



PRODUCTIVE GAME AGAINST THE RAIDERS...Blue Devil Jake Wornow, No. 43, scored five goals and Nicky Bond, No. 20, netted three goals in the game against the Raiders on April 26 in Scotch Plains. The Blue Devils won, 11-6.

WORNOW 5 GOALS, BOND 3 GOALS, COSTANZO 2 GOALS

Blue Devil Boys Rally to Topple Raiders in Lacrosse Clash, 11-6

By ALEX LOWE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Jake Wornow scored five goals and Nicky Bond chipped in three goals with one assist to help rally the Westfield High School boys lacrosse team to an 11-6 win over Scotch Plains-Fanwood on April 26 in Scotch Plains. Westfield recovered from a 4-1 deficit early in the second period and scored nine straight goals to pull away from the Raiders.

The Raiders (6-4) came out flying and drew first blood with a goal by Aidan Guma at 9:18. Seconds later, after winning the faceoff, Noah Costanzo increased the lead to 2-0. The Blue Devils answered with a goal by Wornow to cut it to 2-1 at 5:44.

Scotch Plains-Fanwood kept up the pressure though and senior Jack Brady scored on a nice move to make it 3-1 with 1:19 left in the first period. Brady came out from behind the net, abruptly reversed direction and delivered the ball into the corner of the net. The trend continued into the early part of the second period as Costanzo scored his second goal courtesy of an assist by Anthony Porter.

"We were moving without the ball and finding the open men," said Raider Head Coach Nick Miceli. "We were winning the 50/50 battles on ground balls. In the second half we did none of that. I don't think it was anything strategic that Westfield did to change the game. I just think they started to play better and we didn't up our game or even maintain our level of play from the first half. Lacrosse is all about possession. You don't possess the ball, you are not going to win."

With a healthy 4-1 lead, the Raiders were well positioned to come up with a signature victory against their border rival. But the Blue Devils were just about to wake up. Westfield would go on a 9-0 run that would last into the fourth quarter.

First up was Matthew Rittendale, who potted one in the back of the net to cut the lead to 4-2 with 8:48 to go in the half. Westfield took quick advantage of a Raider mistake as Brady was called for unsportsmanlike conduct, giving Westfield a two-man advantage over the next 40 seconds. Wornow scored his second goal on an assist by Bond making it 4-3 with

7:54 left in the half. Jake Engelke tied the game with a goal at the 5:30 mark. The game would go into the break tied at 4-4.

"On offense we started to play more as a team in the second period," said Wornow. "All of the attackmen were involved with making assists, which showed that we were moving the ball better and unselfishly."

Westfield (5-4) took the lead on a goal by Bond just over a minute into the third period.

"I got a nice ride on the play," said Bond, who will play for Princeton next year. "I got forced to my right and ended up ahead of the defender. Ritt (Matthew Rittendale) got me the ball and the defender was right behind me bumping me all the way. I took the shot as I was falling and was fortunate to get it into the back of the net."

Just about a minute later, Wornow extended the lead to 6-4 when he crossed in front of the net and fired a shot home. Rittendale notched his second goal of the game, scoring on an overhand shot at 6:52 to give the

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Blue Devils Go Long, Survive Cougar Comeback

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"Their first threw a good game. Unfortunately when we were pitching the ball, we threw a couple of walks. You can't do that to a Westfield baseball team. They capitalized on the walks. We gave them too many chances and unfortunately it cost us the ball game," Cougar Head Coach Dennis McCaffery said.

The insurance gathering sixth inning began with the Blue Devils clinging to a 5-4 lead. Jake Lerie, one of "The Two Jakes", slashed a leadoff double to right field. Chris Wagner reached safely on a throwing error then Jake Vall-Llobera stepped up and bashed a three-run home run over the right field fence. With no one out, McEavey got Mike Knapp to hit into a second-to-first double play then struck out the next batter.

As to his double, Lerie described, "He was working me away the entire day. I was ahead in the count. He kept throwing me fastballs when he was behind. It was 2-0 and he just left one a little middle away. I dropped back on it and drove it to right field and the big man [Vall-Llobera] did the rest."

