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COHEN WON MOC 500-F; SHAO, COHEN SPARKLE IN UCT

Raider Swim Boys Finish 11-4, Won Section Title, 3rd in UCT

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

It may be time to say goodbye to a pair of fantastic swimmers in seniors Josh Cohen and Alan Shao, along with several additional fine senior performers, but this year's Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School boys swim team also received outstanding performances from a number of underclassmen. The result was a strong third-place showing in the Union

an 87-83 scorcher to Summit and lost 94-76 to Westfield. Outside the county, the Raiders crushed Chatham, 113-57, but lost a stinger to St. Joseph (Metuchen), 87-83.

Receiving the top seed for the North Jersey, Section 2, Public B Tournament, the Raiders beat Chatham, 93-77, in the semifinals then knocked off second-seeded Montgomery, 97-73, for the title. The Raiders then defeated Ridgewood, 94-76, in the Pub-

Raiders took third at 378. The Raiders did, however, claim first place in six of the 11 events and Cohen and Shao had a hand in all six.

Cohen touched first in the 500-freestyle for the third straight year, this time with a time of 4:36.37. Freshman Corey He at 4:56.18 and sophomore Jason Mongiovi at 5:08.59 finished 6-7. Last year Cohen broke his own 2017 UCT meet record of 4:35.02 in the event by touching in 4:32.77. Cohen, who won the event last year, placed first in the 200-freestyle with a meet record time of 1:40.07, topping the old mark of 1:42.06 set in 1987. [Corey] He finished ninth at 1:49.83.

Shao took first in the 100-butterfly with a time of 52.69 and Mongiovi finished seventh at 56.17. Shao also won the 200-Individual Medley in 1:56.33 and freshman Aidan Treney finished sixth at 2:01.77. Last year Shao took second in the 200-IM and third in the 100-butterfly. Cohen, Shao, He and sophomore Matt London won the UCT 400-free relay with a time of 3:14.13. Shao, senior Dan Donaldson, London and Cohen took first in the 200-free relay at 1:28.

Treney, Mongiovi, Donaldson and He placed fourth in the 200-medley relay at 1:43.21. London at 22.79 and Donaldson at 22.95 finished 4-5 in the 50-freestyle. London at 50.54 and senior Drew Burfeindt at 50.71 finished 5-8 in the 100-freestyle. Treney at 56.77 and sophomore Sean Merkel at 58.02 finished 7-8 in the 100-backstroke. Donaldson took eighth in the 100-breaststroke at 1:05.23 and Burfeindt was 10th at 1:06.38.

At the Meet of Champions, Cohen finally seized top honors in the 500-free with a time of 4:29.93. He also finished second in the 200-freestyle at 1:38.93. Last year Cohen took third in the 500-free at 4:34.29 and second in the 200-free at 1:39.55.

"Josh Cohen finished the year with school records in the 100-free, 200-free, 500-free, 100-fly, 200-Free Relay with Alan Shao, Matt London and Daniel Donaldson and the 400-free relay with Alan Shao, Corey He and Matt London," Coach Hulnik pointed out.

The Raiders will graduate nine seniors, which include Cohen and Shao, but the performances of the underclassmen this season spells "Good News" for next year.

"Our younger talent was strong with freshman Corey He and Aidan Treney seeming to get faster every meet and strong performances by Matt London, Jason Mongiovi, Sean Merkel and Owen Ferrone helped us be very successful this season. We do graduate nine seniors this year. These seniors were the backbone and leaders for this team and set a great example of the expectations of Raider swimming," Coach Hulnik said.



David B. Corbin (February 2019 files) for The Westfield Leader and The Times
UCT WINNER...Senior Alan Shao won the UCT title in the 100-butterfly and the 100-Individual Medley. Shao was also a member of the 400-free relay team and the 200-free relay team that took first at the UCT.

County Tournament (UCT), a North Jersey, Section 2, Public B title, a win in the Public B semifinals and an 11-4 record.

During the regular season the Raider boys had the opportunity to test their reserves against all their Union County opponents except two. The Raiders trounced Union, 104-66, Oratory Prep, 120-50, Cranford, 118-52, Plainfield, 96-41 and Elizabeth, 120-50. The Raiders also topped the Governor Livingston Highlanders, 97-73, and New Providence, 100-69. The Raiders dropped

Public B semifinal before losing 98-72 to Mainland, winners of four straight Public B titles.

"Winning the sectional title was awesome! We swam a great meet verse a strong Montgomery team. We also swam well at state finals verse Mainland, just came up a little short verse a deeper team," Raider Head Coach Jess Hulnik said.

