

# NEIRAD

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## *Sports Extra*

### Playing the field:

*Senior fullback Dan Kouh has carried the load for the Blue Wave this season and says he'll be getting stronger every week as the Wave prepares for its playoff run.*



**4** *Boys' Soccer:*  
State playoff run falls just short

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McIntyre competes internationally

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The Streak is over

# SHUTOUT SERIES PROPELLS WAVE FOOTBALL TO FCIAC CHAMPIONSHIP

*Fairfield, Central, and Ridgefield roll in the Wave's destructive path*

By Scott Goodwin  
Sports Editor

Roll tide roll! The Darien Blue Wave has risen to a crest just as its regular season has drawn to a close. With decisive victories over Fairfield (28-0), Bridgeport Central (47-0), and Ridgefield (40-0) coach Mike Sangster's squad is riding a five game shutout streak as it prepares for its toughest games of the season in the upcoming FCIAC Championship game against Staples (Westport), the Turkey Bowl against arch-rival New Canaan, and another run through the Class S State playoffs.

Leading the Blue Wave offensive attack have been senior fullback Dan Kough and senior tailbacks Chris Pintauro and Jamie Gabriel on the ground, along with senior quarterback Tom DiMenna and senior receivers Tom Knechtel, Justin Reed, and Andrew Barnett coupled with junior receiver Andrew Davidson, through the air. Kough has scored a team high thirteen touchdowns while gaining over one hundred yards in many of the Blue Wave's regular season contests. DiMenna and Knechtel have formed an extremely formidable combination through the air and have helped Darien outscore its opponents 326-83 on the season. One amazing fact about the offense, which speaks volumes about the line, is that DiMenna has not been sacked once

the whole season.

The Darien defense has been just as impressive, if not more so, than the offense. Led by a cast of thousands including seniors Justin Finnegan, Jason Allen, and Shawn Rycenga along with Barnett, Kough, Knechtel, Reed, Pintauro, and Davidson, the defense has not allowed a point in the Wave's last five games. A miraculous feat considering that the junior varsity team has played most of the fourth quarters in all of the games during the streak.

<b>DARIEN</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>RIDGEFIELD</b>	<b>0</b>

The key to the Wave's defensive success has been its ability to function as a unit. The team tackles extremely well as a whole and is solid at nearly every defensive position. Overall, this Blue Wave team may be better defensively than the State Champion squad of a year ago because of the amazing cohesiveness the players display while on the field. "We've got a great team on defense that works really well together. We work hard, and we succeed as a group," said Pintauro of the defensive wall the Wave has raised over its last five games.

The Wave, which has had it rather easy for the past five weeks, should face much more of a chal-

lenge in its upcoming FCIAC Championship game match-up against undefeated Staples (10-0). This Wrecker squad is led by highly touted senior quarterback Mac DeVito and senior wide receiver Doug Vroman who have hooked up for thirteen touchdown passes on the season. Staples will definitely provide a big test for the Wave which hopes to put an end to the Wreckers undefeated campaign.

Following the FCIAC game will be the much anticipated Thanksgiving Day Turkey Bowl match-up against arch-rival New Canaan (7-2). The Rams nearly qualified for the FCIAC game but lost a heart breaker to Staples in the final seconds of their last regular season game. This game, which is always a war, was won last year by the Blue Wave 21-20 on a missed extra point by the New Canaan kicker. This year, the Rams feature a strong running game including tailbacks Zach Volel, Brant Gresham, and Carlo Luciano along with fullback Bob Palladino. Look for the Turkey Bowl to be a battle fought down in the trenches along the offensive and defensive lines.

Of the upcoming match-ups, DiMenna commented, "Staples and New Canaan should definitely be a challenge defensively because our last five games have been so easy. On offense, I think we should be able to put up some points if we



Senior wide receiver Tom Knechtel hauls in a pass in the Wave's upset victory over Trumbull earlier this year.

mix it up and do what we have to do."

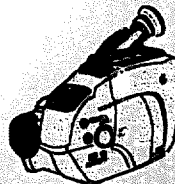
The Blue Wave heads into

these two key contests with a head of steam and a team that has never played better together.

