

## FIVE BLUE DEVILS SELECTED ALL-UC FIRST TEAM

# Blue Devil Soccer Boys Shifted Lineup to Cope With Injuries

By DAVID B. CORBIN

*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times*

Multiple injuries forced the Westfield High School boys soccer team into an awkward situation of rearranging its lineup at the most crucial point of the season, tournament time. Despite the untimely injuries, the Blue Devils won the Watchung Conference title and finished 12-3-3.

With a healthy, very talented, athletic squad, the Blue Devils zoomed to an 11-1-1 record and recorded big wins over Elizabeth, Cranford, Union, St. Peter's Prep, Newark East Side and Scotch Plains-Fanwood twice (both 1-0 scores). The Blue Devils also topped Linden and Plainfield, and tied Kearny, 1-1.

"In 13 matches, we have given up three goals. In a period of six days, we lost six kids. Four of them were start-

ers," Head Coach George Kapner explained. "Included in that were 50 percent of our backline, including Todd Saunders, who the coaches thought was the number one player in Union County. Losing him certainly had an impact."

Saunders, a senior, got injured in the second game against the Raiders and marking back Nick Breza went down the next day in practice. After the injuries, the Blue Devils gave up eight goals in five games. In the quarterfinals of the Union County Tournament, the Blue Devils had a 1-1 tie after two overtime periods with Governor Livingston but lost in a shootout. Next, the Blue Devils were burned by the Elizabeth Minutemen, 2-1, when Dan Correia buried a penalty kick.

"Todd and Nick not being in the back line had an enormous impact. We were playing well. We just needed

to get over the hump," coach Kapner said. "They had to learn how to play together again, not at the beginning of the year when other teams were getting themselves together but at the end of the year when other teams are already set and solid. We moved some guys around. It looked like we were gelling again."

But the real scorcher came in the second round of the North Jersey, Group 4, Section 2 tournament when sixth-seeded North Hunterdon slid in a goal just before the half and added three more in the second half to grab a shocking 4-3 victory.

"We were playing North Hunterdon. We were up 2-0, playing very well and gave up a bad goal right before halftime then they came out like gangbusters in the second half. It was sad, disappointing for us but that's part of the game," Kapner said.

With an 11-1-1 start, the Blue Devil defense and athletic goalie Mike Lessner were superb but the midfield strength made it much easier by controlling to ball in opponents' territory. "The defense played well. That was obvious. The power of the team was midfield. Mike Irving, Pat Tresnan. One of the great losses we had was not only did we lose two of the four in the back but we felt it necessary to move Pat out of the midfield. Outside halfbacks Andy (Flood) and (Kevin) Murphy, and Ryan Heine in the middle played wonderfully. Midfield dominated the ability to control the ball and kept it in the attacking third," Kapner said.

Through the efforts of the midfield, senior strikers Tom McManus, who led the team with 10 goals and seven assists, and Mike Forgash (5 goals, 2 assists) reeked havoc on opponents' goal area. Murphy had three goals and an assist. Irving also got in his licks with nine goals and four assists but the team that outscored opponents 34-11 rarely scored more than two goals in a game until the end of the year.

"If there was one weakness it was we didn't score enough goals. We were creating tons of opportunities. The irony is the last two games of the year, we scored six goals and we averaged about one-and-a-half goals a game," said Kapner.

Saunders and Tresnan made First Team All-Union County (UC) for defense. Irving was All-UC First Team as a midfielder, McManus as a striker and Lessner, who recorded 11 shutouts, as goalie. Breza was named to the All-UC Second Team, while Flood, Forgash and Murphy were Honorable Mentions.

In his sophomore season, Lessner took over for the injured Greg O'Brien at goal then was a starting striker his junior season when the team advanced to the sectional finals.

"He's a three-sport guy, a basketball player and he had not really stepped on the goal since his sophomore year. When we put him out there, it was like he didn't miss a beat," Kapner said. "He basically was our sweeper and our goalkeeper. To go from goalkeeper to striker back to goalkeeper and run 11 shutouts is a pretty cool thing."

