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David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times

PLOWING INTO THIRD...Cougar Anthony Serson plows into third base as Westfield Silver's Jackson Jordan awaits a throw from home in the third inning at Gumbert 2 Field in Westfield on July 1.

ALLIEGRO WHACKS 9 HRs IN 8 GAMES, KESSLER 4 HRs

Westfield 12U Finishes 4-4 At Cooperstown Tournament

The Westfield 12U baseball team recently participated in the Cooperstown Dreams Park Baseball Tournament on June 28 through July 3. The 12U Blue Devils were one of 104 teams from around the country competing in one of the most competitive 12U baseball tournaments in the U.S. The boys represented Westfield Baseball in honorable fashion, posting a 4-4 overall record, including several thrilling late inning heroics.

The team was coached by Mike Varano, Tom Riley and John Kessler. The players were: Danny Varano, Jack Riley, Will Kessler, Tim Alliegro, Leo Loffredo, Griffin Rooney, Andrew Echausse, Brendan Hiltz, Victor Coustan, Henry Meiselman, Danny Kohler, Dom Maurillo and Christian Pansini.

After dropping the first three pool play games, including a 4-3 loss to the eventual 12th seeded Tidewater Bombers (Va.) and a 13-11 slugfest versus the 33rd seed Burnsville Lightning (Minn.), the Blue Devils rattled off three straight wins in pool play, including a 10-9 thriller over then 35th ranked Dogtown (Ariz.), a 16-11 hit fest versus Sharon Springs Spartans White (Ga.) and a 17-4 beat down of White Marsh Warriors (Md.). The Blue Devils won their first single-elimination playoff game versus Brighton Bulldogs Black (Mich.) on a walk off homerun in the bottom of the sixth by Tim Alliegro in a 6-5 win. Christian Pansini was a stud on

the mound holding the Bulldogs to one run and two hits, while striking out four over four innings.

In playoff Game 2, the Blue Devils fell 5-4 in the bottom of the sixth to St. Joe's Bombers (Ill.), despite another Alliegro homerun and a solid pitching performance from Alliegro and Danny Varano (1 run, 2 hits over 3 innings), who consistently kept the Bomber hitters off balance.

The Blue Devil offense was paced by Alliegro, who put on a hitting performance for the ages. The 12-year-old hit over .950 for the week including an astonishing nine homeruns (and four intentional walks). He made just one out - a line shot snared by the St Joe's pitcher. Will Kessler (4 homeruns), Griffin

Rooney (1 homerun), Jack Riley (1 HR) and Dom Maurillo (1 HR) provided more offensive firepower.

Shortstop Danny Kohler made several outstanding plays in the final playoff game. Catcher Victor Coustan was aggressive behind the plate rifling down three potential base stealers and Henry Meiselman took away three hits to right field with his strong arm. Andrew Echausse was a consistent leadoff hitter and made several big plays at short, while Brendan Hiltz came up with big hits and several great plays in the field. The team sorely missed its star pitcher Loffredo who was stricken by the flu bug.

Westfield 12U resumed league play back in New Jersey on July 7.



FUN AT COOPERSTOWN...The Westfield 12U baseball team finished 4-4 at the Cooperstown Dreams Park Baseball Tournament.

Westfield Silver Startles Cranford Cougars, 18-6

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

twice. Tom Clancy scored twice, singled, walked once and had an RBI. Jason Petruzzi poked an RBI single, walked three times and scored once. Jackson Jordan (2 walks) and Rob McIntyre (walk & hit-by-pitch) each scored twice. Russell Kobrin walked once.

Quinn Dursee and Liam Devin, who were on the Westfield High School baseball team that won the North Jersey, Section 2, Group 4 title in 2013, got to be on the other side of the fence as the coaches of the Westfield Silver.

"It's a little change of pace. It's our first year out of playing. To come back here as a coach, it's great. I am reliving my glory days with these young kids. It's great seeing them grow as players throughout the season. We are making progress. That's all I want to see as a coach," Coach Dursee said.

"Nobody likes to make that transition between player and coach. I would like to be playing right now, but it's fun. It's definitely interesting, seeing it from a different angle. We were in this situation when we were 11 with our dads and the way that they taught us. We try to model ourselves after them and hope that we can be the best we can be," Devin said.

The Cougars were not as fortunate with free passes due to the pitching effectiveness of Clancy and, especially, Thorburn, who came in relief with one out in the third and permitted only a double and a single, while hitting a batter, for the remainder of the game. Dom Fallone, JT Kaminski, Christian Wilde and Lucas Simpson shared the mound duties for the Cougars.

Kaminski led the Cougars with an RBI double and an RBI in his other plate appearance. Kieran Hollander singled, was hit-by-a-pitch and scored twice. Wilde had an RBI single and scored once. JT Russell and Anthony Serson each singled and scored once. Fallone walked and scored once. Matt Maggio (RBI) and Aiden Riley each singled. Robbie Salvatore walked and swiped a base. Albert DeChillo, RJ Kelly and Andrew Towne also had plate appearances.

The Cougars scored twice in the top of the first with an RBI groundout by Kaminski and an RBI single by Maggio. Westfield went down 1-2-3 in their half of the first then Cranford took a 3-0 lead when Russell singled, moved to second on a wild pitch, stole third and scored on a passed ball.

Westfield's bats came to life in the bottom of the second and knotted the score. Mendelson's grounder to short caused an overthrow. He then advanced to third on a passed ball and scored when Berger blasted a hard RBI single off the pitcher's shin. Berger later scored on a wild pitch then Skoletsky walked, stole second, moved to third and scored on Thorburn's RBI groundout.

Serson wiggled a one-out single, which kindled a three-run third inning. Wilde hopped an RBI single and Hollander took a fastball to the body. Wilde scored when a pickoff attempt sailed out of play then Kaminski cracked an RBI double to left. Westfield answered with two runs on Clancy's RBI groundout and Mendelson's RBI single.

After Cranford went down 1-2-3 in the fourth, the walls came tumbling down and Westfield marched 14 batters to the plate and nine of them scored. The highlight was Mendelson's three-run double to center, and doubles from Thorburn and Skoletsky.

With the help of two walks, a hit

batter, an error and Clancy's single, four more Blue Devils scored in the fifth to end the game.

"They moved to the bigger field this year [50 mound to plate/70 base distance]. That's a bit of an adjustment. Their arms are not as strong, kids are not as quick, bats are not as strong. The game's changed, but we are adapting," Coach Dursee said.

"That's why we are here. We are here for the kids to have fun, improve every game, our kids get better and better. This is the first year they are playing 50/70. That's huge, so the pitchers are just getting used to the right way to pitch, holding runners on and pitching at this level," Cougar Head Coach Jimmy Russell said.

Throughout the game, Devin had been directing the signs to the catchers.

"I have taken the liberty of taking care of the catchers, first basemen and outfielders. Quinn's got more of the pitchers and infielders. It's just like simple signs, simple things for them to understand," he said.

Cranford	213	00	6
Westfield	032	94	18

Open House: Sunday, July 13th • 1-4PM
1031 Irving Avenue, Westfield



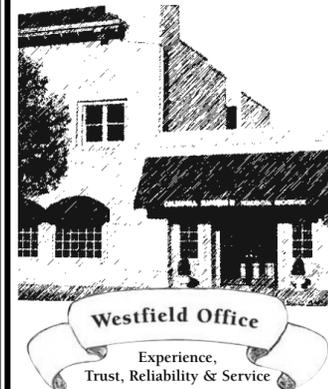
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