

THE WEEK IN SPORTS

SHOVLIN, LOMBARDI LAUNCH HOME RUNS; MANZI MUFFLES JERSEY BATS

The Mattress Factory Bounces Back Big; Pounces on 4th-Seeded A. J. Jersey, 11-4

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

The two-time defending Westfield Men's Softball League Champion Mattress Factory displayed its resilience by overcoming a 4-1 deficit after two innings and sprang to an 11-4 victory over A. J. Jersey in the second playoff game of the best-of-five series at Tamaques Park in Westfield on July 27. Factory men Ron Shovlin and Kevin Lombardi each blasted a home run to get the momentum going.

Fourth-seeded A. J. Jersey did, however, get the jump on the Mattress

Factory by winning the first game of the series, 6-3. Things appeared to be heading in the same direction as the Jersey men leapt to an early 4-1 lead after two innings but Factory pitcher Al Manzi had other ideas and silenced the A. J. Jersey bats for the remainder of the game.

Using an effective defensive strategy, the Jersey men baffled the big Factory guns in the first inning. Using timely overshifts, the A. J. Jersey defense just seemed to be where the ball was hit.

With two outs in the bottom of the first, Jersey man Greg Hobson steamed a single past third. Jerry Lipshitz drilled a single over third and Kevin Price pounded a three-run home run to deep center.

Shovlin narrowed the score to 3-1 in the top of the second with his solo home run, which hit a rut and hopped over the center fielder's head. A. J. Jersey answered with a run in the lower half of the inning when Ed Novy whacked a solo homer to left.

The Mattress Factory recoiled and scored two runs in the third. Lombardi lashed a single to left and Rob Rowland yanked a single to right. Kevin Zippler slashed an RBI single to right and advanced to second on the throw to home. Tim Walsh stepped

up and made the score 4-3 with an RBI sacrifice fly to left.

After Manzi held A. J. Jersey in the third to only a single from Hobson, the Factory men manufactured four runs in the fourth, taking a 7-4 lead. Shovlin found a vacant

spot in right for a single and Joe Walsh looped a whirling RBI double behind third. Chris Masterson bashed an RBI single to left then Lombardi launched his two-run homer over the left fielder's head.

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David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
MAKING THE BIG STRETCH...Mattress Factory first baseman Ronnie Shovlin makes a big stretch to record the out against A. J. Jersey.

GATES SLAMS 4 HITS, 4 RUNS, 3 RBI; PRICE SOARS

SPF Raiders Repel Uprising; Stop Chiefs for Fiorino Title

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

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood 11's won the battle of the tribes, defeating the West Caldwell Chiefs, 15-12, in seven innings, in the championship game of the John Fiorino Memorial Baseball Tournament at Gumbert Field in Westfield on July 29. Raider

West Caldwell stopped Warren in the semifinals. Westfield recoiled to defeat the Warren Rockies, 8-4, in the consolation round on July 29.

In the title game, the Raiders jumped to a 3-0 lead in the top of the first. Clayton Balch reached safely on an error, then Gates brought him home by crashing his triple into the

poked a leadoff single to left then stole second. Balch walked and Gates thumped a ground-rule RBI double. Bell's grounder to first scored Balch and Scibeck's fly to center scored Gates. Sean Young hammered a steaming double down the third baseline then later scored on an error.

Alex Wujciak whacked a leadoff double for the Chiefs in the bottom of the second then dashed to third on a passed ball. Joe Dente made the score 7-1 when he laid down a perfect RBI sacrifice bunt.

Still with the momentum on their side, the Raiders had a three-run uprising in the third to command a 10-1 lead. Chris Cooper drew a walk then moved to third on two passed balls. Price hopped an RBI single over the third baseman's head and Gates reached first safely on a throwing error. Bell walked, then Scibeck smashed a two-run double down the third baseline.

Shaken but with plenty of pride, the Chiefs answered loudly with four runs in the bottom of the third. Gunner Siebert hooked a single to left, stole second then scored on Sean Romano's single to left. Next, Raider third baseman Brian Halpin made a nice fielding play to nab the runner heading to second. John Schomaker dribbled an infield RBI single, then Wujciak made the score 10-5 with a two-run double to deep center.