## U14 Courage Defeats Edison Soccer Girls

The Westfield Courage U14 Girls travel soccer team defeated the Edison United Firecrackers, 3-1, on November 16, winning the first place position in Flight 2 of the Mid-New Jersey Youth Soccer Association. The Courage finished with an unbeaten, 8-0-2 record and totaled 24 goals, while allowing eight.

The team is comprised of eighth graders from Roosevelt, Edison and Holy Trinity Schools. Team members are: Mariah Baker, Emily Brucia, Deanna Cohen, Alyssa Gurkas, Val LaPorta, Isabelle MacDonald, Mary McDermott, Courtney McGovern, Emily McBain, Jenna Perrotta, Aeri Pringle, Molly Prybylski, Sam Rembisz, Ali Schwetje, Amanda Soldati, Olivia Spiridigliozzi, and Courtney Weiss. The team is coached by Maureen Baker and Charlie Gurkas, and trained by Sander Waterland of Dutch Total Soccer.



## Devil's Den

# Friends In Need Are Friends Indeed

By BRUCE JOHNSON

*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times*

Judy Zeikel has been pals with Doug and Lane Kehler for almost as long as she can remember. She's known Doug since the fourth grade at Franklin School and she's been buds with the former Marie (Lane) Priscoe since the seventh grade at Roosevelt. They all graduated in WHS's Class of 1985.

Her friendship with Lane continued through their college days—Zeikel at St. Lawrence and Priscoe at Vermont—and three years as roommates in Boston beginning their adult lives. Eventually Zeikel married Jonathan Stavis and moved to Cohasset, Massachusetts, just south of Boston where they began raising a family, which now consists of Minnie 9, Nicholas 7 and Callie 5. Lane and Doug Kehler married and settled in Westfield. About 5½ years ago they had triplets: Wil, Jackson and Laurajane.

In the last year, things went very awry for the Kehlers. First grandpa Gary, the legendary WHS football, wrestling and golf coach, passed away last December at age 71. Then within a week of his fifth birthday in July, Wil Kehler was diagnosed with osteosarcoma in his left femur, a very rare and very malignant form of bone cancer. After undergoing months of treatment, including nearly five months of chemotherapy at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in Manhattan, young Wil finally underwent limb-salvage surgery about a month ago. The medical costs, including intensive physical rehabilitation and possible future surgeries, have been, and will continue to be, staggering for the young family. Even more so because Lane had to give up her job and Doug had to stop tutoring at night in order to be with Wil in New York or home with their other children.

Friends of the family created the Wil Kehler Fund, where many people have graciously made major contributions to help the Kehlers defray some of the costs. And another group of friends has put together what figures to be a monster fundraising dance this Saturday night, 7-11:30ish, at Temple Emanu-El, with the Mark Pender Band, featuring Richie (LaBamba) Rosenberg, trombonist for LaBamba and the Hubcaps and the Max Weinberg 7. The event has been long sold out.

And this brings us back to Judy Stavis, the erstwhile homemaker, part-time runner, substitute teacher, yoga instructor, jewelry maker and fulltime friend, who will be out there on the dance floor this Saturday night. At WHS, Stavis was not a member of the cross-country or track teams but, as a two-year letter winner in soccer, she did devote much of her free time to running. "I have always run for fitness, starting back in high school when I used to run before school with (teammate) Sally Parizeau Tyrie," she said. "I just continued running recreationally through college. After having my first child, I decided I wanted to do something for myself and thought training for a marathon would be the perfect release from motherhood."

Two more children and four marathons (three Bostons and one New York) later, Stavis was out running with a friend in Cohasset last September when she came to an epiphany of sorts. "I was telling her the Kehler story," Stavis said, "and I looked at her and said, 'I am so far away from them and I feel helpless, so ... I'm going to run the New York City Marathon and raise money for Wil.' I didn't feel right just asking my friends for money, so I thought if I did the marathon, more people would give."

And give and give and give they did. When all was said and done, by the time Stavis crossed the finish line on November 2 wearing her "Wil Power" t-shirt, she had raised \$16,000 for her good friends' bedridden son.

