

MINEO BLASTS 3-RUN HOMER; ANTOINE, PEREZ, 2 RBI

Raiders' Defense Collapses, Gives East Side, 16-9, Victory

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

Leading 8-3 after three innings, the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School baseball team suffered a defensive collapse that yielded eight runs in the fourth inning and another five in the fifth as the visiting 7-2 Newark East Side, team seized a 16-9 victory in a rain shortened game on April 25.

"We kicked the ball around a little bit the first couple of innings and gave them the three runs but then, in that fourth inning, it seemed as if we couldn't get an out. I believe we made about six errors. The bleeding kept coming and coming and we could not stop it," said Raider Head Coach Tom Baylock. "The same thing happened again in the following inning. We gave them a bunch of runs and we just could not stop it. We made errors over and over during the length of the game but never that many during a short period of time. For whatever reason, we lost concentration and could not make the big play and help our pitchers get out of an inning. When we did make good pitches, we made the error and it seem to be that type of a pattern. After that big inning, we completely shut down and the air came out of us. Eastside got all the life, they got the momentum and they ran with it," said Baylock."

Starting pitcher Greg Bayard (1-3) gave up eight runs on six hits, struck out four and walked two. John Mineo hammered a three-run homer, Adam Perez went 2-for-2, including a two-run double. Joe D'Annunzio tripled

and singled. Jeremy Antoine rapped a two-run single and a sacrifice fly and Nick Bonadies contributed two singles.

The 4-5 Raiders loaded the bases in the first but failed to score. East Side took a 2-0 lead in the second. Gilberto Ortiz doubled, Jose Benitez singled and Carles Perry rapped a two-run double.

The Raiders put five runs on the board in the bottom of the inning. Joe D'Annunzio blasted a triple to left and scored on Ricky Shevlin's sacrifice fly ball to center. Perez sliced a single and swiped second. Antoine ripped an RBI single to right and swiped a bag. Dinizo struck out but advanced to first when the ball was dropped. Mineo stepped up to the dish and drilled his three-run homer over the left-center field fence to give the Raiders an 5-2 lead.

"I had a man on first and third, so I was looking to get a single. He gave me a fast ball inside on the first pitch, I turned on it and aired it out over the fence," said Mineo. "It's number one. Hopefully, I can keep it going. I would have had two but there wasn't a fence in the game in Sayerville, so I ended up with a double and a triple."

In the top of the third, East Side added a run on a single by Jeremy Lorenzo and an RBI double by Ivan Rodriguez. The Raiders added three runs in the bottom of the third. Bonadies and Kevin Maroney each singled to center and D'Annunzio worked a walk. Bonadies crossed home plate on a fielder's choice and Shevlin reached first on an infield

miscue. Perez clocked a two-run, bases loaded double to left.

The lead was cut short when the Red Raiders keyed by Jeremy Lozano's three-run blast rallied with eight runs in the fourth, six of them unearned, to take an 11-8 lead.

"We started playing sloppy baseball, making error after error and we couldn't get a single out. They would get hits through the hole and then the big home run," said Mineo.

In the fifth, East Side took advantage of several fielding errors and a hit batsman to add five runs. Rodriguez singled and Sepulveda tapped a two-run single. Later, three more Red Raiders scored.

The SPF Raiders added a run in the fifth when D'Annunzio led off with a sharp single. Shevlin and Perez worked a walk to load the pods and Antoine lifted an RBI sacrifice to right. Dinizo walked to load the bases; however, Perry who took the mound in relief, slammed the door with back-to-back strikeouts.

"We played these guys before, lost a close one so we wanted revenge and beat them. We came out very strong. They got a couple of runs but we fought back with a bunch of runs. That was the confidence for us right from there but we just can't make that many errors in a short time," concluded Mineo. "I think we'll put this one behind us. We'll come out hard the next game and get back on a winning streak."

East Side	021 85	16
Sc. Pl.-Fanwood	053 01	9



STEPPING UP THE TRANSITION GAME...Senior Tri-captain Mary Kate Luker brings plenty of leadership, team balance and a physical presence to the Blue Devil team.

MACDONALD HITS 3; BENNETT, BRUNHOFFER 2 EACH

West Morris Laxers Slide By Blue Devil Lady Laxers, 12-7

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

Jori Procaccini steered a balanced attack with five goals in West Morris's 12-7 victory over the Westfield High School girls' lacrosse team at Kehler Stadium in Westfield on April 26. The Blue Devil defense played well and goalie Michelle Zaffuto came up big, halting 14 shots, several impressively, but the Wolfpack's shooters kept constant pressure.

Blue Devil Allison MacDonald finished with three goals, while Claire Bennett and Lauren Brunhofer clicked with two goals each against the 5-3 Wolfpack who was paced by Procaccini. Jenna Scheibling dished out three assists and keeper Michelle Kennedy made three saves.

"They should be very proud of themselves. They played like a team," said Westfield Head Coach Caroline Francht. "We talked a lot about the midfield players marking tight and taking responsibility for the transition game and they certainly did that today. Ali and MaryKate Luker stepped up and took the role we needed them to take on to help our transition game and it really looked good today."

West Morris opened with quick scores from Liz McAuliffe and Scheibling. Despite enduring intense face-guarding, Blue Devils Bennett

and MacDonald each forced their defenders into the crease, got a step on them and tucked the ball into net to tie the game. West Morris answered, struck deep in Blue Devil territory and punished the defense with a three-goal outburst, including back-to-back goals from Scheibling. Westfield countered when MacDonald scorched the net at 13:22. Three minutes later, Procaccini stuffed the net to give the Wolfpack a 6-3 cushion. Blue Devil Brunhofer hit pay dirt on a free position to cut the deficit to 6-4 just before the half. Zaffuto recorded eight saves.

"I'm always looking at the ball, making sure my teammates know where the ball is. I have to look for the open cuts, people who are open since you must be aware of numbers. There's a lot to think about," explained Zaffuto. "When they attack you must make sure everyone is goal side, on their mark. Basically, they scored off open shots, right in front of the crease."

In the second half, the Blue Devils attempted to slow down the pace, establish good cuts to select better options to find the goal, but in the end, West Morris worked the ball at its own pace and outscored them, 6-3. The teams swapped goals when Procaccini got in deep and hammered home a shot. Twenty seconds later, Brunhofer took control at the top of

the box, made her move and beat keeper Kennedy with a high shot.

"Most of the goals were scored coming straight down the field along with lots of intensity and pressure. When we did win the draw, we came straight down, settled it down and had great sharp cuts along with good movement," said Brunhofer. "The defense was getting tired because the ball was on their side for most of the game but they worked really hard. They played much better, particularly with transition and helping with double teams in the midfield."

West Morris maintained the lion's share of possession and added four more goals to make the score, 11-5, then Bennett blitzed the defense and nailed a goal with five minutes remaining and MacDonald, with 82 ticks left, found the mark. West Morris added a goal with 10 seconds left.

"Because the defense was settling down so well and getting the ball back, they played very calculated defense and I thought that sort of rushed the attack when they got there because of the amount of time of possession. That sort of threw off our coordination a bit but they are getting better and playing more as a team each and every game," said Francht. "They did not have as many shots as I would have liked but the percentage was pretty good."



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