

Raiders Down Cardinals in UCT First Round

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just needed him to throw strikes. That's what he did," Ramos said.

Gale led off the bottom of the first inning with a walk, took second on the catcher's throwing error, moved to third on Ramos' slow grounder back to the mound and scored on a wild pitch. Downing chopped a single past third, stole second and eventually scored the second run on another wild pitch. The Raiders upped their lead to 3-0 in the second when Angelo DiNizo and Canavan both walked, Gale moved them over with a sacrifice bunt then Ramos lofted an RBI sac fly to center.

The Cardinals scored once in the top of the third. Waldy Arias was hit on his backside, stole second and scored on Toran Smith's double to deep leftfield. In the scoreless Cardinal fourthinning, Raider catcher Mike Dieu gunned down Carlos Acosta attempting to steal second.

Canavan, Gale and Ramos got things going in the Raider fourth. Canavan drilled a leadoff double off the leftfield fence and Gale brought him home with a single to left. Ramos laid down a perfect bunt single along the third baseline and Gale alertly hooked around second and took third when he saw it was uncovered. Sam Schetelich made the score 6-0 with a

bouncing two-run double over third.

"Jonny had a nice bunt for a base hit with Willy coming around. That's the kind of stuff we need to be able to do to put some more pressure on the other team," Coach Higgins said.

"We knew we had to score. We had a little bit of trouble at the beginning, so a nice little bunt would have started us off and we kept going from there. It was a fastball a little inside and I was able to get it down," Ramos explained.

"I saw it go down and I just tried to run my hardest. The third baseman was going to come down because it was hard hit. I knew Jon was going to be safe, so I took a hard turn and ended up being safe at third," Gale described.

Once the trio of Canavan, Gale and Ramos get on base that would definitely spell danger to opponents.

"I am not a home run hitter and I don't try to do that at all. Line drives and ground balls. That's what I try to do. Speed kills and our team has a lot of speed. That is what our game plan is," Gale explained.

"We need our fast guys to get on base. We are not the kind of team that is going to pound the ball up and down the lineup. Willy hit the ball very hard today. He hit a couple of

shots. Some of these little guys we have are pretty strong. Willy is one of them," Coach Higgins said.

"As long as he gives me the go sign, I am going to go. I'm going to try to steal a base and advance," Gale said.

Frye whacked his solo homer over the left-centerfield fence in the fifth then the Raiders matched the run in the lower half of the inning. Angelo DiNizo singled then attempted to score on Gale's single to left but was gunned down at the plate. In the meantime, Gale hooked around to third. Ramos sizzled a grounder over first. The first baseman made a spectacular stop but Ramos beat him to the bag as the two collided and Gale scored.

"I was trying to go the other way. I hit the ball hard. He made a nice play but I was able to beat it out but I was good after that," Ramos explained.

The Raiders added four runs in the sixth to stretch their lead to 11-2. Anthony DiNizo (3 walks) drew a free pass, swiped second and scored on Dieu's single over second. Angelo DiNizo yanked an RBI single over first, sped to second on a throw to the plate then scored when Canavan's grounder was mishandled at third. Gale then punched an RBI single to right-center.

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BIG LEADOFF DOUBLE...Raider Josh Canavan, No. 3, slides into second with a leadoff double to spark a three-run fourth inning in the Union County Tournament game against the Plainfield Cardinals in Scotch Plains on April 28.



FLYING INTO THIRD...Cougar Erin Schwerdtfeger comes flying into third base as Blue Devil Rachel Rothenberg gets the forceout in the first inning. Schwerdtfeger had three hits in the game and the Cougars held off the Blue Devils, 4-3.

Cougars Barely Halt Blue Devils' Surge in 7th

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Jayna Mallon lined a two-run single to center.

"It was important for us to have good pitch selection because despite the fact that she is a very good pitcher in the beginning sometimes pitchers need to get into their groove. She was a little wild, so taking advantage and getting walks off of her then whoever can come in and hit the ball we can get the runs," Schwerdtfeger said.

The Cougars tapped Hobson for a fourth run in the fifth inning. Schwerdtfeger added her third single then was called out for interfering with the second baseman on Gluck's grounder. Dolan singled then Mallon added her third RBI with a groundout to short. Hobson, who was relieved by Hyland in the sixth, allowed five hits, walked four, hit a batter and struck out seven.

"Michaela just didn't have the command she's had in the past couple of days but really all the credit has to go to Cranford. They did exactly what they needed to do," Blue Devil Head Coach Caitlin MacDonald said.

A large portion of the credit would go to Dolan, who exercised super control for the first six innings and especially the first four, allowing only a single to Erica Lawrence in the fourthinning and permitting only one walk to Hobson.

"We just couldn't get our bats going. Dolan really shut us down. She did a

great job. She showed up today ready to go," Coach MacDonald expressed.

"We did great defensively. I was throwing very good movement pitches and they were breaking. It was creating them to swing at junk, so I did my job with my movement pitches and the defense did an amazing job," Dolan explained.

Dolan was definitely in the groove and nobody was more aware of that than Schwerdtfeger, since she was the catcher.

"She was doing a great job hitting all her spots, great location. All of her pitches were breaking just when they needed to. Brenna was giving them what we needed," Schwerdtfeger said.

"Erin was an anchor. I couldn't ask for a better catcher. She's a leader and she really holds the ship down behind the plate and when we need her to come out and give us a pep talk," Dolan added.

Schwerdtfeger also proved to be aggressive on the base paths.

"I always look to make the catcher throw. If she messes up, I can obviously get a base. If she throws, I just drop back. You have to take chances when you are aggressive," Schwerdtfeger explained.

Hyland pitched the sixth and seventh inning and retired all six batters, which included striking out all three in the seventh. In their first meeting, the Blue Devils defeated Cranford, 4-

1, and Hyland was on the mound.

"Last time we faced Cranford, Bridget pitched and she pitched a gem. For the past couple of games, Michaela has been really hot. She's been throwing hard and she's been throwing strikes and getting people out and getting big outs in big situations. We decided to go with her today. We trust them both to start a game and go a game," Coach MacDonald explained.

Hobson recently recorded a 6-1 win over Chatham and a 6-5 win over AL Johnson.

"She's earned it. She won us a big game in Chatham on Saturday and she won us a big game yesterday against ALJ [Johnson]. She's done a good job and so has Bridget, so you never know who we are going to draw that day," Coach MacDonald said.

Westfield drew the third seed for the Union County Tournament, now under way, and Cranford drew the sixth seed, so it is highly likely the two rivals will face each other again.

"When Bridget came in, she did exactly what she needed to do and looked really sharp. There's a chance we will see them again in the county quarterfinals if both of us do our jobs in the first round. So we will see who gets the third one," Coach MacDonald said.

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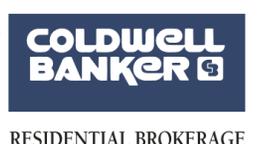


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