

MARSAL FIRES 2-HITTER; CORTIZO & ESPERON RBI

R. C. Lion Baseballers Down Union Catholic Vikings, 6-2

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

Ace Nick Nolan turned in a strong pitching performance for the Roselle Catholic High School baseball team and the offense clicked enough to earn a 6-2 victory over Union Catholic at Union County College's Shane Walsh Field in Cranford. Nolan (3-0) struck out eight, walked one and hit six batters. The Vikings collected seven hits but left 14 men on base.

"Our pitchers got off to a bad start with a lot of walks and a lot of runners. The outcome showed that we had more hits than they did but we gave them too many opportunities by walking runners in early," said Viking Head Coach Jim Reagan Jr. "I thought we were very disciplined at the plate and hit the ball pretty well. We got guys on base, had a couple of

walks and a bunch of guys that got hit but we just could not drive in the runs when we needed them."

The 6-3 Vikings threatened in the top of the first inning when leadoff batter Kristian Cortizo triggered a single to opposite field. Matt Oliveto and Chris Whittemore each got hit with a pitch to load the bases. Nolan, however, settled down and retired the side in order.

The 6-2 Lions roared with three runs in the bottom of the inning. Viking starter Steven D'Angelo gave up a single to Mike Canales then lost the strike zone with two walks to load the bases. Three runs scored on Abbondante's RBI single and a bases loaded walk. Coach Reagan decided that was enough and brought in Whittemore. (1-2/3innings, three runs, two hits, one walk, one hit batter).

In the second inning, the Lions added two runs on two hits, including a three-run blast by Mike Canales (2-for-4). The Vikings turned to relief pitcher Anthony Marsal (46 pitches, two hits, no walks), who tamed the Lions with his off-speed stuff, curve balls and very good placement through four innings.

"There was no pressure really," said Marsal. "We're the underdogs. Everyone thought we were going to be shut out today so it was a good thing that we scored two runs."

The Vikings put a run on the scoreboard in the fourth inning when Phil D'Apolito swung at the first pitch and pulled a single to center and scored on Cortizo's single to right field. The Vikings' second run came in the fifth after two infield miscues then Jimmy Thornton, who was hit twice in the game, drove in Chris Esperon with a single.

The Vikings looked for more in the sixth when Esperon blasted a shot that knocked the centerfielder against the fence. The ball, however, caught enough leather, snuffing out the potential two-run homer. The Vikings threatened again in the seventh when designated hitter Tony LaRocca was hit for the second time, Mike Honeyman scorched a single and Thornton got nailed for the second time to load the pods. Marsal, however, poked a bouncer to the first baseman who in turn fired home for a 3-2 fielder's choice. With the bases still loaded the game ended with a grounder to second.

"The effort was there. There was no quit in them and we battled right back against one of the best pitchers in the state. Now we just need to focus on knocking runners in," concluded Reagan.

Union Catholic	000	110	0	2
Roselle Catholic	330	000	x	6

Baseball Vikings Whip Morris Catholic, 15-2

The Union Catholic High School baseball team improved to 7-3 with a 15-2 whipping of Morris Catholic in Scotch Plains on April 21. Kristian Cortizo had a three-run triple and Matt Oliveto cracked a two-run home run.

Softball Vikings Stop South Amboy, 9-6

The Union Catholic High School softball team scored six runs in the second inning and rolled to a 9-6 victory over host South Amboy on April 21. Nicole Palumbo tripled, singled and had two RBI for the 6-3 Vikings, and Nicole Caravano fanned eight and walked two in the win.



Fred Lecomte for The Westfield Leader and The Times
LION TAMER...Viking relief pitcher Anthony Marsal tamed the Lions with his off-speed stuff, curve balls and very good placement through four innings.

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Devil's Den
WHS Swimmers Have Done OK Despite 1958 Snub By Voters



By BRUCE JOHNSON
Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

We are coming up on the 48th anniversary of a day that is a huge black mark on the town of Westfield. On April 29, 1958, the town got to vote on the building of a community swimming pool to substitute for one of the gymnasiums that was going to be built in a new addition after the referendum.

The school was just starting to flex its collective swimming muscles, having just won the first state championship in school history, and the first two county championships in what would become a national record 42-year streak. The only year-round pool in town was the four-lane, 20-yard Rooke Pool at the Westfield YMCA.

Support for a new pool came from many directions. On April 17, the "From the Sidelines" column on *The Westfield Leader's* sports page said it "would be a pity" if the pool was not supported. In a page one story that day, the WHS Booster Club announced it was "overwhelmingly in agreement" with and "vigorously supported" the proposal for a new pool. The Boosters urged that "all citizens interested in the welfare of all our children will vote for the proposed pool on April 29."

And a lead editorial in *The Leader* on April 24 concluded that "we favor the inclusion of a swimming pool rather than an extra gymnasium in the senior building because we feel this will provide an excellent athletic facility and do so at less cost than may ever be possible again." On page 27 of that issue was a full page advertisement headlined "Why a Swimming Pool for Westfield, And What Will It Cost You." It listed 11 reasons to vote for the pool, and concluded that the cost of the pool would not exceed \$125,000 or \$2.23 per \$1,000 of assessed value of a home, a total one-time only cost of approximately \$15 per family (that's \$107.30 in today's economy according to Bureau of Labor statistics).

That ad was signed by such Westfield movers and shakers as Mr. and Mrs. Frank Ketcham, Al Danker, George Plenty, Charles Eddy, Norm Morash, Stan Britten, Archer Sargent, Cudde Davidson, Dick Maxwell, Jerry Bentley, Joe Wiendl, Charles Frankenbach, George Brownell, Dr. Gerald Demarest, Ed Holschuh, Dick Richter, Harry Hinebauch, J.C. Pfeiffer, Dr. J. Pennington Warter, John Ackerman and Mrs. Gordon Booth, among dozens of others.

