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THE WEEK IN SPORTS

Sports Section
Pages 11-16

RINALDI WHACKS 3-RUN TRIPLE IN FOURTH INNING

WF White Plates 9 in Fourth To Defeat Raider 11s, 13-2

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

Baseball has been described as a "Game of Inches" many times. An inch one way or the other could be the difference between a call of "strike three" or a call of "ball four." One inch of visual distance could influence a call of "out" or "safe" on a crucial play and one inch can make the difference in a call of "fair" or "foul" that could result in runs scored or no runs scored.

But that is the game of baseball and the Westfield White 11-year-old team seized many opportunities to plate nine runs in the fourth inning to earn a 13-2 victory over Scotch Plains-Fanwood at Gumbert Field in Westfield on July 3.

"Our guys played really well against a very, very good Scotch Plains team. The next time, it could go either way. That one inning was key. Anything can happen! At this level, walks and extra outs can kill you. You can

take advantage of those when you are on offense. You can string some runs together and break a game open. We did that today," Westfield Head Coach Joe Rinaldi said.

Westfield White pitchers Nick Mele and Brett Robertshaw combined to allow six hits and only one hit batter, while striking out three Raiders. Raider starting pitcher Connor McSherry walked none and yielded eight of the Blue Devils' 11 hits in his

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15



SLIDING SAFELY INTO HOME PLATE...Jeff Sirdashney slides safely into home in the third inning to give the Raiders a 2-0 lead over Elizabeth en route to a 5-1 victory.

DLUGOSZ TOSSES THREE-HITTER, FANS 5, WALKS 3

Raiders Top Minutemen, 5-1, In American Legion Baseball

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

Pitcher Alan Dlugosz tossed a three-hitter and walked only three, while striking out five, as the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Senior American Legion baseball team silenced the Minutemen of Elizabeth, 5-1, in Scotch Plains on July 2.

The 6-2 Raiders executed a fine "Small Ball" system, taking advantage of four successful bunts to move runners into scoring position, to win their fifth straight game, dating back to June 25 with a 3-2 victory over Westfield.

Dlugosz, who did not record a strikeout until the third inning and ceded all three of his walks by the fourth inning, picked up steam and confused the Minutemen batters the rest of the way, allowing just one single.

"Honestly, my stuff all year really hasn't been there. It just seems like a couple of starts ago I got my confidence and I was able to throw a changeup and a curveball for a strike. So, in the middle innings, that was what I was able to do,"

Dlugosz said. "We (catcher Kyle Berwick) had a good connection going. It seems like we are on the same page most of the time."

"He's one of the guys, who is trying to fight for a (varsity) job next year and get into the rotation. Today, he threw pretty well. His fastball was working and he mixed in some curveballs and a couple of changeups. He had some pop on his fastball. He's not a strikeout pitcher but he hit his spots and made them put the ball in

play, and we played some pretty good defense behind him," Raider Head Coach Tom Baylock said. "Once he gets more confident, I think he's going to turn into a pretty good pitcher."

Raider Mike Lauricella pulled off two successful sacrifice bunts, while teammates Ryan Haggerty and Connor Thompson added one each, all leading to Raider runs. John Howarth, who went 2-for-2, slapped a key RBI single after one of those

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



GETTING TO THIRD BEFORE THE BALL...Raider Connor McSherry, No. 7, beats the ball to third base in the first inning as Blue Devil third baseman Brett Robertshaw reaches for the ball.

ELLIOTT WHACKS 2 HRs, CATANAZARO CRACKS ONE

Cougar 12s Nip Westfield Blue In Ripken Tournament, 11-9

By FRED LECOMTE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Cranford showed its moxie by jumping on Blue Devil pitching in the first three innings for an early 10-run uprising that led to an 11-9 victory over Westfield Blue 12s in the Cal Ripken District 12 baseball tournament at Gumbert Field in Westfield on July 3.

Blue Devil pitchers Matt Russo, Mike Prosek and Sean Elliott combined to limit Cranford to 10 hits and four walks, while striking out six, but Cougar Brian Bruns caused commotion with a solo home run and a single. Mike Catanazaro tripled, singled and scored a run. Andrew Gee, Matt Raveter, Kevin Trotter, Sean Duffy, Austin Bevizaque and James Campbell all contributed singles. Cougar infielders Bevizaque and Mike Welrus threw runners out heading to first and initiated a slick double play in the sixth.

"Our pitching was strong and consistent even though their batters were putting the ball in play. They hit a lot of hard line drives; they were challenging balls and we were forced to make the plays in the field, so from Cranford's perspective, the defense

really kept us in the game today. The hitting speaks for itself. We're a solid hitting team and as for the pitching, if the guys are throwing strikes and they're not walking, we're a pretty solid team," said Cranford Head Coach Anthony Bevizaque.

Westfield mounted a 14-hit assault led by Sean Elliott, who tattooed the ball with two monumental home runs for four RBI. Matt Catanazaro blasted a solo home run and an RBI double. Danny Mitchell and James Brucia each smacked a pair of singles and had an RBI. Mike Prosek tapped a pair of singles, while Kevin Irving, Colin Dursee, Matt Williams and Logan Klier each had one hit. Only one Blue Devil struck out.

Irving, at shortstop, made three key stops for putouts. Centerfielder

Prosek made two fine grabs. Third baseman DoCampo and second

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

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