The UCT was a battle among the Raiders, the Summit Hilltoppers and the Westfield Blue Devils. The Hilltoppers nudged the Blue Devils, 405-400, for top honors, while the



David B. Corbin (February 2019 files) for The Westfield Leader and The Times
UCT RECORD HOLDER...Senior Josh Cohen is the UCT record holder in the 200-freestyle and the 500-freestyle. Cohen was also a member of the 400-free relay team and the 200-free relay team that took first at the UCT.

Raiders Won 5th UCT in Row; Finished 10-2-1

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Sofia Leonetti leading the way, followed by freshman Julia Bonhote and senior Ellie Richards to put them in a situation of just placing second in the final event, the 400-freestyle relay. Freshman Chloe Howell, senior Caroline Warren, freshman Lily Hughes and sophomore Rachel Small secured the victory by touching second in the event.

"Great season overall! We had 14 freshman come in this year. Chatham was a great victory back in December, but another exciting meet has to be the sectional semifinal verse North Hunterdon, where we split the 400 free relay to take 2-3 to tie it up and force the meet to go to power points. It was close even then. We actually swam very well against Chatham in the sectional finals, but came up a little short verse Chatham at full strength. Lily Hughes broke the school record in the 100 backstroke when she went 57.80," Raider Head Coach Jess Hulnik recalled. But come UCT time there may have been questions as to the Raiders' chances of repeating after losing to the Blue Devils early in the season. The Raiders answered the question by outscoring the Blue Devils, 385-375, at Sonny Werblin Pool at Rutgers University on January 27 for the crown.

Small, Bonhote, Howell and sophomore Abby Ryan answered the question of who was the best in the UCT in the 200-free relay by taking first in 1:40.36. Hughes took top honors in the 100-backstroke with a time of 58.17 and Small took seventh at 1:01.77. Hughes, Leonetti, Warren and Bonhote finished second in the 200-medley relay at 1:51.45. Howell, Warren, Small and Ryan took second in the 400-freestyle relay at 3:40.08.

Individually, Warren touched second in the 500-freestyle at 5:17.15, freshman Aislin Mooney took fourth

at 5:25.33 and Richard took sixth at 5:29.71. Howell placed second in the 100-freestyle at 54.31, while Small at 54.77 and Bonhote at 55.27 placed 4-5. Bonhote finished third in the 50-freestyle at 25.02 and Howell took fourth at 25.03. Ryan at 1:10.42 and Leonetti at 1:10.65 placed 3-4 in the 100-breaststroke. In the 200-freestyle, Warren finished fourth at 1:57.62 and Ryan finished sixth at 1:59.87. Hughes took fifth in the 200-Individual Medley at 2:19.85 and freshman Camille Cooke earned

team points by finishing eighth in the 100-butterfly at 1:04.78.

The Lady Raiders would lose a handful of seniors due to graduation but will return a wealth of talent, so the outlook should be quite bright for next year.

"We will miss our seniors, Aubrey Bagdonas, Rachel DiFabrizio, Kate Jackmin, Ellie Richard and Caroline Warren. They really took the underclassmen under their wing and helped set the stage for a great year," Coach Hulnik concluded.

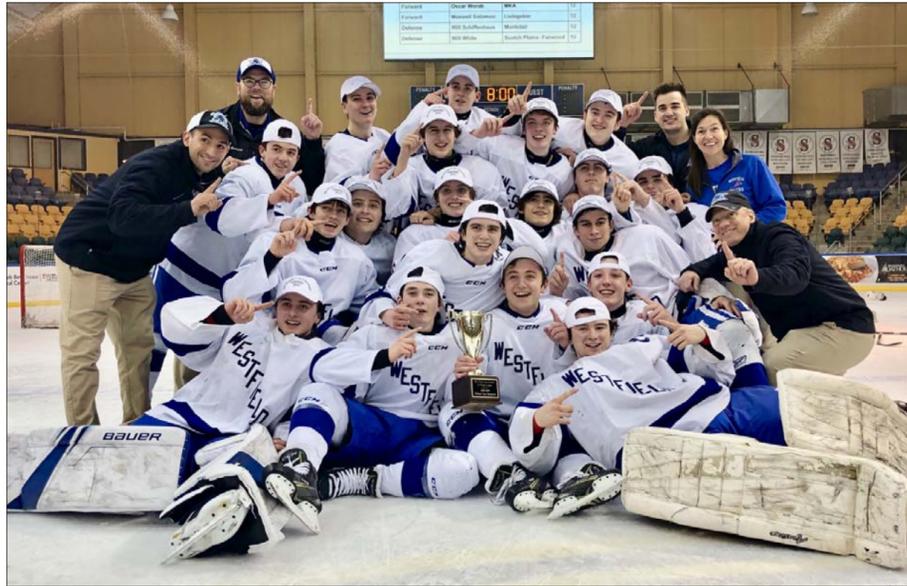


Photo courtesy of Brett Howard

GLORIOUS SEASON...The Westfield Blue Devil Ice Hockey team won conference and finished with a 17-6-3 record.

