

COLTER CRACKS HR, 3 RBI; SASFAI SLAMS HR, 2 RBI

S. Orange/Maplewood Quiets Chatham for Cal Ripken Title

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

Power hitting took charge early then three singles with three walks yielded four runs in the fourth inning to catapult the South Orange/Maplewood (SOM) Cougars 12-year-old baseball to an 8-3 victory over the Chatham Cougars in the championship game of the Cal Ripken District 12 Tournament at Gumbert 2 Field in Westfield on July 3.

The SOM Cougars endured the heat and beat several tough teams, including Millburn and Cranford to reach the championship game against another tough team that won five straight games, including two over Scotch Plains-Fanwood. Both teams qualified for the state tournament.

"These kids never quit. They always find a way to fight back and pull out the wins. I can't be more proud of these guys to repeat, to win last year and come back and do it again after we lost our first one to Westfield Blue, a tough team. Then to come through tough pool play games, then Cranford in the first round and a phenomenal Millburn team was great. Also this team, Chatham! My hat is off to [Head Coach] Bill Karpowic. He is a classy coach, and he runs an excellent team. It's a lot of fun playing him," SOM Head Coach Doug Sasfai said.

"We were ecstatic with the effort the kids gave us in the four pool games. Obviously winning the semi-final playoff game against Scotch Plains automatically got us into the states. That was our primary goal. We did play here to win. Our power hitter

[Peter Demaria] was out for the day. That left us a little bit deflated, but the kids played hard. It's a very good South Orange team. A couple of more timely hits and we are in the game," Coach Karpowic said.

In the championship rounds, SOM shut out the Cranford Cougars, 10-0, with a one-hitter and followed with the impressive win over Millburn.

"My guy who started tonight's game, Casey Thompson, was throwing seeds. He was fun to watch. In the Millburn game, Palmer Kraiss and Reid Evans came in and were phenomenal," Coach Sasfai explained.

The SOM Cougars used three pitchers beginning with Thompson. Will Nomura relieved and pitched to two batters in the second inning. Daniel Cotler stepped to the mound in the third and tossed four innings of shut-out ball, while yielding just two hits, a hit batter and a walk.

The Chatham Cougars, who had also played a game the night before, had to go with five pitchers. Billy Gyves pitched the first inning. Matt Stamford pitched the second. Will Covino pitched to three batters in the third. Tommy Winter relieved and pitched to all but one batter in the sixth. Chloe Blanc pitched to the final batter.

SOM out-hit Chatham, 10-5, and received some power off the "metal stick" of Cotler (2 runs scored), who hammered a solo home run in the first inning and added a two-run single in the fourth. Jake Sasfai lined an RBI single in the first and slammed a solo homer in the third inning.

Thompson singled twice and

scored once. Peter Nolet and Christian Pierre each rapped an RBI single and scored once. Evans drilled a double. Nomura and Kraiss each scored a run, and Danny Boemer singled in his plate appearance. Joe Barello, Josh Watson-Lewis and Miles Leandre also had plate appearances.

Mac Brendahl led Chatham with a pair of singles, two stolen bases and a run scored. Ryan Chase poked a two-run single. Gyves (run scored) and Blanc each singled. Ethan Glasgow was hit-by-a-pitch and walked. Tommy Winter walked twice and scored once. Max Schelling and Clay Delsandro each had a walk. Charlie Bergman had three plate appearances, Stamford had two, and Covino hit a sharp line drive that forced SOM shortstop Nomura to make a circus catch.

Cotler's solo blast and Sasfai's RBI single gave SOM a 2-0 lead in the first. Chatham answered with a run when Brendahl singled and later scored on an overthrow at first. In the second Thompson singled, stole second and scored on Pierre's single to left. Chatham tied the score in the bottom of the second when Chase sizzled his two-run single to center.

Sastai launched his solo homer over the leftfield fence in the third to make the score, 4-3. Thompson started a four-run rally in the fourth with a leadoff single. After three straight walks, Cotler slashed his two-run single and Nolet punched his RBI single.

S. Orange/Maplewood	211	400	8
Chatham	120	000	3



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David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
MLOWING INTO THIRD BASE...Millburn's Ben Bograd steals third as Raider Regan Mooney, No. 22, and pitcher Nick McCormack, background, watches the outcome at Gumbert 2 Field in Westfield on July 8.

DiNIZO, MOONEY, SCHELTECH GET SPF'S ONLY HITS

Millburn 12s Sting Raiders In Cal Ripken Playoffs, 8-0

By DAVID B. CORBIN
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Millburn 12s pitching ace Nick Maldonado tossed a complete game shutout, allowing just three hits, while walking none to lead the Millers to an 8-0 victory over Scotch Plains-Fanwood at Gumbert 2 Field in Westfield on July 8 in the battle for third place and advancement to the Cal Ripken Regional Tournament.

"Putting him on the mound is always something that I can count on. I know we are going to be in good shape when he is on the mound," Millburn Head Coach

Kevin Ford said.

"He's the best pitcher we've seen this year. He got ahead of everybody, and he threw the curveball for strikes, which you don't see from a 12-year-old kid very often. He was excellent," Raider Head Coach Joe Higgins said.

The Raiders were unable to put more than one hit together in any given inning. Regan Mooney singled in the top of the second. Sam Schetelich had a leadoff single in the third, and Anthony DiNizo singled in the fourth. The Millers did successfully field some sharply hit balls, and Maldonado managed to keep Raider

power hitter Nick McCormack off-balance in two plate appearances.

"He knew what to throw when. He knew where to throw it, but we did have some good at-bats against him. We had a couple of guys hit the ball hard. We just couldn't string anything together," Coach Higgins said.

The Millers totaled seven hits, but they managed to deliver them in lumps and follow them up with aggressive base running and hit-and-run plays. Leadoff hitter Ben Pampush singled, stole three bases and scored twice. Maldonado finished with a double, a

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CLOUD OF DUST AT SECOND...South Orange/Maplewood's Peter Nolet, right, successfully steals second base on a close play. Chatham shortstop Mac Brendahl makes the tag as Charlie Bergman, No. 2, employs some body English. South Orange/Maplewood defeated Chatham, 8-3, at Gumbert 2 Field in Westfield on July 3 for the Cal Ripken District 12 Championship. Both teams, along with Millburn, advanced to compete in the Ripken Region Championships.

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