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struggled a little bit at the beginning," Ramos explained.

"Jonny had a nice day with some good at-bats. He's a leader. He the kind of kid, who has the same look on his face whether he's making errors and striking out or getting hits and making plays. Today he got hits and made plays. He set the tone," Coach Higgins said.

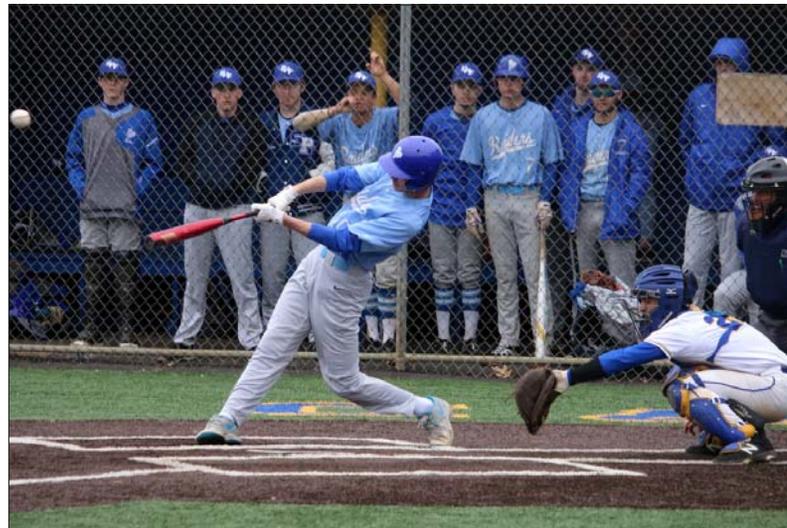
On his clutch two-run single, Dieu described, "He got me the first two at-bats with two strike pitches. The next two at-bats I had to make an adjustment, widen my feet a little bit. I just had to put the ball in play. That was all I was thinking. I was trying to put my team in a good position."

"Michael has been doing a pretty good job with two strikes lately. You can tell he's really working on cutting down his strikeouts

and changing his approach with two strikes," Coach Higgins said.

The Raiders had a chance to

score again in the seventh. Ramos lined a one-out single to center and Kirian grounded out



to first. After Gale was intentionally walked, Kevin Donovan relieved Vam Dam. Dieu rapped a bouncer past short as Ramos attempted to score but Johnson in leftfield rifled him out at the plate.

"I thought he was blocking the plate. I couldn't really get to the plate without hitting him. Whatever happens we got to keep playing," Ramos recalled.

The Cougars' heroics in the seventh did not tarnish Cuccurullo's performance. "He's a bulldog. He just competes. I was telling him he just has to throw strikes and we will be there for him. He did his job," Dieu said.

"He's got good stuff. You know he beat them here last year. He's a competitor. We are looking forward to seeing him pitch a lot," Coach Higgins commented.

As to the weather's bite, Plick

answered, "When you are playing in Cranford baseball, it's always breezy. You got to come out here and get ready to play. Control all you can."

"We tried to stay in the game, keep the bats going and play really good defense, not let any runs up. We had Donovan come in and pitch a great last inning. He got the job done," Johnson added.

"We worked for months for this moment. We practice thousands of bunts. When the opportunity arises, it's not like you are not prepared. I feel good about the first win. Hopefully we can keep it going," Meola expressed.

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