Bailey and at 220-lbs, Jon Heard dropped a tough 5-2 decision to Kevin Lind.

For Raritan, Justin Acevedo won by 8-0 major decision over Brendan Loder at 195-lbs. Anthony Aquilano pinned Jordan Simpson 4:10 at 170-lbs and George Burdick pinned Mike Price in 17 seconds at 182-lbs. At 132-lbs, Jacob Spirko pinned Tyler Sontz in 2:47 and Cameron Rafalko

pinned Connor Ballangal in 1:16 at 138-lbs.

Jim Ecklyn pinned James Greco in 4:55 at 152-lbs and Vin Mangano beat Theo Dardia, 7-3, at 145-lbs. Matt Spirko (285) and Mike Lonny both received forfeits.

In the Mendham match-up, Scanlan pinned Rob Chittenden in 36 seconds at 160-lbs and Simpson pinned Andrew Bryan in 1:29 at 170-lbs. Loder (195) won by 20-5, 5:19 tech fall over Sebastian Quinn. Jack Price beat Shaan Dhimalani, 6-0, at 182-lbs. Gimblette (113) beat Tristan Navarino, 7-0, and Hoerle (120) won by 13-5 major decision over Chris Tringali.

For Mendham, Jack Bertha (106) topped Jacobs, 7-0, Peter Tringali (132) beat Jeremy Silber, 10-4, and Luke Colanino (138) won by injury default over Anthony Ciotta. Alex Winant (145) won by 4:00 tech fall over Dardia and Justin Hyde (152) nipped Greco, 11-9. Nick Berry (220) edged Kevin Vicuna, 5-4, and Gage Armijo (285) pinned Heard in 49 seconds. Dom DiGena (126) won by forfeit.



Courtesy of Cranford fan

UNDEFEATED...The 9-0 Cranford PAL wrestling team of the Central Jersey Youth Wrestling League recently knocked off undefeated Woodbridge, 40-36, in Cranford. The Cranford High School Team came out to support the youth team.

D. Blair Corbin's
Raiders
Blue Devils
Cougars
Walk Down Memory Lane



David B. Corbin (February 2016 files) for The Westfield Leader and The Times
ATTEMPTING AN ESCAPE...Blue Devil Isaiah Reese stands up and attempts to escape the grasp of Raider Mikey Ramos in their 160-lb bout during the Pin Cancer showdown. Reese escaped and defeated Ramos, 7-1 (February 5, 2016).

From the archives of *The Westfield Leader and The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* — full accounts of the past can be found at goleader.com "archives" Click the particular month and year.

FOCUSING ON 2016:

February 4, 2016: Four starters for the Westfield High School girls basketball team delivered 100 percent of the scoring and all four hit double figures in a 52-34 rejection of the AL Johnson Crusaders in Westfield on February 4. However, every Lady Blue Devil delivered dazzling defensive performances, especially in the third quarter when they outscored the Crusaders, 15-2, to put the game on ice.

Blue Devil sophomore Molly Ryan hit 15 of her team-leading 17 points in the first half and four of them — 12 points — came from beyond the 3-point arc. The inside exploits of junior Shannon Devitt stepped heavily into the act. Devitt drove to the basket and scored eight of her 14 points in

the third quarter. Junior Danielle Rinaldi banged a pair of threes and



David B. Corbin (February 2016 files) for The Westfield Leader and The Times
DIFFICULT PERSON TO GUARD...Cougar freshman Lauren Williamson, No. 10, has to deal with a real tough customer in Pioneer Katie Kinum who drives to the basket in Cranford on February 6, 2016. Kinum scored 33 points in the Pioneer win.

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