

Brearley Bears Shut Down Blue Devil Softballers, 2-0

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

Two-hit pitching from junior right-hander Jenna Vitale and timely hitting determined the outcome of the game as the undefeated, 8-0, David Brearley High School softball team edged 4-5 Westfield, 2-0, on April 21 in Westfield. Vitale struck out eight batters and walked one. Amanda Aguire and Hannah LoBello each slapped RBI singles in the fourth.

third and darted to second on the overthrow. Vitale, however, responded with two K's and a ground ball. Brown held the Bears hitless through three innings and allowed only one walk in the first but in the fourth inning, Lisa Reilly tapped a single and Vitale walked. Aguire and LoBello each yanked RBI singles. Urcivoli displayed outstanding hustle in right field resulting in back-to-back run-saving snags to end the inning.

"Jen (Urcivoli) has been getting very hot. She had two game winning hits this week and is doing a really nice job out there," said Pignoli, who added, "Defensively, I'm very pleased. This team is getting better every day. We keep getting ourselves into tight spots, runners in scoring position with less than two outs, and we're finding ways out every time. When we do make a mistake, we don't compound it by making an-



LEADERSHIP ON THE FIELD...Blue Devil first baseman Jenny LaSpata made a number of excellent plays in critical situations against the Bears.

Blue Devil junior Lindsay Brown tossed a six-hitter, sat down nine Bears and walked two. Mary Kate Flannery and Jen Urcivoli delivered the lone hits for the 4-5 Blue Devils.

"Lindsay threw a great game. I think she's very tough. She fell behind the batters a little more than I would want her to but she showed a lot of mental toughness and gave up only a couple of hits. Behind the plate, Jillian Olsen is taking charge and working very well with Lindsay. She had a lot of balls in the dirt but knocked them down, picked them up and threw the runner out," said Blue Devil Head Coach Tara Pignoli.

First baseman Jenny LaSpata made a number of excellent plays in critical situations. "She is showing a lot of leadership on the field, she's very vocal and fields her position with a lot of confidence," said Pignoli.

In the bottom of the first, leadoff hitter Flannery bashed a sizzler past

Sophomore third baseman Erin Scialabba stepped up big when a rocket came down on her in the Bear fifth. Unshaken, she scooped up dirt and ball, held the runner and fired in time to first.

"Every single day she looks a little better and she's getting smarter," noted Pignoli.

Urcivoli rapped a one-out single to right in the bottom of the seventh, but Vitale remained focused and retired the side.

Softball Raiders Clip Lady Cardinals, 6-1

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School softball team upped its record to 8-0 by clipping Kearny, 6-1, in Kearny on April 19. Elaine Piniat fanned 14 Cardinals walked one and allowed just two hits. Lauren Mains went 2-for-3 with two RBI and two runs scored.

other right after. Offensively, we need to get more solid contact on the ball. We need to get the bunts down when we are in that situation and put more pressure on the other team's defense."

Brearley	000	200	0	2
Westfield	000	000	0	0

Blue Devil Nine Level Nwk East Side, 15-1

The Westfield High School baseball team won its sixth straight in dramatic fashion with a 15-1, five-inning victory over 7-3 Newark East Side in Newark on April 19. Brandon Cuba (2-1) tossed a four-hitter while striking out three and walking none.

Alex Zierler had a three-run double and a single and Justin Olsen went 3-for-3, with a solo homer, three runs scored and two RBI. Manny Melendez had two hits and an RBI for East Side.



COMPLETING A TWO-RUN HOMER...Raider Adam Perez slides safely over the plate to complete a two-run home run in the fifth inning against the Kearny Cardinals.

PEREZ BLASTS 2-RUN HR, BELL BELTS RBI TRIPLE Kearny Cardinals Strike Out SP-F Raider Baseballers, 8-4

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

Eric Valdez recorded 13 strikeouts and yielded six hits, while walking only one, to improve his record to 4-0 in Kearny's 8-4 victory over the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School baseball team at Park Middle School Field in Scotch Plains on April 19.

Adam Perez whacked a two-run home run and Jeff Bell thumped an RBI triple for the 4-5 Raiders. John Cox drilled a double and scored, Joe Cepparulo had an RBI single, Mike Rusin had a bunt single and scored, and Dave Belford tapped a single.

The 7-3 Cardinals tagged Raider pitching for 12 hits, including a pair of triples from Evan McCourt (3-for-4, 3 RBI, 2 runs scored, 1 stolen base), and a triple from Alfredo Echevestre (2-for-3, 2 runs scored). Catcher Anthony Pelicaro had a pair of RBI singles.

Blue Devil Nine Rout Piscataway, 11-5

The Westfield High School baseball team won its seventh straight game by routing Piscataway, 11-5, in Westfield on April 21. Mike Murray went 2-for-3 and smacked a two-run home run in the first inning. Mike Diaz whacked a solo homer in the sixth.

Raider starting pitcher Greg Bayard fanned five Cardinals, walked four and allowed eight hits in his five innings on the mound and reliever Josh Decker gave up four hits and three runs in his two innings. However, common with a team that fields only one returning varsity starter, mistakes were made - a balk, passed ball, a hit catcher's glove that resulted in a free pass and some miscommunication on pickoff plays - that cost runs.

"Young mistakes! Josh comes in the sixth inning, throws a little changeup. The kid pops it up to centerfield. We don't catch it. The next batter there's catcher's interference. Next batter we throw the pickoff play away. We had a passed ball. We did some silly things today. Against a good team, you can't do that," said Raider Head Coach Tom Baylock.

Valdez was so effective keeping the Raider batters off-balance that five of his strikeouts came via call of strike three. The Raiders did, however, tag him somewhat in the second inning but were far more successful in the fifth.

The Cardinals put together three singles to score a run in the top of the first, then added another run in the second when Echevestre tripled and scored on a passed ball. In the Raider second, Cox drilled his double down

the right-field line and scored on Cepparulo's poke to right.

In the fifth, the Cardinals took advantage of a balk, a walk, a muffed pickoff attempt and an error to go with their two hits to add three runs. But the Raiders answered when Rusin laid down his bunt single, Bell cracked his RBI triple to right and, with nobody out, Perez followed with his two-run shot over the leftfielder's head to cut the Cardinals' lead to 5-4. Valdez fanned the next three batters.

McCourt smacked a two-run triple and Pelicaro dropped an RBI single to put the Cardinals ahead 8-4 in the sixth. Valdez struck out the side in the sixth and fanned two of the three batters he faced in the seventh.

"He pitched against us last year. He is probably one of the best pitchers in our area," said Baylock. "Our reputation precedes us. We get a lot of the number one's (pitchers). He's gotten a lot better from last year. He was able to pitch a lot of strikes. He was throwing his fastball. He was throwing his curveballs, sliders, changeups. He threw anything he wanted to for strikes. He kept us off-balance but we did a decent job on a couple of bats, keeping our swings small and making contact but it wasn't good enough."

Kearny	110	303	0	8
Sc. Pl.-Fanwood	010	030	0	4

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