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GIRLS SOCCER

X-COUNTRY

# Danbury denies girls soccer state berth

By Jen Costa

Production Associate

The girls' soccer team finished the season with a devastating 1-0 loss to Danbury. This loss crushed the team's hopes of making the State competition for the first time in team history.

Danbury scored the only goal of the game within the first minute. "We let in a really [bad] goal," said senior co-captain Kinsey Osberg. "We were jittery," commented senior co-captain Lauren Walsh. Danbury scored the only goal of the game within the first minute.

The team was not disappointed with its performance on the field, however. "We fought every minute after that [the Danbury goal]. Lee [Brown, coach] said that if we had started the season with that game we would have done much better," said Walsh. Facing Danbury's All-state goalie was also hard for the team. The Wave had 11 shots on goal in the second half, none of which found the net. Many supporters cheered on the Wave that afternoon, and they saw one of the best games the team has ever played.

Losing such an important game was especially hard on the seniors. "I cried a lot. We would have liked to win, but we will always remember our last game as our best fight," Walsh said. Many of the seniors never thought this was the way their season would end. "It was weird because I've been playing for so long. I never thought it would be my last game. I really thought we'd win," stated Osberg.

The Wave is losing seniors Walsh, Osberg, Ali Linden, Susannah Frank, Christy Huntley, and Kerry Lyden to graduation this spring, and so will be looking to next year's seniors for leadership. As of now, there will be 11 senior players on the team next fall. "I think they'll be looking to Kimmy Flatley, Katie Simpson, and H-H [Katie Harrington-Howes] for leadership,"

<b>DARIEN</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>DANBURY</b>	<b>1</b>

Walsh commented. Osberg thought they would also be looking to the upperclassmen, especially Jeannie Crawley, Simpson, Heather Smith, and Kate Sorgi.

Many members of the team garnered All-FCIAC Honors. Sorgi, Huntley, and Flatley received All FCIAC Honorable Mention, while Kristin Altorfer and Osberg were placed on the All FCIAC Second Team.

The team hopes to make States next year. This will probably be the team's main goal as it was this year. "We boosted the confidence of our team," said Walsh. "Lee also wants to make a summer soccer league to get the team going sooner because it took us a while [to get going]. We lost our first four games."

This year the team had many key players. "Christy Huntley was a key player. She always scored when it counted, not when we were ahead by six or seven goals. Also, Ali Linden and Kate Sorgi played well. All used her speed and agility well. They were both tough in the back. We depended



Allison Bisset moves upfield in Darien's 8-0 thrashing of Stamford.

a lot on Kristin Altorfer. She has the moves and the ability to score," said Walsh. Osberg also saw Sorgi as a really good player. "Kate Sorgi was a really steady player and she was really consistent. Katie Simpson was also good on defense."

"I'm surprised how good we looked at the end of the season. We stepped up against harder teams. We went into games thinking that we'd win, not that we'd lose. Our strategies were different than Fletcher's,

our coach from last year. Instead of just getting the ball forward, we worked on using the width more," Walsh remarked. Osberg also noted some key differences in the team's skills. "We were a totally different team at the end of the season than we were at the first game. We were really good at pushing up to pressure the offense [of the other team]. That was a big problem."

Seniors will fuel this team next year, and they hope once again to make a run for States.

FIELDHOCKEY

# Baigert emphasizes defense for wins

By Jon Dunn

Opinion Editor

Two rainbows contrasted against the dark, ominous clouds on Tuesday, November 4. The Field Hockey team, ranked eighth in its league, was battling Enfield High School, ranked seventh, at the State Class M Tournament. Unfortunately, the Blue Wave struggled during the game, causing them to lose 0-2. "Our timing was off. Our game couldn't quite click. It was a hard way to end the season — you win you go on, you lose you don't," said assistant coach Suzanne Falcone.

