

McCORMACK GOES 3-FOR-3, 3 RUNS; TRAJKOWSKI 3 RBI

Athletics Stop White Sox, 12-3, In Westfield Majors Playoffs

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

The Westfield Majors 12-year-old playoffs began with the fifth-seeded Athletics facing the fourth-seeded White Sox at Gumbert 2 Field in Westfield on May 31. This time it was the Athletics that wielded the hot "metal sticks" banging out 12 hits to stop the White Sox, 12-3.

The Athletics consisted of Sam Esposito, Luke Bracco, Tyler Pietrewicz, Bredon Trajkowski, Logan Martel, Austen Halleran, Liam Morris, Charlie McCormack, Aiden Carlucci, Zach Fernandez and Zach Latessa. The White Sox featured Jack Soriero, Aaron Ives, Brian Jordan, Liam Garrett, Bennett Ayala, Connor Smith, Ted McCue, Alex Lawrence, Evan Bauer and Harrison Thorburn.

McCormack proved to be unstoppable as he went 3-for-3 with an RBI and scored three times, while swiping numerous bases. All three of his hits were infield grounders but his blazing speed was just too much for the White Sox infielders to handle. Trajkowski whacked a two-run single and added an RBI sacrifice fly. Leadoff hitter Esposito tapped a pair of singles and scored twice and Fernandez singled

twice and had two RBI. Bracco singled, walked and scored twice. Pietrewicz had an RBI single and scored once. Carlucci walked and scored twice, Martel singled and scored once, and Halleran singled.

Ives singled twice for the White Sox and added an RBI. Ayala walked twice and scored once. Bauer singled and scored once. Smith had an RBI single and Soriero scored once.

Batting in the top of the first inning, the Athletics took a quick 3-0 lead. Esposito reached first on a throwing error, Bracco plopped a single over first and Trajkowski drilled his two-run single down the leftfield line. Trajkowski would later score on a wild pitch.

The Athletics added a run in the second. Morris walked and stole second but was later gunned down at third base. McCormack beat out an infield single, stole a pair of bases then scored on a passed ball. The White Sox answered with a run in the bottom of the inning to make the score, 4-1. Ayala walked and advanced to second on a wild pitch then scored when Smith's grounder slipped past the first baseman. Any additional rally ended when centerfielder Latessa

caught McCue's liner and alertly fired to third to double up Smith, who was heading for home.

The Athletics stretched their lead to 7-1 with three runs in the fourth. Martel singled past first, stole second then later scored on McCormack's infield single. McCormack would add two more stolen bases then score on a ball in the dirt. Carlucci drew a walk and would later score on Fernandez's single to right field.

Three more Athletics scored in the fifth. Esposito looped a single over first, Bracco walked and Pietrewicz tapped an RBI single. Bracco scored on Trajkowski's sacrifice fly then Pietrewicz scored on a throwing error. The lead jumped to 12-1 when the Athletics added two runs in the sixth. McCormack singled, stole second and scored when Carlucci's fly ball to center was dropped. Fernandez followed with an RBI groundout to short.

The White Sox scored their final two runs in the sixth. Bauer singled into shallow right field and later scored when Soriero's grounder caused an error. Ives followed with an RBI single.

Athletics	310	332	12
White Sox	010	002	3



David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
COLLISION AT THE PLATE...Blue Devil Matt McIntyre is unable to avoid a collision with Ridge catcher Greg Bozzo in the top of the first inning of the North Jersey, Section 3, Group 4 Championship on June 1. Westfield won 4-2.

Blue Devils Rattle Ridge for Section Crown, 4-2

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really on even when it was close to being a strike, so I was comfortable with all of my pitches, which is always a great thing to use in a game," Catanzaro explained.

Red Devil starter Jack Love remained on the mound until he reached his pitch-count limit with two outs in the seventh inning and was replaced by Brendan Bell, who yielded a double to Flynn and struck out a batter. Love allowed 10 hits but walked none, while striking out seven Blue Devils.