The silence of the "metal sticks" ruled the fourth inning as neither team scored although Halpin managed to whiz a single over third. Even though Gates singled and Bell walked, the Raiders failed to score in the fifth.

Taking advantage of four walks, four passed balls and two stolen bases, the Chiefs roared with three runs in the fifth. Romano, Mike Lawshe and Matt Kirbas all crossed the plate for the Chiefs. Raider pitcher Alex Fourre then caught fire, struck out the next two batters and got the third to ground out.

After the Raiders went down in order, the Chiefs tied the game, 10-10, with two runs in the sixth. Matt Dorting and Steve LaSaffre both walked, then Dorting scored on another passed ball. Romano's chopping single to center tied the game and the Raiders were in jeopardy. Two back-to-back run downs between home and third sent the game into extra innings.

Now totally excited, the Raiders put that excitement to good use in

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David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
SLIDING SAFELY INTO THIRD...Kyle Gates of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood 11's slides safely into third in the second inning as West Caldwell third baseman Matt Dorting catches the ball during the finals of the John Fiorino Memorial Baseball Tournament.

Kyle Gates slammed two singles, a double and a triple and scored four times while collecting three RBI and teammate Dom Price had three hits and scored three runs while knocking in two runs which cost the Chiefs dearly.

On July 27, the SPF Raiders defeated the Westfield Blue team and

left field fence. Jeff Bell clanged an RBI double to right-center then scored on two passed balls.

Raider pitcher Matt Scibeck was effective in the bottom of the first, retiring three of the four Chief batters and holding them scoreless. Moments later, the Raiders elevated their lead to 7-0 in the second. Price

KREYER SCREAMS A 2-RUN SHOT

St. Joseph Holds Down Stubborn St. Paul, 5-3

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

St. Joseph evened its record to 8-8 in the St. Bartholomew's Oldtimers Softball League by holding down a stubborn St. Paul team at Brookside Park in Scotch Plains on July 30. Although St. Joseph chipped away with its runs, Charlie Kreyer contributed the largest chunk with an unusual two-run shot in the fourth inning.

Also unusual in the St. Bart's League has been the fact of such a low scoring game. St. Joseph pitcher Joe Matuska and St. Paul pitcher Tony Blasi did a superb job of making the ball so difficult for the opposing batters to hit squarely.

Blasi retired the first three St. Joseph batters in the top of the first and received some help from second baseman Tony Barattucci who made a fabulous running catch of a pop-up to shallow right field. Matuska allowed only a walk to Paul Nadolny in the bottom of the first.

Kreyer yanked a single to left to lead off the second but St. Joseph failed to score. Tom Engleman had a single to left-center but St. Paul also remained scoreless thanks to a brilliant running catch by St. Joseph center fielder Marc DiFrancesco.

The first chip came in the third when St. Joseph scored a run, but the chip could have been a huge chunk if it had not been for an outstanding Blasi-to-Barattucci-to-Bill Mirto double play. After Frank Pepe singled. The second-to-first double play occurred, then Rich Worth followed with a single over second. Matt Fugett also singled, then Al Weber wobbled an RBI single past third.

Tom Kucin and Mike Hayeck both singled in the third but St. Paul could not reach home base. St. Joseph then took a 3-0 lead in the fourth when Dave Rothenberg ripped a double to right and Kreyer whacked his two-run shot past the stumbling center fielder.

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David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
SMASHING A SINGLE TO LEFT...St. Paul batter Tom Engleman smashes a single to left field during the game with St. Joseph at Brookside Park in Scotch Plains. St. Joseph won 5-3.



David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
IS HE UNDER THE TAG?...Rob Rowland of the Mattress Factory slides under Dave Rizzo of A. J. Jersey in the fifth inning and is called out on a very close and dusty play. The Mattress Factory defeated A. J. Jersey, 11-4, in the second game of the best of five series and later went on to win the series.