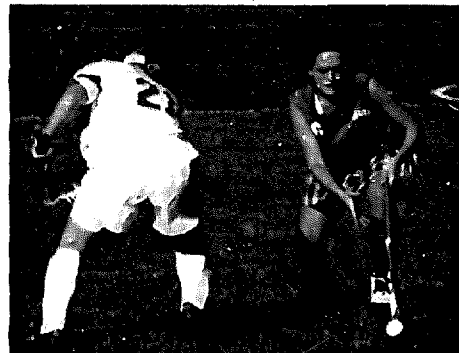
Enfield scored first in less than five minutes from the start of the game. After a brief delay due to lightning, the squad attempted to regain their composure. "We were hoping it would give us a fresh start, but we just didn't come together," said Falcone. As the game continued, the DHS girls could not rally to overcome their opponent. "We couldn't get the job done. Enfield capitalized on that. Our frustration showed," said Falcone. Senior co-captain Sam Drimal said, "This was not one of our better games. They came out stronger in the first half — that killed us. As a whole we didn't play as good a game as we should have. Enfield was a beatable team."

The Blue Wave lacked communication between the defense and the offense on the field, which partly led to

their defeat. "We didn't leg down, but we didn't communicate very well," said Drimal. Falcone added that "we could get our defense into place, but our lack of transitions and communication between the defense and the offense contributed to the loss. We could get the ball up there [near the goal], but we couldn't reach the goal."

The field hockey team's record for this season was 10-7. "Looking back on the season, we kept improving. We had young players who kept gaining more experience. It was a slow start, but we kept playing better each game. We kept working together," said Drimal. After losing many key players to graduation, the team was able to recover well. "We had a young team, but we look forward to many returning players. Next year these players will have more experience," said Falcone.

Coach Pam Baigert's attempts to improve the team's performance through strengthening the defense were successful. "The defense system turned out really well," she explained. "It changed our game around. At first it was hard adjusting, but after a few games it worked out well. The defense was an effective point of our team. The defense was very strong in the corners." Goalie Ashley Charron also contributed to the powerful defense. Out of 24 attempted goals (in 17 games), Charron had 108 saves. "Ashley is an incredibly hard worker.



Lindsay Caruso helped power the Wave to post-season success

She is mentally tough and knows what to work on. Ashley always wants to get better," said Falcone.

<b>DARIEN</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>ENFIELD</b>	<b>2</b>

The offense was also very strong. Sophomore Lesley Walsh was the lead scorer, with eleven goals and two assists. She was followed by junior Abby Tracy with seven goals and three assists. Senior Erin Moore

had seven assists. Sophomore Chrissy Nevins-Herbert was also a prominent player. "She makes things happen, she feeds the ball well to the corners," said Assistant Coach Falcone.

"We had a fantastic season! Not only did we have a good record, but our team work improved incredibly from last season. All the players were effective and gave 100% effort to each game," said Drimal.

# Injury plagues lady striders

By Audrey Drosch

Editorial Associate

The Girls' Cross-Country team, or what was left of it by the end of the season, made strides at the Class M State Championships at Wickham Park on Saturday, October 25. Braving a driving rain, the small but devoted band of girls relentlessly carried on with the same spirit that they had been demonstrating all season to achieve an eighth place finish, an improvement over last year's tenth place showing.

What could have given the nucleus of this team, so riddled with injury and heart-break, the stamina to beat all the odds and carry on? The answer lies quite possibly in the two members for whom the race would be a grand finale to many long years of cross-country running. Senior co-captains Vanessa Fjellidal and Nina Henderson knew that the Class M meet would be the last of their careers; thus, they strove to end on a victorious note, both improving their times from last year's Class M meet and placing 38 (19:07) and 42 (19:47) respectively. Said Fjellidal, "The mud made it harder than ever before, but we knew that



Senior Jen Bosich shined in her final season for Darien

we had to finish well for the team and for Norrie." Coach Norris, who has been coaching some team members such as Fjellidal as long as five years, remarked that "All the seniors improved. It was rough weather, bad conditions. I am very proud of how we did."