Yes, you read that right, sixteen thousand dollars! "I just asked people to donate whatever they felt comfortable giving," she said. "I had people asking me to send them information on how to donate. Cohasset is a small town (7,500 people) and word travels quickly when people are involved in helping out others. It's a very supportive town. I was overwhelmed by the generosity of my friends and family, and I had a couple of 'big' givers."

"I almost didn't do it, because I felt uncomfortable asking people, who have never met Lane or Doug, for their support in such strained economic times. It would have been a mistake I would have regretted. It has definitely given me faith in the human spirit of giving and helping out."

**FOOTBALL UPDATE**  
It's WHS vs. Plainfield for the 104th time, tomorrow morning, 10:30, at Hub Stine Field in Plainfield. WHS, which has won the past two Thanksgiving games, comes in with a 6-3 record, while Plainfield is 4-5. Both teams have lost three of their last four games.

Tomorrow will be the final game for a talented group of WHS seniors, featuring Tony Dilorio, Ricardo Johnson, Eric Moran, T.J. Mruz and Chris Sheehan, and including Dan Ludlum, Josh Firestone, Craig Dyer, Jihaad Billups, Brett DeFazio, Henry Kwok, Mike Clark, Jordan Johnson, Matt Marcus and Tom Maxwell.

Johnson comes into the game with 1,009 yards this season, the school's first 1,000-yard rusher since LeRoy Gallman in 1988, and just the second in history. Dilorio has passed for 1,144 yards, 24 yards short of Joe Monninger's single-season record set in 1970. This is the first time WHS has had a 1,000-yard rusher and passer in the same season. Sheehan has 28 catches this fall, two short of his school record set last year.

Through nine games, WHS has scored 278 points, a total surpassed only five times in school history: the 1977 team had 413 points in 11 games, 1970 had 354 in nine games, 1947 had 354 in 10 games, 1998 had 301 in 12 games and 1966 had 282 in nine games.

WHS and Plainfield have been playing since at least 1900, but the first Thanksgiving meeting between the two schools was in 1944. That game followed two full years of no athletic events between the schools after Plainfield coach Jack Liddy pulled his team off the field late in the 1941 game because of what he felt were a couple of questionable calls by the officials.

Before 1944, WHS's Thanksgiving Day opponents had included Madison, North Plainfield, Nyack (N.Y.), Haverstraw (N.Y.), Pearl River (N.Y.), Ridgewood and Ferris (Jersey City).

Here is the 2009 WHS football schedule, in the new Mid-State 40 Football Conference, Watchung Division:

**Sept. 11-12 Elizabeth**  
**Sept. 18-19 Watchung Hills**  
**Sept. 25-26 Bridgewater-Raritan**  
**Oct. 2-3 bye**  
**Oct. 9-10 North Hunterdon**  
**Oct. 17 SP-F**  
**Oct. 23-24 Montgomery**  
**Oct. 30-31 Linden**  
**Nov. 6-7 Union**  
**Nov. 13-14 playoffs**  
**Nov. 20-21 playoffs**  
**Nov. 26 Plainfield**  
**Dec. 4-5 playoffs**

**Note: Home and away games are not set yet.**

It was pretty sweet Friday night to look on nj.com and see this final score: Hunterdon Central 39, Ridge 14. It's just too bad Central couldn't have scored two more and started the "mercy clock" running. P.S.: Anybody have a video of the Ridge coach's face on the last Central touchdown?

**WHS'S BCS**  
Combining the requests of several readers with everybody's interest in college's Bowl Championship Series, we thought it might get some people's blood boiling to hold a BCS of the best WHS football teams ever. So we have attempted to seed what are arguably the top 16 teams ever in this week's Den. Next week we will have the round-by-round results.

