

**Blue Devils Sweep UCT Tennis Story on Finals - May 10 Issue**

# THE WEEK IN SPORTS

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**GALE 3-3, 3 RUNS; RAMOS 2-2, 2 RBI; DiNIZO 2-3, 2 RUNS**

## Raiders Down Cardinals, 11-6 In UCT 1st Round Baseball

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

Each end of the second-seeded Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School baseball team's lineup made the most noise with the metal bats in its Union County Tournament (UCT) opening round game with the visiting 15th-seeded Plainfield Cardinals on April 28. The front three in the Raiders' lineup provided seven of their 12 hits plus five runs and the No. 8 and 9 hitters provided three hits and four runs in an 11-6 victory.

Leadoff hitter Willy Gale went 3-for-3 with a walk, two RBI and scored three times and No. 2 hitter Jon Ramos singled twice, had two RBI and scored

once. Pat Downey followed with two singles and a run scored. On the bottom side of the lineup Angelo DiNizo rapped a pair of singles, walked once, scored twice and had an RBI. Josh Canavan doubled, walked and scored twice.

Danny Wilkinson pitched the first three innings for the 11-4 Raiders, allowing one run on two hits, a hit batter and two walks, while striking out six. Nick Merkel pitched the next three innings well, walking two and allowing just a solo home run to Skylar Frye in the fifth, while striking out two batters.

"Merkel's been pretty good at the bullpen. He's been a good go-to guy.

I've gotten more out of him than I expected to, especially after the first inning. First inning he wasn't getting ahead of the hitters. Fifth and sixth he was getting ahead and his curveball was biting pretty good. That was big to be able to have him come in and hold it down," Raider Head Coach Joe Higgins said.

"He did alright in the beginning but did great. He hit spots and he has a pretty good curveball too," Gale added.

"Nick has been doing a good job. He's been throwing strikes, which is what we really needed. We didn't need anyone like blowing kids by. We

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David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times

GETTING HOME SAFELY...Courtesy runner Jack Jarosz slides in for the Cougars' second run in the third inning as Blue Devil catcher Mike Charlton prepares to get the throw in Westfield on April 26. The Blue Devils nipped the Cougars, 8-7.

**VALL-LLOBERA 3-RUN HOMER, LERIE 2B; McGEE 2B, 1B**

## Blue Devils Go Long in Sixth, Survive Cougar Comeback, 8-7

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

Three insurance runs in the bottom of the sixth inning appeared to be enough security for the Westfield High School baseball team in its second showdown with the Cranford Cougars at Bob Brewster, Sr. Field in Westfield on April 26. But the 8-4 lead was barely enough as the Cougars with a never give up attitude,

came storming back in the top of the seventh with three runs of their own and had a runner on first with one out until relief pitcher Mike Carlone struck out the final two batters for an 8-7 victory.

Both starting pitchers did experience control difficulties. Cougar pitcher Kevin Donovan, who pitched into the sixth inning until he was relieved by Jack McAleavey, walked six batters

—one intentionally—, hit a batter and allowed nine hits, while striking out four. Blue Devil starter Tyler Hoffman pitched four innings, walked four batters, hit one batter, struck out three and allowed four hits and four runs. Dan Russo tossed the scoreless fifth and sixth innings, yielding just a double to Jake DeClerico and walking none, while striking out two.

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STIRRING UP THE DIRT AT HOME...Raider Pat Downey, No. 24, stirs up a lot of dirt when he comes sliding home safely in the first inning during the Union County Tournament game with Plainfield. The Raiders defeated the Cardinals, 11-6.

**SCHWERDTFEGER 3 HITS, DOLAN STRONG ON MOUND**

## Softball Cougars Barely Halt Blue Devils' Surge in 7th, 4-3

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

Nerves were on the very edge in the bottom of the seventh inning during the second softball meeting between the Cranford Cougars and the Westfield Blue Devils in Westfield on April 24. After being shut out for six innings and trailing 4-0, the Blue Devils plated three runs and had the bases loaded with two outs but starting pitcher Brenna Dolan took several big breaths then managed to come up with a strikeout to preserve a 4-3 victory for the Cougars.

The situation in the Westfield seventh began with a leadoff single from Rachel Rothenberg (2-for-3) then

Dolan ricocheted a pitch off Natalie Patterson's helmet. After Dolan recorded a pair of strikeouts, Erica Lawrence (2 hits) ripped a hot grounder off shortstop Elizabeth McCaffery's glove as Rothenberg scored. Gen Howell's spinning infield hit scored Patterson then Bridget Hyland (2-for-2) slapped an RBI single just behind the third baseman. After a conference at the mound, Dolan hit the next batter (Ally Gulla) to load the bases then recorded her third strikeout of the inning to end the game.

"It was important that we all remained calm. They got a little rinky-dinky hit and that's the worst because you can't do anything about it but it does get

runners on base. Keeping Brenna calm, keeping the team calm when they had the bases loaded and a full count was very, very important," Cougar catcher Erin Schwerdtfeger expressed.

The 4-5 Cougars only had five hits but jumped on Blue Devil freshman starting pitcher Michaela Hopson immediately with three runs in the top of the first inning and it began with a walk and two wild pitches that allowed leadoff hitter Elizabeth McCaffery to reach third base. Schwerdtfeger, who went 3-for-4, beat out an infield RBI single then Sarah Gluck (2 runs scored) was hit-by-a-pitch. After Dolan hit into a force out,

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