Freshman Katie Thomas, in her debut performance at a State meet, was in her usual top form, placing 28 in the highly competitive field with a time of 18:36. Junior Jessica Calvey was 85 in time with a time of 20:24, freshman Linet Martin saw a season best at 22:54 (114th), and sophomore Elizabeth Anderson bracketed the Blue Wave

Continued on page 5

BOYS SOCCER

# State dreams crushed in second round for soccer

By Jeff Watson  
Staff Writer

The Boys' soccer team didn't win every game this year; they didn't win a State title or even make it to the championship game, but according to Senior Captain Carter Sainz "This season went really well, everyone worked hard and we worked well as a team."

The final game of the season brought on Staples a team which found themselves in the exact same position as Darien. If the game resulted in a tie, both teams would be in the State Tournament; if either team lost, their season would be over. Neither team was willing to back down, and playing for a tie was out of the question. The Wave was nervous going into the game but they certainly weren't nervous afterward,

as they dominated the Wreckers and left the field victorious 1-0. Sean Devlin tallied the lone goal with 15:35 remaining and again Darien's defense stood strong, finishing the season with a shutout. This victory sent the Wreckers home early for the first time in 38 years, and that couldn't have made the Wave any happier. "This game was one of the best we've had all year we really dominated them" was what Carter Sainz had to say about this victory.

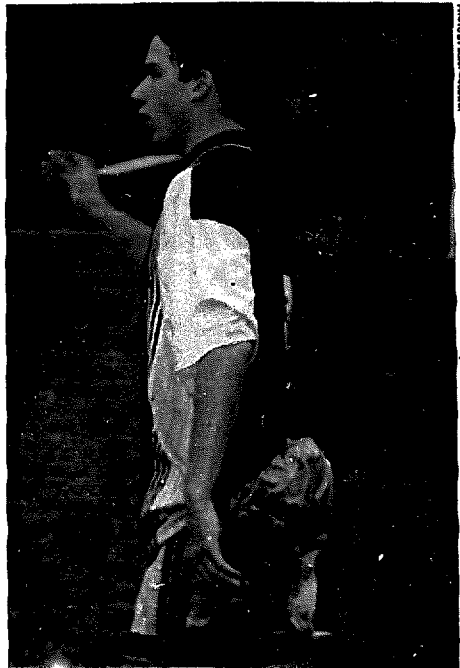
Momentum was on the Blue Wave's side and they were ready for the best teams in Class M. The eighteenth-seeded Wave drew fifteenth

seed Ellington in the first round. Both teams came into the game expecting a war and the weather added to this battle feeling, as torrential rains turned the field into a battleground of mud. During the first half, both teams fought each other and the elements trying to grab the early lead. The Wave's play was streaky at best, but Ellington was not much better as both teams entered halftime deadlocked at 0-0. The Wave came out ready in the second half crashing on Ellington and dominating much of the play. Despite this domination, Ellington was able to launch a quick

counterattack and they opened up the scoring with a goal coming in the last fifteen minutes. The Wave had not been sunk yet though. They continued to battle valiantly, putting pressure on the Ellington keeper. The Blue Wave's fighting spirit finally showed through as Ryan Parker beat the Ellington keeper with a shot from a very difficult angle. At the end of regulation the score was 1-1. The game went into sudden-death overtime and soon both teams were back on the field slugging it out once again. The teams pressured each other's net in overtime yet the score remained 1-1 in the last minute. At

that point Darien had time for at least one more attack and attack is what they did. The midfield pushed the ball up the field and soon Ryan Parker found himself in the middle of another scoring chance. This time he sent the ball in the air to Sean Devlin, who headed the ball into the back of the net to give the Wave the victory in the final seconds of overtime. After their first round upset, the Wave found themselves going up against second seeded North Branford. Branford had lost only once before, and the Wave hoped that they could add a second loss to their record. From the opening whistle the Wave showed North Branford that they would not go down easy. They launched several assaults on the Thunderbirds net that nearly resulted in goals. At halftime the score remained 0-0. The second half was more of the same, as both teams found themselves stalemated. North Branford could not be contained though; they finally punched home the game winner with about ten minutes remaining. The Blue Wave left the field for the final time after this game, but all was not a loss. "This was probably our best game, we really played well" said goalie Jay Maupin.