Here are the seeds and first-round matchups:

**Top bracket: No. 1 1977 (11-0) vs. No. 16 1931 (7-0-1), No. 8 1965 (9-0) vs. No. 9 1971 (9-0).**

**Middle top bracket: No. 4 1976 (10-0-1) vs. No. 13 1998 (9-3), No. 5 1961 (9-0) vs. No. 12 1945 (9-1).**

**Middle bottom bracket: No. 3 1947 (10-0) vs. No. 14 1974 (9-0), No. 6 1941 (9-0) vs. No. 11 1966 (7-1-1).**

**Bottom bracket: No. 2 1970 (9-0) vs. No. 15 1990 (7-2), No. 7 1972 (9-0) vs. No.**

## 10. 1944 (10-0).

### DID YOU KNOW?

On Nov. 17, 1951, Westfield's Sam Mitchell connected with Hugh McIlhenny for a 60-yard touchdown pass with 1:12 left in the game to lift Washington into a 20-20 tie with UCLA.

### WHS VS. SP-F UPDATE

The final numbers, according to faithful reader "lazarusd," for the fall season are in: WHS 9 wins, SP-F 1 win, and 1 tie. WHS had wins in boys and girls cross-country, football, gymnastics, boys soccer (two), girls soccer, tennis and volleyball. SP-F's win came in volleyball, while the tie was in girls soccer.

### SMALL WORLD DEPT.

Dan Lynch (WHS, '81) is the New York Giants' vice president of media operations and lives in Fanwood with his wife Judi and their kids Danny, Jennifer and Jack. Danny plays for the SP-F freshman team, which recently lost to the unbeaten WHS frosh. Dan's sister Katy ('89) is married to former WHS and Giants quarterback Dave Brown ('88).

### IN PASSING

Jimi Hendrix rightfully gets most of the props for the greatness of the short-lived Jimi Hendrix Experience. But talented drummer Mitch Mitchell—who died two weeks ago at age 61—was a close second in one of rock's great "power trios." Forty years ago, there weren't many better ways to spend an evening than putting "Are You Experienced" on your turntable and listening to Hendrix, Mitchell and bassist Noel Redding tear through "Purple Haze, Manic Depression, Hey Joe, Love or Confusion, May This Be Love, I Don't Live Today, The Wind Cries Mary, Fire, Third Stone From the Sun, Foxey Lady," and the title song. And "The Experience's" "All Along the Watchtower" is the song's definitive version, even better than Bob Dylan's original (though maybe not quite as good as the Dave Matthews Band's live version).

### DEVIL OF THE WEEK

There were no sports events the past week. The Devil of the Week will return next week.

*The Devil's Den appears Thursday in The Westfield Leader during the school year. Contact us with comments, complaints and suggestions at bj1019@aol.com. Win or lose, WHS4EVR!*

## Garwood Gymnast Makes the A Team

Alonza Klopfer, a nine-year-old Garwood resident, recently qualified for the 2008 USA TOPs National Gymnastics Team. TOPs (Talent Opportunity Program) is a talent search and educational program for female gymnasts ages 7-11 and their coaches.

Klopfer is one of 20 girls out of over 3,000 in her age group to be selected to participate in an all expenses paid, five-day training (December 3-7) at the Bela Karolyi Gymnastics Center in Houston, Texas. Klopfer, who trains at North Stars Gymnastic Academy in Boonton, is one of four other gymnasts that will be representing New Jersey.

The Women's National Team Training Center at the Bela Karolyi Gymnastics Camp is home of the well-known gymnastics coaches Bela and Martha Karolyi. Martha coached the 2008 USA Woman's Olympic team. The Karolyi's also coached Nadia Comaneci, Mary Lou Retton, Kim Zmeskal, Kerri Strug and many other World and Olympic champions.



Courtesy Mike Ehrmann for The Leader and Times  
Alonza Klopfer



David B. Corbin (November 28, 2004 files) for The Westfield Leader and The Times  
NERVOUS ANTICIPATION...The Westfield PAL "D" football players and Coach John Dugan await the end of the first half of the Giants/Eagles game at the Meadowlands and prepare to run out of the chute and onto the field.