MALTA SCORES WINNING RUN ON MEYER'S SINGLE

Checchio Chiropractic Stops Jolly Trolley in Seventh, 4-3

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

Checchio Chiropractic advanced to the finals of the Westfield Men's Softball League playoffs by stopping a very competitive Jolly Trolley team, 4-3, in the third game of a best-of-five semifinal series at Tamaques Park in Westfield on July 28. Frank Malta scored the winning run in the bottom of the seventh when Bob Meyer singled up-the-middle.

Although Checchio's won all three

games to advance, the road to the finals was not easy. Checchio's skimmed past the Trolley, 4-2, in the first game, then found itself locked in a 4-4 tie in the second game on July 26. When the game resumed in the top of the 10th inning on July 28, Checchio's rallied for three runs, then halted the Jolly Trolley to win 7-4.

Playing on a freshly dragged infield, both teams' defenses experienced no bad hops on the infield. Due to this rare and fine scenario, specta-

tors were able to observe a multitude of spectacular fielding plays.

The Jolly Trolley failed to score in the top of the first mainly due to a fine catch of a line shot to third and a sharp scoop of a grounder by Checchio second baseman Danny Mondelli. Checchio's returned the favor by failing to score in the bottom of the inning despite Joe Dasti's lead-off single.

Jim Ruta got the Trolley rolling in

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David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
POOF! MARKS IS ON THE MARK AT HOME...Lee Marks of the Jolly Trolley creates a huge dust cloud as he plows into home base in the sixth inning as Checchio Chiropractic catcher Dave Duels waits for the ball. Checchio Chiropractic defeated the Jolly Trolley, 4-3, and won the very competitive series.

THE FACTOR FACTOR RULES SUPREME WITH 2 HOMERS, SEVEN RBI

Russell Road Crew Secures 2nd Place; Leaves Sun Valley in the Dark, 19-3

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

A dark cloud of absenteeism obscured Sun Valley's golden opportunity to seize first place in the Fanwood Old Men's Softball Association when the top-notched Russell Road crew took advantage of the situation and rolled with a 19-3 victory at LaGrande Park in Fanwood on August 2. Offensive terror Clint Factor ruled supreme as he went four-for-four with two monumental home runs and drove in seven runs.

The outcome of the game would have offered several options. If the Sun Valley men would have won, they would have finished with a 10-4-1 record, the same as Willoughby; however, Sun Valley would have captured first place due to their head-to-head advantage over Willoughby. With a win, Russell would have had the same record as Willoughby but would have had to settle for second place due to Willoughby's head-to-head edge. In the rare event of a tie, Hunter Avenue would have secured the second place position and Russell and Sun Valley would have had to play each other again for the third

place spot.

The Road crew rolled early with two runs in the top of the first inning. Tim Walsh drilled a double off the screen in left, then Factor fractured a two-run homer into the playground beyond left field.

Russell Road pitcher Tom Culinane was fierce in the first as he allowed only a single to Luke Cerchio, then in the second the Russell Road crew rumbled over Sun Valley with eight runs. Joe Walsh strutted to the plate and plastered a leadoff solo home run

over the screen in left. Chris Masterson bounced a shot off the third baseman's arm and Paul LaMastra walked.

After Culinane fled out to center the merry-go-round began. Don Weber loaded the bases with a walk, Tim Walsh walked in a run and Scott Johnson followed with another walk. Factor changed the process slightly with a two-run single off the pole in center. Wally Alicia smashed a two-run double to center, then Jordan Scher lofted an RBI sacrifice fly to left.

Mike Pellino slapped a single to right for Sun Valley but any ray of hope was extinguished when Weber made a circus catch in right for the third out.

The score jumped to 13-0 when Russell Road added three more runs in the third. After Valley center fielder Kevin Woodring made a great running catch for the first out, LaMastra drew a walk. Culinane also walked, then Weber hit into a force play but an ensuing throwing error allowed LaMastra to score. Moments later, Tim Walsh walloped a two-run home

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David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times
FIGURING IN THE FACTOR FACTOR...Russell Road "hit man" Clint Factor trots home after crushing the first of his two home runs as umpire Bob Brelinsky also heads for home. Russell Road overshadowed Sun Valley, 19-3.