But on April 29, the voters spoke and by a margin of 844 (3,070-2,226), the swimming pool was turned down, although the voters did give the go-ahead for the addition at the high school and to complete the building of the new Edison Junior High School.

The following week's *Leader* included another full-page "obituary" titled "Eulogy to the Westfield High School Swimming Pool," written by Jerry and Janet Bentley, whose son Terry was captain of the 1958 WHS swim team and would be graduating in another month. It concluded, "we sincerely urge that the next

time this subject comes up for consideration that we all think very carefully about the opportunity and challenge which can so easily offer, or so easily withhold. Our children are always ready for new opportunities... let's not hold them back, deliberately."

That "next time" never came up. And so, exactly what has the WHS swim teams done for the town since that snub by the voters 48 years?

The boys are the winningest team in state history with 714 victories. They've won 20 state championships, the most of any public school. They've captured the Union County championship 52 times in the meet's 55 years, including 42 years in a row from 1957-98. They've had 83 individual state champions (25 more than the next closest team), and 29 relay state champions, a state best; and also two of the school's three Olympians — gold medal diver Bob Clotworthy and swimmer Dave Perkowski.

And the WHS girls have pitched in big-time with nine state titles and 24 county crowns in the girls meet's 29 years, including the last 14 in a row.

Plainfield High School has a pool and so does Elizabeth, the only high schools in Union County with such facilities. Trenton has one, and Atlantic City has a brand new facility. Almost every school in Mercer County has a pool, and most of them were built in the last 20 years as add-ons to the school. Morristown built a huge pool onto its existing high school about 20 years ago, and Montgomery just replaced its old high school with a new one that has a gorgeous swimming pool.

Yet Westfield, the town in New Jersey that is most synonymous with high school swimming, has made its swimmers into vagabonds, practicing at the Y (including over two decades of 5:30-7:30 a.m. workouts before school), the Garden State Swim Club (now Berkeley Aquatic Club) and even evenings at the Watchung Fork home of Grover and Pat Connell.

All thanks to the head-in-the-sand voters on April 29, 1958.

DEN'S HIGH FIVES
For the remainder of the 2005-06 school year, The Den will post weekly Top Five lists, of various things — sports and non-sports — involving WHS and Westfield, maybe even surrounding towns.

This week we'll start with the top five all-time pitching staffs at WHS (not based strictly on won-loss record; and remember, this is just one person's opinion):

1. **1963.** With sophomore Greg Chlan as the No. 5 pitcher, this staff has to be tops. Chlan is arguably the best right-hander to ever pitch at WHS, and reached Triple A level in the early 1970s. Three-year ace Marty Howarth and captain Jim Smith were the mainstays, but juniors Bill Richold and crafty left-hander Dennis Burke were pretty tough too. This group was the main reason rookie coach Norm Koury led WHS to its first Union County Tournament title and an 18-7 record.

2. **1995.** Though not as deep as the '63 group, the big three of Kris Williams, Steve Cheek and Brian Ciemniecki was rather imposing. Williams was 10-1 and later drafted by the Cubs. Cheek was 9-0 and a future NFL punter, while Ciemniecki anchored the staff and did just about everything for a team that went 27-3, most wins in school history.

3. **1987.** This is the only staff that could match 1963's for depth and quality. Clint Factor, Pete Lima, Chuck Mueller, Kevin Stock, Dave Lavender and Kevin Lombardi gave Bob Brewster plenty of arms for the April rainouts. The team went 21-9-1 and won the UCT crown.

4. **1949.** Jack Corbett, Sam Mitchell and Dick Smith split the innings almost completely. Corbett (3-1) went on to star at Michigan. Mitchell (5-0) was a standout at Washington and a future Phillie draftee, while Smith, just a sophomore, went 4-0 as Noel Taylor's club went 14-2 and won the first sectional title in school history. (The team also included future professionals Rudy Stanzel at shortstop and catcher Dave Townley.)

5. (tie) **1966.** You start with Donnie (Big D) Anderson, whose 12-1 record and 0.81 ERA with 134 strikeouts in 103.2 innings was the best single-season ever at WHS, and add sophomore Frank Tokash (who went 40 straight scoreless innings in 1968) and junior Jim Howarth. It's no wonder this team went 22-4 and won the UCT.

5. (tie) **1972.** This staff was so deep that arm problems for aces John Havas (3-0) and Steve Tebbetts (1-0) didn't keep the team from going 18-7. Tom Anderson had four shutouts among his five wins, Art Goldblatt went 5-3, including two wins on one memorable Saturday, while pro draftee Bobby Jester and Linwood Hudson (3-1) completed the group.

EYE-OPENER

How good is the Millburn tennis team? To come to Tamaques Park last Thursday and put a 5-0 goose egg on a very good (but still very young) WHS team was amazing. And the top-ranked Millers followed that up Saturday with another 5-0 win over WHS at the Bryan Bennett Memorial Tournament. WHS knocked off a strong Holmdel squad in the quarterfinals before falling in the semis to eventual champion Millburn.

DID YOU KNOW?

One of the greatest swimmers on one of the greatest athletic teams in New Jersey history was John Ketcham, senior captain of the 1966 Blue Devils. Ketcham was a three-time state champion in the 100 backstroke for WHS. In college at Wesleyan (Conn.), he won three events at the 1969 NCAA Division 2 championships: the 100 (55.62) and 200-yard backstroke (2:01.91), and the 200-individual medley (2:02.28).

The Devil's Den appears Thursday in *The Westfield Leader* during the scholastic sports season. Contact us with comments, suggestions, story ideas or trivia questions at bj1019@aol.com. Go Devils!

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