

***FITZGERALD EXPECTED TO BE KEY ON OFFENSE, COUGARS HAVE NEW GOALKEEPER*****Cougar Lacrosse Boys Expect Dogfight in County & Division**By **DAVID B. CORBIN***Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times*

With the sport gaining popularity, this year's Cranford High School boys lacrosse team expects an increased level of competition at the county and division levels.

"All of our local rivals are always tough. Johnson, Westfield! Those two games should be wars. Scotch Plains is ever improving, and they really want to get a good victory against us. The conference is even stronger. They brought in Morristown. You have a very strong Millburn team, a very strong St. Peter's team, and very strong Montclair Kimberly team that is the defending champion of the division. So it's very strong top to bottom. I expect it to be a dogfight in the county and also in the Waterman Division," Cougar Head Coach Al Reinoso said.

What can keep all teams in the dogfights is a strong defense.

"That was the case last year. We built up our defense, and most of our success was generated out of our strong goaltending, strong defensive play and good face-off play. A lot of possessions come from that. That's going to be our formula, hopefully, this year," Coach Reinoso said.

The Cougars have a veteran defensive crew with senior Alex Fries and juniors Jon Dinsmore and Jack Nunziata, and with senior Owen Dingelstedt as the first defender off the bench. Sophomore Wills Roman has acquired

the goalkeeper position, especially since junior Jack Davis has been recovering from a broken leg.

"We've got all of those defenders back. Unfortunately, we

graduated our goaltender, so we have had a search on for his replacement, and I think we've got a pretty good one in Wills Roman. Jack Davis had a broken leg through most of pre-season.

both guys better," Coach Reinoso said.

The midfield seems to be of some concern, but there are a few veterans returning, led by senior Jonathan Rubin. Seniors

Kutzer.

"That's our work in progress. Our midfield and goaltending is our most untested. They have to work hard in order to get to the level of our defense and our attack. We didn't lose anybody on defense and we graduated only one attackman. The midfielders have to really buy in and really work hard if we are able to be successful this year," Coach Reinoso said.

The attack force consists of junior three-year starter and three-sport athlete, Tom Fitzgerald, senior Andrew DeLuca and junior Dan Murphy. Rubin will also be a threat from the midfield. Most teams will be keying on Fitzgerald.

"We are looking for even more from Tom. He did a great job his first two years. Now he's got a lot of varsity experience under his belt. He's been working hard in the off-season. He fought off some nagging injuries during his soccer and hockey seasons. He had a nice preseason, really distributing the ball more. He is seeing the field better," Coach Reinoso said.

But opposing teams should not neglect Murphy and DeLuca.

"We got a nice pleasant surprise with the advancement of Dan, a big tall strong lefty, and Andrew has rounded into a nice attackman. Each guy does a little something different, and that's what the challenge is right now, trying to blend those ingredients," Coach Reinoso said.

The Cougars jumped into the fire immediately when they faced the Westfield Blue Devils on April 2 then hosted St. Peter's Prep on April 4. The Cougars will travel to Scotch Plains this Saturday to face an improved Raider squad at 11 a.m.



David B. Corbin for *The Westfield Leader and The Times*

**READY FOR THE DOGFIGHT...**The Cougar senior boys lacrosse team is ready for action. Pictured, left to right, are: front row; Matt Bowman, Jonathan Rubin and Andrew DeLuca; back row, Alex Fries, Owen Dingelstedt, Dan Weber and Glen Cook. See story in *The Westfield Leader* newspaper on page 16.

He's just getting back with the team now. We are hoping he can get to 100 percent then we can have healthy competition to get

Matt Bowman and Glen Cook, and junior Stefan Fedorchak will be in the midfield. Junior Joe Vicci will take the face-offs. Senior Dan Weber will be the long-stick middle. Other middies are junior Shane Albrecht and Cam

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