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***BLUE DEVILS PIETREWICZ, STOGNER, GAGLIARDI ADD OFFENSE; CR's HEIM 2-RUN HOME RUN***

# Blue Devils Fight Off Cougars in UCT Softball Semifinal, 8-5

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

Rain may have delayed the Union County Tournament (UCT) semifinal showdown between the top-seeded Westfield High School softball team and the fourth-seeded Cranford Cougars at Kean

University in Union on May 7. But one day later at the same location, the Blue Devils stormed home plate with five runs in the fourth inning but needed to shower the plate with more runs in the fifth and sixth innings to fight off the battling Cougars in

an 8-5 victory.

Blue Devil sophomore pitcher Michaela Hobson allowed six hits, while walking no one and striking out seven batters. Cougar sophomore pitcher Morrigan Gardiner also allowed six hits, while walking four, hitting two batters and striking out five.

Underclassmen played a major role in providing the offense for both teams. Junior Julia Gagliardi

and sophomores Emma Pietrewicz and Molly Stogner were instrumental in getting all of the Blue Devils' runs across in the fourth inning. Gagliardi added an RBI in the fifth inning and Pietrewicz singled and scored on Stogner's big double in the sixth.

Cougar sophomore Emma Ingraham rapped a hard RBI double in the second inning to bring home Gardiner's courtesy runner Mia Markase. Sophomore Morgan Heim (2-for-3) hammered a two-run home run in the

fifth inning and Ingraham's difficult blooper into shallow centerfield accounted for both Cougar runs in the sixth inning.

Cougar leadoff hitter Elizabeth McCaffery reached first on a throwing error in the top of the first but Hobson fanned the second batter then got the next two batters to ground out to short-stop Julia Romano. Gardiner walked Blue Devil leadoff hitter Kalea Calugay in the bottom of the inning but buckled down to

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