



THIRD AT FIRST SINGLES...Raider freshman Jeffrey Rodgers placed third at first singles.



FIRST AT SECOND SINGLES...Blue Devil Adam Greene placed first at second singles.



FIRST AT FIRST DOUBLES...Blue Devils Jack Rickles, left, and Jake Harris placed first at first doubles.

Blue Devils Win Eighth Straight Union County Tournament Boys Tennis Championship

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incredibly close and intense. Almost every game went to deuce, and it seemed that some games lasted over 10 minutes. At the end, it came down to a difference of a couple key points in my favor. The match could've easily gone either way. Scott's a very good player, and I'm sure we'll have some more close battles in the future," said Rodgers, who added, "After not playing well and losing in my morning match, I was happy to get a third place finish for my coach and teammates, who were all watching and cheering me on. My teammates

(second doubles in 2011) with a 6-4, 6-1, win over Matt Celona (S).

"He had a big serve and a big forehand, so I just tried to return and keep it to his backhand. I didn't really come to the net at all. I just tried to keep it in, because he hit so hard, he made a lot of errors. He hit it long a lot," Greene said.

As to his overall performances, he said, "Yesterday I had one match. I thought I did pretty well. I just tried to stay consistent, keep the ball in. I had a lot of double faults. My first match today was against New Providence. I

(D), 6-1, 6-3. In a rematch with Raider Mike Rosenheck, he won, 7-5, 6-0, to advance to the championship where he stopped Rick Vankimmae (NP), 6-3, 6-1, for his second UCT title (first doubles in 2011).

"I know he had a couple of injuries bothering him, but he really competed out there, and I am happy to get through. My forehand was a little erratic, but I got it under control. I incorporated serving and volleying into my game. I think it definitely helped me get through some of my tough matches here," Mancini said.

In his match with Vankimmae, Mancini made a very clever but successful return, which caused the fans to "Oooh and Aaah."

"He lobbed me, and I just turned around and hit a backwards forehand overhead. I prayed and it ended up passing him at the net. That was, no doubt, the shot of my county tournament," Mancini explained.

Earlier, Rosenheck blanked Rob Blackwood (P), 6-0, 6-0, then topped Jordan Hendy (O), 6-1, 6-2. Rosenheck placed fourth after his 6-1, 6-3, loss to Gabe Rissman (S).

At first doubles, Blue Devils Jake Harris and Jack Rickles received a bye then blanked Zack Kadish and Aaron LaPena (D), 6-0, 6-0. They then topped Levi Glick and Drew Osborne (S), 6-3, 6-2, in the semis. Their championship match turned out even easier with a 6-1, 6-0 win over Mike Herrigel and Seth Keller (NP).

"I think we steadily improved every match during this tournament, playing with more confidence, and definitely the team chemistry is there where earlier in the season it wasn't as strong," Harris said.

"Winning was great I guess to be a number 1 doubles team in the county, but the fact that every match we looked better and we played as a team. We've had a long stretch of matches. We had a lot of matches out of county, and coming up, we have some in-county

matches," said Rickles, who won at second doubles last year.

Third-seeded Raiders Jesse and

Alex Ozdamar rolled with a 6-0, 6-0 win over Mohamed Hussain and Marc Bordoy (L) then they stopped Cou-

Blue Devils Topple Highlanders

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When those guys get on, things happen," Coach Brewster said.

The 7-3 Blue Devils got eight hits off GL pitcher Jon Schmedel, who came into the game with a 3-0 record. At the beginning of the season, the Blue Devils struck out 11 times against Scotch Plains-Fanwood and 13 times against Cranford but had only four against Schmedel.

"We've worked very hard at cutting our strikeouts down. We've done a lot of work to improve our offense. We had four straight games where we had double figures in hits. I can put a lot of it on the fact that we got Jay Cook and Mike Murray helping their approach in the batting cage. It had drastically altered the way we attack the baseball. We are going up there with a purpose," Coach Brewster said.

After GL got a pair of hits in the second but failed to score, Westfield scored a run when Mike Coletta plunked a double down the leftfield line and scored on Jon Gribbin's slap shot down the right field line.

GL answered with two runs in the third. Jennings singled, Aaron Smith reached on an infield error and Ryan Place (3-for-3) drilled a two-run triple between the leftfielder and centerfielder. In that inning, Coletta, the first baseman, made a fine stretch for a putout and followed with a diving scoop to initiate a first-to-pitcher putout.

The Blue Devils regained the lead, 3-2, in the bottom of the inning. Eric Demers, who finished 2-for-3 with a pair of doubles and an RBI, doubled to right. O'Rourke reached safely on a sacrifice bunt, and Brett Ryan (2-for-4) chopped a bad-hop two-run single over the second baseman's shoulder.