As this season comes to a close a great deal of hope can be placed on next season. Despite losing the leadership of seniors Charlie Chacos, Carter Sainz, Scott Goodwin, and Bobby Daly, the Wave will return



James Bealer celebrates Darien's State playoff victory over Ellington

nine starters, including All-FCIAC performers James Bealer and Jay Maupin. The Wave can also look forward to strong play from Leigh Parsons, Ryan Parker, Jeff Jones,

Leonard Linnet, Sean Devlin, Carlos Penny, Brian Clark, and Jeff Watson. Greg Visi, Coulter Lewis, Nick Rohs and Mike Meurer will also look to play a big role next year.

<b>DARIEN</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>N. BRANFORD</b>	<b>1</b>

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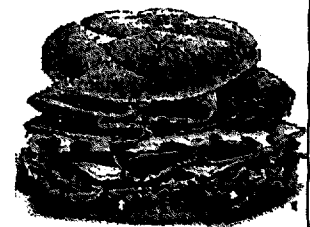
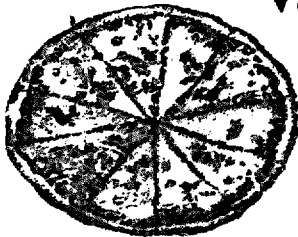
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# ATHLETE Profile

## Elizabeth McIntyre makes waves at international synchro competition

By Noreen Gillespie

Editor-In-Chief

Synchronicity is something that is key to success in sophomore Elizabeth McIntyre's life, from the nature of her sport to having to be in three places at the same time.

And short of dividing herself into multiple pieces, McIntyre has come pretty close to being just about everywhere at all times this fall, juggling a varsity sport, and, in her spare time, training for an international synchronized swimming competition, The Slovakia National Championship, held November 10-17 in Slovakia.

The competition, comparable to the US Open, will include twelve international teams including the best of the national teams from Russia, Sweden, and Egypt, among others. McIntyre, who competes with the New Canaan Aquinas, will travel as the United States representative with her team and attempt to claim the championship.

"We've done a lot of preparation," said McIntyre, whose usual schedule involves practice daily until at least 7:15p.m., including weight work, water work, and with the approaching competition, mental training. Sara and Karen Josephson, 1992 Olympic Gold Medalists, have been training the squad for the mental challenge of international competition. "We've trained for this competition as if it were the Olympics," said McIntyre. McIntyre cites the two, who have also trained the 1996 Olympic Gold Medalists, as "Great. They have basically made us feel like we've already had the swim of our lives. We've been ready to swim this meet for weeks now, we know exactly what to expect when we swim."

The Josephson sisters have instilled in the girls just how important synchronicity is, even down to their mental attitudes. "Before each performance, we all hold hands and take a breath together so that we're synchronized even in that respect," McIntyre said. "Everything, even down to our hand movements and facial expressions, has to be identical. It's important that we are totally in sync."

The routine, performed to a Russian theme accompanied by music from *The Hunt for Red October*, was choreographed by the girls by first choosing the music, then the elements. "When we choose a piece of music for a swim, we'll play the music, then just go out and try different things in

coaches sit us down and said, 'If you want to go to Slovakia, you can't speed swim,' which a lot of us had a problem with. We have two freshmen from New Canaan High School on the team, and we argued that especially as a freshman, you need something to help you fit in at school."



Elizabeth McIntyre (second from front) performs with teammates from the New Canaan Aquinas.

the water. You have to see yourself swimming to music, otherwise it won't work," McIntyre explains. Both the music selection and the choreography are a team effort, mixed with a little acting for a dramatic effect during the performance.

While the grueling mental and physical regime for synchro has consumed much of McIntyre's time, she has also managed to become a strong force on the varsity swimming and diving team, a heated conflict with McIntyre's coaches in New Canaan. "It's really hard," said McIntyre. "When we started training for this competition, our

After several discussions, McIntyre's coaches allowed the girls to compete in both sports, but under the condition that synchro came first. This requirement came to a painful realization for McIntyre when she was forced to pull out from Class S State Championships, after qualifying in dual events, in favor of training for Slovakia.

"I've tried to balance the two the best that I can," said McIntyre, who finished her speed swimming season with a lifetime best performance in the 200 freestyle at FCIAC finals. "I've probably weighted synchro a little more, but I know

that this is a once in a lifetime opportunity, and I have to take it."