As to his home run, Vall-Llobera recalled, "He threw me the same pitch twice in a row. The first time it got a little inside on me and I fouled it off. I was a little out in front of it and I could hear the dugout my friends over on the sidelines chirping at me. Then he threw it again over the middle and I took it."

Just six days before, Lerie had the winning RBI single in the eighth inning to lift the Blue Devils past Colonia, 12-11.

"It felt pretty good, especially since they walked Matt [McIntyre] and I felt a little disrespected because someone gets intentionally walked to let you hit. It was a big spot and I was really glad that I could come up big," Lerie said.

Vall-Llobera, who also drilled a hard smash to third that allowed Blue Devils Mike Charlton and McIntyre to score in the fourth inning, has been on a hard-hitting streak recently, so it would be just a matter of time until one cleared the fence.

"I am not just hitting line drives gap-to-gap. I hit one in a scrimmage but there hasn't been one all season. It was the first time I got good air under it and it felt good," Vall-Llobera said.

The Cougars took a 1-0 lead in the first on three walks to load the bases and an RBI sacrifice fly to right by Pat Connolly to bring home Jamie Shriner. Westfield quickly answered

with two. Lerie, who walked and strutted to second on a balk, scored on Wagner's RBI double to leftfield. Vall-Llobera's grounder resulted in a throwing error and Wagner scoring.

The Cougars tagged Hoffman for three runs on four hits with the help of some passed balls in the third to take a 4-2 lead. Mike Murphy (2-for-4) singled, Connolly walked and Mike McGee (2-for-4, 2 runs, 2 RBI) slapped an RBI single to right. Connor Katz (2-for-4, 2 RBI) hopped an RBI single past second then McGee's courtesy runner Jack Jarosz scored on DiClerico's single.

Back came the Blue Devils with a run in the third. Vall-Llobera walked, Matt Manning (2-for-3) singled and Knapp knocked an RBI single past first. After the Blue Devils took a 5-4

McCaffery said. Westfield received the first seed for the Union County Tournament and Cranford received the eighth seed, so the two rivals stand a very big chance to see each other again very early in the tournament.

"I know that we play a game on Saturday [April 28] against Summit. The county tournament is one game at a time and if you lose that game, you don't worry about the next opponent. Here at Cranford we don't worry about any future opponents. We worry about the next day, which will be practice on Friday. After practice on Friday, we will get ready to take on Summit, which could be a difficult game, then we will see from there," Coach McCaffery said.

"It's a good team. Every time we



ABOUT TO SCORE...Blue Devil Jake Vall-Llobera, No. 21, heads home to score in the third inning as Cougar catcher Mike McGee watches the progress.

lead in the fourth, scoring was silent until the sixth when they added Vall-Llobera's big blast.

The Cougars were still alive and began the seventh with back-to-back singles by Mike Meola and Tyler Szczec. Connolly added an RBI groundout and McGee followed with an RBI double to center. Katz lined an RBI single to center then Carlone struck out the next two batters.

"When you play Westfield, they are a solid ball club and it is always going to be a tough game," Coach

play them it's a fun game. Every time it goes down to the wire," Vall-Llobera said.

"We saw them three times last year also. We know [Gordon] Graceffo is going to be good. He's one of the best pitchers if not the best pitcher in the county but we got somebody good over there too with Cory [Hiltz]. It will be a great one. I think it should be one that everyone comes to see," Lerie expressed.

Cranford	103	000	3	7
Westfield	201	203	x	8



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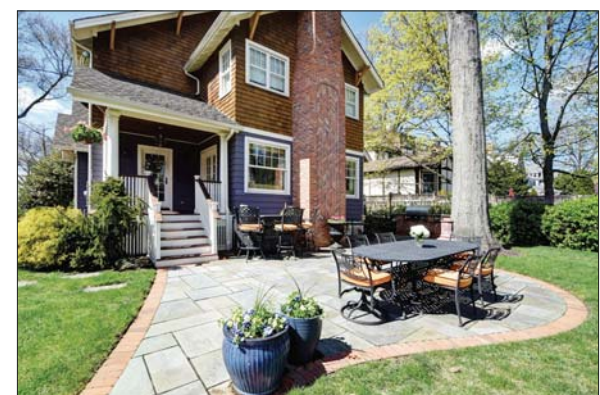


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