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David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
TRYING TO GET THE GO-AHEAD RUN...Blue Devil Jake Bencivenga attempts to score the go-ahead run in the fourth inning but will be tagged out at the plate by Union catcher Rody Martinez. The Blue Devils defeated the Farmers, 4-2.

COUSTAN 2-RUN DBL; McINTYRE, CAMINITI 2 HITS EACH

Blue Devils Pass by Union, 4-2, In North 2, Group 4 Baseball

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

Big opportunities occurred but after missing the first opportunity, the eighth-seeded Westfield High School baseball team cashed in on the next two with two runs in the fourth inning and two more in the fifth to overcome the ninth-seeded Union Farmers, 4-2, in the first round of the North Jersey, Section 2, Group 4 Tournament in Westfield on May 20.

Both teams platooned their ace pitchers with the Farmers starting Andrew Sanborn, who was then relieved by Zach Fernandez with the bases loaded and no outs in the fourth inning, and the Blue Devils starting Mike Carlone, who pitched the first four innings, and MJ Catanzaro tossing the next three innings.

Sanborn allowed three hits and two runs, while walking three batters and striking out three. Fernandez yielded two runs on three hits and five walks, while striking out five batters. Carlone allowed six hits and walked only one batter, while striking out one.

Catanzaro tossed three scoreless innings, allowing one hit and a walk, while striking out two Farmers.

The Farmers scored once in the top of the first inning. Leadoff batter Jalen Bryant jumped on Carlone's first pitch for a double to left-center. After a groundout to short, Matt Silvestre punched an RBI into right field but was thrown out at first by Christopher Ho. Then third baseman Victor Coustan made a diving smother of Mike Velez's grounder and tossed to first for the third out.

The Blue Devils' first big opportunity came next. Matt McIntyre (2-for-3, RBI, intentional walk) yanked a leadoff single to right and Andrew Caminiti (2-for-3, walk) followed with a single to center. Unfortunately for the Blue Devils, the next three batters failed to bring them home.

Brilliant defense paid off again in the Farmer third. McIntyre performed a diving, rolling snag of a low liner in centerfield for the first out. After Carlone struck out the next batter, Bryant and Nick Saracino both singled

but first baseman Danny Kohler got the third out when he fielded Silvestre's grounder and tossed to Carlone covering first.

The Farmers extended their lead to 2-0 in the fourth. With Sanborn on second, Rody Martinez looped an RBI single into leftfield.

The second big opportunity came in the Westfield fourth but it was nearly missed. Kohler drew a leadoff walk. Ho pushed a single over second and Coustan walked to load the bases with no one out. Fernandez stepped on the mound and got John Czarnecki to ground into a force out at home. Fernandez struck out the next batter for the second out but then walked Christian Pansini for an easy RBI. McIntyre stepped to the plate and drilled an RBI single to right, scoring Coustan. Courtesy runner Jake Bencivenga also attempted to score on the play for the go-ahead run but he was gunned down at the plate.

"I was just trying to do my part there. I am seeing the ball well, hitting

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

Roselle Park Stuns Blue Devils For UCT Softball Crown, 7-1

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

Roselle Park erupted for five runs in the top of the fourth inning on its way to a 7-1 victory over Westfield in the Union County Tournament softball championship game played on May 15 at Cougar Field on the campus of Kean University. It was the second straight championship victory for the Panthers over top-seeded Westfield. Roselle Park received a stellar pitching performance from Madison Hummel who struck out six batters, scattered six hits and walked none against a potent Blue Devil lineup.

"She deserves all the credit today and so does their team," said Westfield Head Coach Caitlin Cheddar. "They did an absolutely excellent job. They played pretty much a clean game on defense after a little bit of a nervous first inning. When they had runners on base, they executed. Hummel did a great job. She was moving the ball all over the place. I don't think she threw one fat pitch. When she doesn't

do that it is tough to get offense going against her."

Hummel and Westfield ace Michaela Hobson engaged in a pitching duel over the course of the first three innings with neither allowing a run to the opposition. But all that changed in the top of the fourth inning. After surrendering a leadoff walk to Hummel, Hobson struck out the next batter. Next up was Gabrielle Scott, who hit a slow grounder up the middle that was fielded by Julia Romano. But second baseman Molly Stogner also made a move to field the ball leaving no one to receive the relay for a force play at second. Instead of a possible inning-ending double play, Hobson was now facing runners on first and second with one out.

"It was a miscommunication as to who was going to cover the bag or whether she should take it herself," said Cheddar. "Sometimes those things happen. That was not a routine ball."

