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M. CHRISTIANO NAMED ALL-STATE/ALL-AMERICA, NOTCHES 57 GOALS, ADDS 66 ASSISTS

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, begin-

ning 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 dominate possession time, along with pace and flow of a game."

Luke and Mark received First Team All-Conference and First-Team All-Group 2 recognition and both were selected to play in the Gill Gibbs New Jersey All-Stars Senior Showcase game. Mark's play also landed him on the overall All State/All-America Team, the first ever Cranford player elected to such an honor.

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