"With the time management that I have to have to balance them, synchro has made me grow up a little more," said McIntyre. Since beginning national competition in the sixth grade, she has been balancing school, synchro, and social commitments, and between the three, has managed to chalk up an impressive resume. Over the past five years McIntyre and her team have acquired several Junior National and National Age Group finalist rankings, and most recently, a third place Age Group national finish, qualifying the squad to compete in Slovakia. McIntyre was also elected as the regional representative for the United States Swimming National Aquatic Convention held in California this past October.

These achievements, however, have not come without sacrifice. For McIntyre, social aspects that revolve around school are few and far between. "My teammates are my best friends," she said. "We are so united as a team—there's no other team that I've been on that has that feeling. Our coaches get annoyed with us because we talk so much about what goes on at school that we're not focused on the water. I don't get to hang out with people from school, but it's okay because the people on my team understand me in ways that everyone else doesn't," she said. "In sixth grade, I went to all the parties and was in the 'cool group.' But after awhile, when everyone began to realize that every time they'd call to invite me somewhere, I couldn't go, they stopped calling," she reflects. "It's hard to be able to balance school stuff when I'm in the water so much."

Outside of her competition, McIntyre also coaches the sport in the summer at Tokeneke, where she first discovered her love for the sport at the age of ten. "Coaching is so rewarding," she says. "It's great that these kids are starting so young. It's easier when you are younger to do a sport that everyone else isn't doing. But it's a great experience."

### CREW

## Crew earns respect with solid finish

By Craig Currier

Staff Writer

The boys' and girls' crew teams both completed strong seasons in the month of October. "It was a really good season," said junior rower Christine Maddox, "We finished well in all of our races."

The girls' team started out the month of October with a third place finish at the Head of the Norwalk regatta on October 4. A week later at the Head of the Schuykill they finished 14. The next day they finished 12 at the Head of the Connecticut.

On October 19, the team traveled to the St. Charles River to face up against some of the strongest competition in the country. They finished in last place, but it was still a respectable showing for the only public high school in the race. Crew is one of the few teams at Darien that goes up against some of the top teams in the nation.

The boys' team also closed out

their season with top place finishes. "We were a lot more competitive this year than last year," said sophomore crew member Matt Drewes.

The boys' team started out the month with the Head of the Connecticut on October 12 where they placed 14. The next weekend they were at the Head of the St. Charles, which, just like the girls' race, included some of the toughest competition in the nation. The boys' team placed 27 out of 33 boats at the Head of the St. Charles. And to finish the season, on October 25, the boys finished 10 at the Head of the Schuykill.

Although team members were pleased with their performance this season as Maddox said, "It is hard not being in FCIAC and State Tournaments."

The crew team spends the winter in the weight room preparing for another successful spring. "We'll work hard and hope to come back even stronger next season," stated Drewes.

## GIRLS' CROSS COUNTRY

Continued from page 3

with a 127 place finish in 25:13.

As for senior co-captain Jen Bosich, who has been the keystone of the cross-country team since her freshman year, she enjoyed her usual top team position, garnering a 13 place finish overall in 17:47, good enough to qualify her for the State Open meet and a considerable improvement over her FCIAC performance. "Jen was the eleventh FCIAC finisher [in the Class M meet]," explained Norris. "We were pleased to be able to send her to the State Open meet."

At State Opens, held again at Wickham Park on Friday, October 31, Bosich bested her time, slicing it to 17:23. Unfortunately, this led only to an 89 place finish, which, while certainly excellent, was a disappointment to both her and Coach Norris. "I may have trained her too hard [the week leading up to the State Open meet]," offered Coach Norris as explanation for why Bosich did not perform up to expectation. "We had hard practices Monday and Tuesday. Otherwise, the weather was good, the course was certainly clearer than on the 25th."