The Panthers took advantage of the

opportunity when Madison Cieslinski dropped a two-out bloop single down the right field line that landed just inches inside the chalk, scoring the first run of the game. Next Luana DaLuz delivered a more definitive blow with a shot to straight away centerfield that Westfield freshman Kalea Calugay could not track down. The ball bounced at the base of the fence and scored two more runs giving the Panthers a 3-0 lead. Meaghan Mooney then fisted a bloop infield single just over the pitcher's mound that fell in front of second base, scoring another run. Sarah Lippin followed with a slow roller out in front of the plate that stayed fair and loaded the bases. Hobson then walked Hummel scoring another run during the nightmare fourth inning. The Panthers benefited from a pair of walks and no less than three infield singles in putting five runs on the board.

"At some point in these games you are going to need the bounces to go your way," said Roselle Park Head

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16



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POPUP TO SHORT...Roselle Park Panther Madison Ciesinski, No. 17, hits a popup to short as Blue Devil catcher Erica Lawrence observes in the sixth inning of the Union County Tournament Championship at Kean University on May 15.

Lady Blue Devils 2nd, Boys 3rd at UCT Track

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

Miranda Lorsbach took top honors in the 3,200 at 11:23.01 followed by Blue Devils Grace Endy at 11:42.98 and Samantha Salz at 11:46.79 and Raider Olivia Zambrio at 11:47.51.

Blue Devils Kronheimer at 168-4, Griffin Rooney at 160-1 and Connor Hach at 150-6 took 1-2-4 in the javelin. Raider Zach Zimmerman took seventh with a toss of 133-1.5. Blue

Gabriel is just good, so I couldn't beat him," Leigh expressed.

With his broad range of talent, Leigh has been a real workhorse for the Raiders this season.



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VERY CLOSE FINISH...Blue Devil Ajay Olson, left, Gabe Nash (Elizabeth) and Raider Jacob Leigh head for the line in the 200 meters at the Union County Tournament in Plainfield. Nash finished first, Leigh was second and Olson finished fourth.

UC Viking Sydney Tucker won the 200 at 24.65 and Raiders Lyght at 26.09 and Julia Jackson at 26.47 finished 6-11.

For the boys on Day 1, Leigh earned the Raiders 10 team points by crossing first in the 400 with a personal record (PR) time of 48.02. Blue Devil Ajay Olson finished third at 48.61. Blue Devil Jake Saltzer finished eighth at 49.62.

"It's kind of new. I have been running the 4x4 like last year but I never gone on open time. I wasn't expecting to go 48.02. Half a second PR from last week, so I was surprised," Leigh explained.

Leigh also finished second in the 100 dash at 10.87 behind Gabe Nash (Elizabeth) at 10.65, while Olson finished fourth at 11:04.

Devil James McCutcheon finished third in the 1,600 with a time of 4:22.23, followed by Raider Brandon Garcia at 4:23.89 and Blue Devil Will Loggia at 4:24.61. Blue Devil Quinn Priscoe took third in the long jump with a leap of 21-10.5. In the high jump, Blue Devils Jack Cioffi tied for fourth at 5-10 and Nick Rubineti tied for seventh at 5-8.

On Day 2, Leigh finished second in the 200 at 21.87 behind Gabe Nash at 21.73 and Olson finished fourth at 22.37. Cranford Cougar Matt Maggio finished seventh at 22.9 and Blue Devil Steve Zucker finished 11th at 23.24.

"I didn't feel like I ran my best yesterday in the 1[00]. I think I ran pretty well in the one I did [200].

"I have been doing high jump and I ran the 400 yesterday," Leigh commented.

His personal record in the high jump is 6-4 but not without incident.

"We actually didn't practice high jump for like two weeks then in a meet I did 6-4. When I went to jump at 6-6, I cut my head open and had to get stitches," Leigh explained.

With his refreshing verbal style, it was clear that Leigh was not native to New Jersey.

"I am from Oxford, England, and I lived in Singapore for a few years then when I was going into seventh grade, I moved here. I never really started doing track until I came here as a freshman," Leigh revealed.

Fleischer crossed the line first in the 3,200 with a time of 9:37.74. Blue Devils Will McGlynn at 9:59.35, Zach Spergel at 9:59.56 and Aidan Kilbourn at 10:09.82 finished 4-5-8. Blue Devil Cooper Brennan finished third in the 800 at 1:58.62 and Raider Garcia finished fourth at 1:59.76. Blue Devil Ronnie Melao finished 11th at 2:03.5, followed by Raider Myles Singletary at 2:04.53.

UC Viking Conor Reilly won the battle in the pole vault clearing 14-6, followed by New Providence Pioneer Cheney Price at 13-6 and Raider Ian Celardo at 12-6. Raider Tyler Dvorin placed seventh at 11-6. Kyle Lipscomb (Linden) easily won the discus with a toss of 181-2. Cougar Mike Conrad at 126-8, Blue Devil Declan McCauley at 126-7, Raider Doug Tibbals at 125-1 and Blue Devil Braden Stryker at 121-3 placed 7 through 10.



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CLEARING 12-6...Raider Ian Celardo cleared 12-6 to place third in the pole vault event at the Union County Tournament at Hub Stine Field in Plainfield.

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