The timely hitting came off the bats of Matt McIntyre, Sean Flynn and Andrew Caminiti. McIntyre was unstoppable at the plate, going 4-for-4 with a double, a stolen base and two runs scored. Flynn blasted a pair of long doubles and singled, while scoring once and knocking in two runs. Caminiti whacked a long double in the top of the first inning that would be the catalyst for catching everybody's attention on an interesting call at the plate.

"I was able to see it really well. We had a lot of practice hitting. For three days, all we have done was hitting, hitting and hitting, so that really contributes to success there and seeing the ball well," McIntyre explained. "Just woke up! We knew what we

were playing for. We knew we were playing for first-ever back-to-back in history and all I wanted to do was contribute to getting this win. All I wanted to do, hit the ball hard to make sure we got the win," Flynn expressed.

McIntyre led off the top of the first by ricocheting a hard single off the mound. Caminiti stepped to the plate and drilled his double to straightaway centerfield. McIntyre rounded third and headed home but Ridge catcher Greg Bozzo was standing in his path and a collision ensued. An out call was made and an impassioned conversation followed.

"Obviously I thought he was blocking the plate a little bit but it didn't matter. We won the game," McIntyre commented.

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The Blue Devils' first crucial defensive play came in the bottom of the second inning when McIntyre chased down Bozzo's hard liner in centerfield. In the Westfield third inning, Christian Pansini looped a one-out single into leftfield. McIntyre followed with a single and after Caminiti hit into a force out, Flynn yanked an RBI single to left putting the Blue Devils up 1-0.

Ridge answered with a bit of a fury in the bottom of the inning when Cooper Bobowicz bashed a leadoff double to deep left and Jason Arrigo followed with a slow-rolling bunt single down the third base line. After Catanzaro recorded a much needed strikeout, Chris Parker lined an RBI single to center. The next crucial defensive play came next when Bell smashed a liner that deflected off first baseman Danny Kohler's glove but Kohler quickly reacted, stepped on first and fired quickly to second for an inning-ending double play.

Crucial defensive play number three came in the fourth inning when Blue Devil third baseman Victor Coustan (1-for-3) smothered Bob Parisi's grounder and fired to first for an out.

The Blue Devils jumped their lead

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GETTING UNDER THE TAG...Westfield White Sox base runner Bennett Ayala, No. 4, slides under the tag of Athletics catcher Logan Martel in the second inning of the Majors playoff game at Gumbert 2 Field in Westfield on May 31. See additional photo on next page plus other photos at goleader.com Ballyhoo Sports.

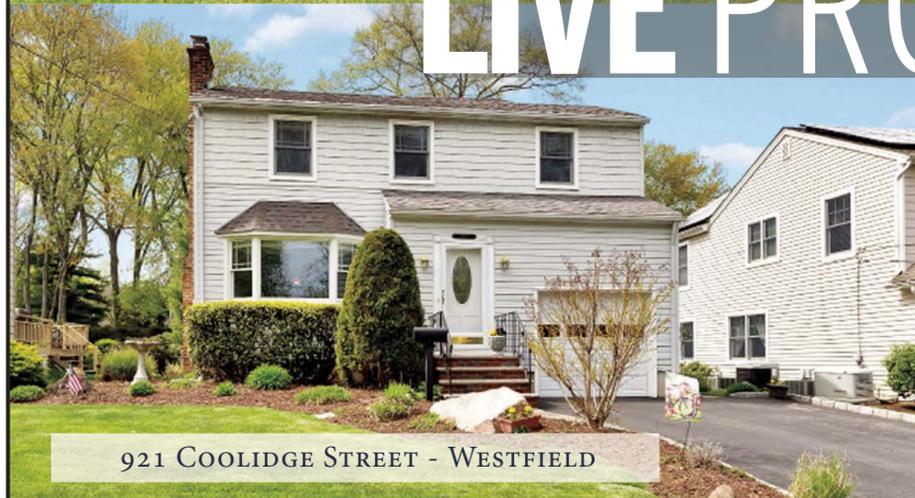


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