However, Bosich is not quite ready to hang up her flats. She and Thomas will be joining some of the finest young barriers in the region to compete in the Junior Olympics on November 16 at Bryant College in Rhode Island. The Junior Olympics is an honor unprecedented in Bosich's long and distinguished cross-country career, but she says it is not what will make her senior season stand out in her mind for years to come. "This year our team was really close," she stated. "We got each other through some hard times, with people leaving the team for injuries and other reasons. We stayed close-knit, and that is what made the team special for me."

### NEIRAD SPORTS PROFILE



ELIZABETH MCINTYRE

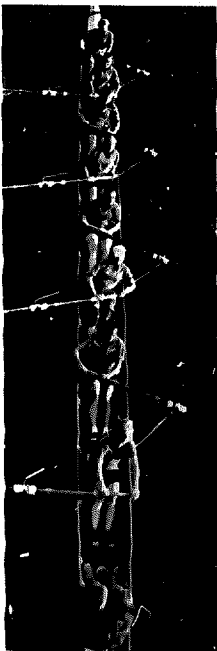


Photo: Noreen Gillespie

# IT'S OVER:

*For Darien volleyball dynasty, no streak means less pressure*

By Tracy Smith  
Feature Editor

One of the state's great winning streaks came to a close when the Bunnell Bulldogs defeated the Darien Blue Wave in a close 3-2 match.

The loss marks the end of a five year streak that started in 1992 after Guilford beat the Wave in a crushing 3-0 match in the second round of the state championships.

"It was a disappointment. There were a

**"The school has not seen us after a loss, and we wanted to make sure they knew that we were just like any other team. We still have Blue Wave Pride."**

Lana Bodach

lot of tears shed, but it is something we can learn from and just take something from it," said senior Lana Bodach.

"I was kind of surprised that we lost because we were trying so hard," said sophomore Sarah Orr, "But to lose two games and come back to win the second two is amazing."

Early in the season Darien almost lost to a tough St. Joe's team, losing the first two games but managing to go pull out a win in

the end. Likewise at Stamford, Darien dropped two games. But Bunnell, close in the past two State tournaments, was too tough and managed to do what no team in 121 games could do: win.

"We have to give them a lot of credit because they played an awesome game," said Orr, and she is right. Bunnell's Sarah Kattinger, known throughout the state as one of the best senior volleyball players, overwhelmed the Wave with 36 kills and 26 digs. She added to her total of a 1,542 kills in the four years on the Bulldog team. She and Bunnell took advantage of the opportunities Darien gave them.

Even though Bunnell was strong, the Wave with sharper play could have won. The team made uncharacteristic mistakes. Darien couldn't put the ball away. Long rallies resulted in many Bunnell points. The Wave was also caught in some miscommunications. Four times the ball dropped in the middle of the court as the girls watched for the other to make a play.

Did the streak hurt the team's play? It certainly put pressure on the players and could have made for some tight nerves, but "Coach LaRusso prepared us for everything," Orr commented. No one blamed the loss on the streak. In fact, some may be glad the streak is no longer a focus. "We don't have to worry about having the media completely focusing on us. They won't be expecting us to be perfect," said Orr.

Sweet revenge for the Bulldogs? The past two years Darien has beaten Bunnell in the state finals in dramatic comebacks. But this year it was not to be. Even though overjoyed with what they had done, Bunnell coach Dave Jockle praised Darien's program in all the local papers. "They are



Bunnell's Sarah Kattinger (23) killed the Blue Wave's streak, posting a career high 36 kills against the Wave. Kattinger is considered to be the best player in the state.

what we want to be, eventhough we beat them. They are still the model program for the rest of the state."

Monday, just two days after the loss, could have been a day of self-pity and fingerpointing. But says Bodach of her team's character, "We wore our

jackets to school to show that even in a loss we could hold our heads up high. The school has not seen us after a loss, and we wanted to make sure they knew that we were just like any other team. We still have Blue Wave Pride."

## SWIMMING AND DIVING

# Class S runner-up a team effort from swimmers and divers

*Mattison shatters school, FCIAC, state, and Open record in a brilliant championship run*

By Noreen Gillespie  
Editor-in-Chief

Coach Jeff Allen and the swimming and diving team sat down before Class S Championships and decided that something was missing.