## D. Blair Corbin's

**Blue Devils**

**Raiders**

## Walk Down Memory Lane

From the archives of The Westfield Leader and The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times—www.goleader.com

**November 25, 1998:** Excitement was in the air and confidence was rampant but the Blue Devil senior girls captured the fluff by defeating the highly charged juniors, 8-0, in the Powder Puff game at Gary Kehler Stadium. Senior Suzanne Heinkel scored the winning touchdown on a pass from Liz McKeon and junior Katie Richards became the "Minister of Defense." McKeon also passed to Jessica Lutkenhouse for the two-point conversion.

After some consideration, junior Co-Captain Erica Van Anglen predicted, "It's going to be a very difficult game but I believe the juniors will prevail by an extra point."

Prior to the opening kickoff, Co-Captains Katie Gildea and McKeon had their own opinions about the outcome. "I predict a win by two touchdowns," claimed Gildea. "We are going to kill them," said McKeon confidently.

**November 25, 1999:** Anthony Davis had TD runs of 66 and 94 yards to lead Plainfield to a 21-14 victory over the 3-7 Blue Devils before a rain-drenched crowd of over 4000 at Gary Kehler Stadium. The Blue Devil defense limited the Cardinals to 69 yards on 45 of the 48 plays but Cardinal quarterback Mike Lowrey hit Bobby Holloman for a 69-yard TD for the game winner. Blue Devil quarterback Chris Giacone

had two short TD runs.

**November 2002:** Ryan Breznitsky a junior at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School has received the honor of being named to Region 1, US Olympic Developmental Soccer Team for the second consecutive year. The team will compete in an Interregional Tournament over Thanksgiving at Coca Beach, Florida Soccer Training facility.

**November 27, 2003:** The Elizabeth football team found out first hand that the "Wild Dogs" of Scotch Plains-Fanwood can deliver vicious defensive bites that resulted in a 6-0 Raider shutout and a school record 10th victory of the season before an exuberant crowd in Scotch Plains on Thanksgiving Day. Junior quarterback Dan LaForge completed two of four passes for 56 yards, including a 22-yard touchdown pass to senior wide receiver Mike Walker. Senior John Liss made a diving circus catch that netted 34 yards and senior cornerback Matt Powers broke up a touchdown pass with less than two minutes remaining.

**November 28, 2004:** More than gaining yardage took place at Giants Stadium in East Rutherford. Thanks to the graciousness of Director of Youth Programs Beth Roche, staff and security personnel, the Westfield PAL "D" football team got the opportunity of a lifetime by performing during halftime of the Giants/Eagles game.

## HAPPY THANKSGIVING

*Best Wishes to everyone  
for a day of sharing  
and giving thanks  
for all our blessings*

*Regards,  
Hye-Young Choi*

**COLDWELL BANKER**  
**RESIDENTIAL BROKERAGE**  
Westfield Office • 209 Central Avenue  
(908) 233-5555 ext. 165  
(908) 301-2015 • Direct  
hye-young@att.net

**COLDWELL BANKER**  
**RESIDENTIAL BROKERAGE**

© 2008 Coldwell Banker Real Estate Corporation. Coldwell Banker is a registered trademark, licensed to Coldwell Banker Real Estate Corporation. An Equal Opportunity Company. Equal Housing Opportunity. Owned and Operated by NRI Incorporated.

## Competitive Insurance Prices From A Local Guy



**We insure all drivers**

## I Service What I Sell!

- Auto
- Home
- Business
- Worker's Compensation

**Buy Auto Insurance On-Line Now!**

**AlphaOfWestfield.com**  
**or Call 908-232-1955**

## The Westfield Leader – The Times

*Serving the Town Since 1890*

PO Box 250 • Westfield, New Jersey 07091

Tele - (908) 232-4407 • Fax - (908) 232-0473

□ **The Leader** • □ **The Times**

□ **New Subscriber** • □ **Renewal**

□ **One Year - \$28** • □ **Two Years - \$52** • □ **Three Years - \$76**

□ **College \$20** (September - May)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Payment \_\_\_\_\_ Cash \_\_\_\_\_ Check \_\_\_\_\_ Charge

CC # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Sec. Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Subscriptions Are Pre-Paid and Are Non-Refundable

**press@goleader.com • www.goleader.com**  
**We Reach People... Not Driveways!**