

RUTMAYER, WILLIAMSON STRONG ON MOUND; FEENEY, FOLINUSZ, DiFRAN' WITH BATS**Cougar Baseballers Looking To 'Work Out All the Kinks'**By **DAVID B. CORBIN***Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times*

Success in a program draws attention, and the success of the Cranford High School baseball team over the years has gotten two of Head Coach Dennis McCaffrey's assistants promoted to head coaching jobs at other schools, which has opened the door for some familiar faces with a Cranford background to fill in the vacancies.

"We are very excited about this upcoming year. Angel Naverette, Brian Weingart and Ryan Matlosz have been with the program for years. They bring a great deal of experience, and they have had a lot of success in the past as players and coaches," Coach McCaffrey said.

All three have been standouts in the Cougar baseball system. Naverette played on the 1997 team, while Matlosz and Weingart played on the State Champion 1999 team.

"They definitely know the system. They played through the system. Fortunately, they were able to win a number of championships. It worked out well. I am fortunate to work with them each day," Coach McCaffrey said.

Last year, the Cougars won their seventh Union County Tournament title and finished 20-5, but as with every year, because of graduation, the quest is to find the right combination to fill the vacant varsity positions.

"We are still trying to work out a lot of kinks. We really need to work on our offense, defense and our pitching. It's a work in progress. We are hop-

ing to continue to get better each day and try to make it so we are competitive in each game that we play," Coach McCaffrey said.

Senior Kurt Rutmayer and junior Ryan Williamson have been very successful on the mound in the past and expect to be so this season. When not on the mound, Williamson will play centerfield, and Rutmayer will play first base.

Junior Chris Folinusz will also be seen on the mound when not catching or playing first base.

"They certainly have been able to put a lot of hard work in the program. We are hoping that they will be able to have a successful year," Coach McCaffrey commented.

The Cougars have several additional candidates vying for the

pitching spots with juniors Alex Plick, Matt DiMartino and George Georgodis, sophomore Tyler Davis and freshman Eric Donohue, along with senior Vinnie Colaneri.

"In this program, we have never said that we have a number one pitcher. We want the kids to think that they are the number one pitcher when they go out there. Everyone is fighting for playing time. There are a number of kids who are working on the mound. There are a number of kids who are playing different positions

out in the field, so we are hoping that we can put it together," Coach McCaffrey said.

Junior Andrew DiFrancesco, who had a .450 batting average last year, is expected to play leftfield. Sophomore Tommy Trotter will find time in centerfield, while junior John Armstrong and senior Sean McGovern will occupy right.

"Andrew had a great year. He is a hard-working player. Really puts a lot of time in the fall and in the winter to get ready for this spring," Coach McCaffrey said.

Junior Sean Feeney, in his third year as a starter, had a .500 batting average last year and has shifted from third base to shortstop.

"He played behind Sean Trotter, who had an unbelievable career for us. We are hoping that will be a smooth transition for him," coach McCaffrey said.

Senior Eric Garguilo will play second, and three candidates, DiMartino, Georgodis and Donohue, are vying for the third base position. Plick could see some time at first. Sophomore Sam Sheer may find time behind the plate.

"I am not really confident with our infield, our outfield, our pitching or our hitting yet. We need to put a lot of time in the field. We need to get ourselves strong mentally off the field as well. So we have a long way to go," Coach McCaffrey said.

The Cougars open at home with Union on April 3 at 4 p.m. then will travel to Scotch Plains to play the Raiders on Thursday, April 5.

"We literally try to take the approach of one game at a time. We don't look ahead. I ask the kids not to do it, so I don't do it," Coach McCaffrey said.

See Pre-Season Baseball Story In The Westfield Leader newspaper



David B. Corbin for *The Westfield Leader and The Times*
WORKING OUT THE KINKS...This year's Cranford Cougar baseball team is trying to work out all the kinks. Seniors pictured, left to right, are: Kyle Frank, Sean McGovern, Eric Garguilo, Kurt Rutmayer and Vinnie Colaneri.