It was something that had been present in the years before, perhaps unknown to a relatively young squad; something that was imperative to swimming fast and ultimately, something that would decide the outcome of the Class S Swimming and Diving Championship.

"No one could put their finger on it, but they knew something was wrong," said Allen.

But come Wednesday's finals, it was a different picture.

Fifteen swimmers, decked in blue and white face paint and touting a blaring radio behind them, the team made quite an entrance at Watertown High School, letting everyone know that Darien High School had arrived—and was ready to swim. They had found the missing piece—excitement.

"Somehow, somewhere, somehow, the team came together with a focus," said Allen. "We put on quite a show. I was very proud of

everyone for coming together like that, especially since we are a relatively young team."

Although four-time Class S Champion Wilton took off with the meet from the starting relay, the Blue Wave squad made them work for it. The Wave clocked several season and lifetime best times in a number of events from start to finish, something that Allen attributes to support. "We really had nothing on the line," he said. "We placed a solid second. But everyone was involved in every event—it's a magical thing when you have 29 girls standing behind a swimmer on the block. That made a difference."

Star-studded performances came from Lauren Dudley, who swam the 200 freestyle in 1:57.21 for a second place finish, then continued with the 500 freestyle in 5:23.48, third place. Both swimmers were All-State finishes for Dudley. Tri-Captain Katie Hawes also showed how it was done with a third place 100 freestyle (36.08), chalking up another All-State bid for the Wave. Her sister Maggie Hawes also had an All-State swim for Darien, with a third place finish in the 100 backstroke (1:03.12).

Kelly Dearnio turned in solid

performances for Darien as well, with a lifetime best in both the 100 and 50 freestyles. Whitney Hooper scored points with seasonal bests in the 200 freestyle and 100 butterfly; Katherine Thelin turned in bests in the 50 freestyle and 100 butterfly; and Lyn Marie Cocchiaro and Danielle Claibourne rounded out the final heat in the 100 breaststroke with respective fifth and sixth places. Christine Rongoe placed sixth in the 100 backstroke, and had a solid finish in the 200 individual medley.

All three relay teams posted improved times at Wednesday's finals. The 200 medley of Hawes, Thelin, Cocchiaro, and Dearnio finished in third, (1:56.51); the 200 freestyle relay of Thelin, Dudley, K.Hawes and Hooper was also third (1:42.89); and the 400 relay of Dearnio, K.Hawes, Dudley, and Hooper was third in 3:44.40.

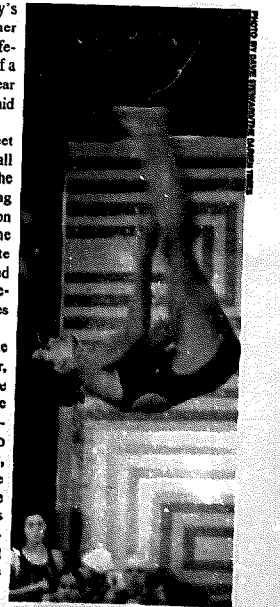
"The success of the season can really be measured by these relays," said Allen. "In our 400 relay, we started at 3:59. To come down that much in one season is awesome."

Wednesday's momentum carried into Saturday's state Opens, where swimmers from Hooper, Dudley, K.Hawes, M. Hawes, and the relay teams all posted season bests for the

second time that week. Dudley's 200 freestyle (1:55.27) broke her own school record and was a lifetime best. "That was the result of a year of frustration and another year of total commitment from her," said Allen. "It was incredible."

Yet the epiphany of the meet perhaps came that evening, after all the swims had concluded, with the diving competition. Surmounting three years of defeat and frustration at this competition, Katherine Mattison not only took the State Open Championship, but shattered the previous Open record and defeated rival Liz Ackerman of Staples in the process.

Mattison's victory marks the last bridge in her high school career, as she has set every record possible to be set by a high school diver in the state of Connecticut. "She has established herself as the best diver to come through the school, the county, and the state," said Allen, "and she didn't just win, she annihilated the competition. The last three years she's fallen short every time. Anyone else would have given up—but Katherine is an example of fortitude and courage for pulling through."



Katherine Mattison: DHS's diving superstar