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**RINALDI LED IN BATTING, HITS, SB; BARMAKIAN RBI**

# Baseball Blue Devils Struggle To Finish with 13-13 Record

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

Stars may not have been quite aligned for this year's Westfield High School baseball team that found itself on the short side of a number of very close scores, but regardless, the Blue Devils managed to finish with an even 13-13 record, which included what could be considered a major upset in the sectional tournament.

Nine of the Blue Devils' losses came with mental collapses that resulted in big innings for the opponents or missed opportunities. Three came at the bats of the Cranford Cougars, who won their first meeting, 7-5, then scored three runs in the bottom of the seventh to win, 3-2, but the most important one came in a 4-2 loss in the quarterfinals of the Union County Tournament. The Cougars went on to win the title.

The Blue Devils also dropped a 6-4 decision to the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Raiders early in the season but beat them later, 13-7. Two close losses were to the Governor Livingston Highlanders, who won their section, defeated Buena in the Group 2 semifinals then won the championship with a 10-4 victory over Bernards. The Blue Devils also lost to Mendhan, 4-3, Bridgewater-Raritan, 7-6, midway through the season and had South Plainfield, the Group 3 champions, on the ropes before dropping a nine-inning classic.

Receiving the 16th seed, the Blue Devils had to face top-seeded Bridgewater-Raritan in the first round of the North Jersey, Section 2, Group 4 Tournament, but this time they tranquilized the Panthers, 5-2, before dropping a 5-1 decision to Edison in the quarterfinals.

Junior shortstop Chris Rinaldi wielded the big bat to lead the Blue Devils with a .413 batting average (BA), hits with 31, walks with 13 and stolen bases with nine. He tied Mike Friel in runs scored with 17 and tied Alex Pansini in doubles with seven. Rinaldi also added a triple, a home run and eight RBI.

Pansini, a pitcher or second baseman, was next in BA at .368, going 25-for-68, with four triples, seven doubles, 12 RBI and 15 runs scored. Pansini was second to Rinaldi in stolen bases with eight. In his 32 innings on the mound, Pansini recorded 25 strikeouts, while walking 10 and hitting three batters, and finished with a 2-3 record.

Friel, a senior, occupied right field and finished the season with a .300 BA with 21 hits, including four doubles and a triple, nine RBI and six stolen bases. Junior leftfielder Chris Barmakian had a .313 BA with 21 hits, including four doubles, two triples and a home run. He led the team with 18 RBI, scored 12 runs and swiped six bases.

Junior catcher Devin Anderson went

19-for-57 with a .333 BA. He whacked six doubles and a home run, scored 12 times and had 11 RBI. Senior designated hitter/second baseman Matt Catanzaro had a .288 BA with 19 hits, including a double, two triples and a home run, scored 10 runs, added seven RBI and stole seven bases.

Senior centerfielder Colin Dursee batted .242 with 15 hits, including two doubles, and had 11 runs scored, four RBI and two stolen bases. Senior third baseman Dan DoCampo produced 18 hits, six RBI and seven runs scored, while swiping a pair of bases. Senior first baseman Mike Tivenan finished with a .271 BA with 16 hits, including a double, 15 RBI and nine runs scored. He also swiped a pair of bases.

Senior pitcher Jack Bunting spent 55 innings on the mound and finished with a 6-4 record, which included 31 strikeouts, five walks and two hit batters. Bunting's biggest victory came in the 5-2 win over top-seeded Bridgewater-Raritan in the first round of the North Jersey, Section 2, Group 4 Tournament.

Senior Ben Herbster finished 2-6 in 39 innings and recorded 46 strikeouts, 29 walks and 12 hit batters. Senior Sean Elliott, in 21.2 innings, recorded a 2-1 record, while striking out 13, walking 12 and hitting 10 batters. Reliever Rowan Oberman, in 11.1 innings, finished 2-2 with five strikeouts and eight walks.



LEADING IN OFFENSE...Blue Devil Chris Rinaldi, right, led the Blue Devils with a .413 batting average, hits with 31, walks with 13 and stolen bases with nine. He also scored 17 runs and rapped seven doubles.



More photos at [goleader.com](http://goleader.com)  
Ballyhoo Sports

ALL-STATE/ALL-AMERICA...Cranford senior Mark Christiano, No. 21, scored 57 goals and added 66 assists this season. Mark Christiano's efforts also landed him on the overall All State/All-America Team.

**MARK CHRISTIANO NAMED ALL-STATE/ALL-AMERICA**

# Cougars Clinched First Ever Section Title in Boys Lacrosse

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

No other Cranford High School boys lacrosse team accomplished what this year's Cougars did. Win their first ever state section title with a 9-4 victory over No. 18 Seneca in the South Jersey, Group 2 championship game. The Cougars also set a team single-season record in wins, finishing 19-3, and also had the most shutouts in a season with three.

"To experience the unprecedented success that we had this season has been a wonderful experience for everyone involved in our program. It is our hope that the experience will be such a positive one that it has far-reaching effects going forward for our future," Cougar Head Coach Al Reinoso said.

The Cougars also lost a competitive game to Westfield (the eventual champion) in the Union County Tournament semifinals and pushed Summit to the limit in the Group 2 finals, losing 8-7. With only one regular-season loss, the Cougars won the Bianchi East League.

According to Coach Reinoso, "[We had] a nice run in the counties before bowing to an outstanding Westfield squad, one of the best overall teams in the state, and without question, a top two or three public school team in the state."

Senior twins Mark and Luke Christiano obviously knew each other very well and proved it on the field with dazzling displays. Mark had a variety of ways to find the net and led the team in total points with 123

points (57 goals, 66 assists), while scooping 47 ground balls. Luke handled the face-offs and led the team with 50 ground balls but also slammed in 46 goals and added 23 assists.

"Without question, our most powerful play was supplied by Mark and Luke. Each of them turned in brilliant senior campaigns and were two of the very best midfielders in the state. Luke's play was both tenacious and dominant, beginning at the face-off where he was one of the best around," Coach Reinoso said. "Both he and Mark were tremendous on ball defenders on the defensive side as well. You had to watch them play to see the uncanny chemistry that they have playing with each other constantly on the field. The two of them could domi-

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