In the fourth, Gribbin showed off with a diving grab in right field, and through-

out the game GL shortstop Martis was demonstrating his dexterity.

"He's a great shortstop. He's probably the best fielder around. I haven't seen too many better than him," Coach Brewster said.

From the fourth inning on, Mondon allowed only one infield single and walked nobody, and in the sixth inning, the Blue Devils added two insurance runs when Gribbin reached safely, Liam Devin singled, Demers looped an RBI single and O'Rourke beat out and infield RBI single.

"Early in the game, they got two guys on a couple of innings, but he [Mondon] kept getting out of it then he really settled down. He got out of what he had to. That's a very, very solid team," Coach Brewster said.

This was an especially important victory for the Blue Devils, because the Highlanders had been a monkey-on-their-back with three close victories last year.

"We actually said that in a huddle. One thing that we've done this year that last year didn't do was beat Governor Livingston. That's huge for counties but also in the back of our minds that we can beat anybody. Hopefully, we can keep doing that and make a run in the tournament," Mondon said.

"Every game that we played against them has been a great game. It's two good high school baseball teams that are out there playing their butts off. Last year, we went to the Group 4 state finals. They were the Group 2 state champions. This is good baseball," Coach Brewster said. "Cranford will play anybody anywhere. Westfield, Cranford, GL! Three good teams!"

gars Chris Ditzballis and Dan Buono, 6-0, 7-6 (2) to advance to the semis where they lost to Herrigel and Keller. The brothers Ozdamar then captured third with a 6-2, 2-6, 6-2, victory over Glick and Osborne. Ditzballis and Buono finished seventh.

At second doubles, Blue Devils Justin Cafiero and Jacob Ziff received a bye then crunched James Douglas and Lucas Gallo (J), 6-0, 6-0, to reach the semis where they defeated Ryan Turner and Kevin Stinchcomb (NP), 6-3, 6-3. Cafiero and Ziff then zapped Raiders Ben Yin and Josh Lopez, 6-0, 6-1, for the title.

"We were fortunate yesterday. We had a bye and we came out really strong with a double bagel win, 6-0, 6-0. We came out a little slower this morning, but we really picked it up this afternoon. I felt we got more comfortable with each other, because we have only been playing with each other for a short period of time," Ziff said.

"We were new going into the Delbarton Tournament, but after the Holmdel win, we got together a lot more. Through this tournament, we grew as a doubles team," Cafiero said.

Ziff added, "I am more of a server, and he puts away the volleys."

"He always makes it easy on me. Every time you have a big server like Jacob, it makes your volleys a lot easier. On returns, I try to stay focused and hit it across court to make it easier for him, so he can put the ball away," Cafiero said.

Earlier, Yin and Lopez beat Miguel Flores and Damian Olague (P), 6-0, 6-1, then defeated Cougars Will Allen and Brian Lu, 6-3, 6-0, to advance to the semis where they stopped Andrew Gilbert and Christian Barrett (S), 6-3, 3-6, 6-3.

CHAMPIONSHIPS:
 First singles: Del Rey (E) d McDonald (NP), 4-6, 6-3, 6-3
 Second singles: Greene (W) d Celona (S), 6-4, 6-1
 Third singles: Mancini (W) d Vankimmae (NP), 6-3, 6-1
 First doubles: Harris and Rickles (W) d Herrigel and Keller (NP), 6-1, 6-0
 Second doubles: Cafiero and Ziff (W) d Yin and Lopez (SPP), 6-0, 6-1



FIRST AT SECOND DOUBLES...Blue Devils Jacob Ziff, left, and Justin Cafiero placed first at second doubles.

did well in their matches too so hopefully we can do even better in next year's county tournament."

Cranford Cougar Andrew Miller, at first singles, stopped Allen Reed (RP), 6-4, 6-2, before falling to McDonald in the quarterfinals. After losing to Breen, he finished seventh by defeating Rob Millman (GL), 6-2, 6-1.

Blue Devil Adam Greene received a bye at second singles then topped Rafael Zamarripa (E), 6-1, 6-0, to advance to the semis where he stopped Kevin Maluso (NP), 7-5, 6-0. Greene then claimed his second UCT crown

actually had trouble. I faced set point in the first set, but I managed to fight that off and go on to win the set. Today my serve was much better."

Raider Andrew Leischner, seeded second, received a bye then defeated Cougar Christian Wu, 6-3, 7-5, to advance to the semis where he lost to Celona (S). Leischner finished fourth after falling to Kevin Maluso (NP), 6-2, 6-2. Wu beat Jensen Butler (GL), 6-0, 6-4, then lost to Mario Nasta (O) to place sixth.

After receiving a bye, Blue Devil Max Mancini grounded Jared Grabber



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