Blue Devil Icemen Ranked 18th; Won Conference, Finish 17-6-3

With every win in tournament hockey the excitement grows, as does the potential for disappointment. It's a sword that cut both ways on the Westfield High School 2018-2019 boys ice hockey team in the New Jersey high school state tournament this year.

The Blue Devils entered the Group B tournament as the No. 3 seed with a "why not us?!" mentality and almost delivered a state championship to Dubfield Nation. After defeating Manalapan in opening round play, Westfield hosted the Princeton Little Tigers in the quarterfinals. Senior Anthony Oliveri and Freshman Matt Beke both scored two goals to lead the of-

fense. Senior Tommy Duffy and junior Trevor Tanella also pitched in with a gino apiece. Senior captain goalie CJ Duffy was stout in net and the Blue Devils cruised to a 6-3 victory.

The win over Princeton led to a date with the Ridge High School Red Devils in the semifinals. After playing to a tie earlier in the season it was no surprise that the high stakes tilt would be tight between the two evenly balanced squads. The game remained tied at 0-0 through the first two periods. Midway through the third Ridge broke through to take a 1-0 lead.

The Blue Devils remained composed and responded. With less than two minutes remaining, freshman

Thomas Conrod pumped home the equalizer after some gritty work by senior John Humiston and Tanella who provided the assists. Suddenly the white-knuckle affair was headed to overtime. Unfortunately for Westfield the finals were not meant to be as Ridge was able to get at tip in goal past Duffy for the win.

Short-term disappointment, but in retrospect a fantastic season. Captain CJ Duffy, and alternate captains senior Alex Park and Tanella led the team. Outstanding team influence came from other seniors on the squad: Timmy Rosa, Petey Buontempo, and Zach Peterson. Head Coach Joe Bertucci, and assistant coaches George Giresi, Spencer Truesdell and Brendan Hickey managed the team masterfully all season.

TEAM HIGHLIGHTS:

Making history as McInnis Conference Champions for the first time, defeating rival and the state champion Summit Hilltoppers in the process.

Earned the No. 3 seed in the NJ state Public B (group of death) tournament

Westfield concludes one of its most successful seasons to date at 17-6-3 and ranked 18 in the state by NJ.com

INDIVIDUAL HONORS:

Trevor Tanella - 1st team all-conference (McInnis) and named one of the top 50 juniors in the state

CJ Duffy - 2nd team all-conference (McInnis) and named one of the top 50 seniors in the state.

Alex Park - Honorable mention all-conference (McInnis)

Anthony Oliveri - Honorable mention all-conference (McInnis) and was an Allstate athlete of the week

John Humiston - Named NJIHL Conference player of the week

Will Gamba - Named one of the top 50 juniors in the state and was an Allstate athlete of the week

As the season came to a close the Westfield High School boys varsity hockey team recalled the words of the immortal Dr. Seuss, "Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened." The program is already looking forward to next season - here we go boys...

During the off-season follow the WHS boys ice hockey teams on Twitter @westfieldpuckandWHSpu on Facebook and Instagram. See the website for more www.westfieldhockey.com.

SPF 8th PAL Boys Win JBA Hoops Championship

The 8th Grade Scotch Plains-Fanwood PAL basketball team won the JBA (Jersey Basketball Association) Championship this past weekend over Green Brook. The game, held at St. Joseph's of Metuchen, resulted in a 46-39 victory for SPF.

"We are so proud of the hard work these boys have put in over the past four months," coach Matt Kalafat said. "We demanded a lot, and they always delivered. They are a great group of young men, who especially came on strong during their four-game playoff run."

The team posted a 16-2 combined regular- and post-season record this year. Over the past three seasons, the team has tallied a 37-5 regular-season

record, making it to the JBA finals as 6th-graders.

Coach Mike Ferrone added, "I'm extremely proud of all the boys with their commitment and dedication to the team, and their willingness to challenge and support each other throughout the year. This was a well-deserved win for the boys."

The 12-man roster, in alphabetical order: Ryan Cawley, Brody Chin, Jack Fallo, Sean Ferrone, Trey Hall, KJ Jackson, Julian Jennings, Luke Kalafat, Dan Mahr, Timmy Paprocki, Matt Reynolds and Ryan Yarnall. Yarnall, Reynolds and Chin attend Terrill Middle School and the rest of the roster attends Park Middle School.



CHAMPS...The SPF PAL 8th grade boys won the JBA Basketball Championship.

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