

SPORTS

Westerners win the close ones

BY JASON TUREK
Sports Reporter

The Danbury Westerners won three out of five games at Rogers Park this past week, bringing the team to a .500 record at 18-18 and in third place in the Southern Division of the New England Collegiate Baseball League. Danbury's three victories were all by one run.

Last Wednesday, the Westerners squeaked out a 4-3 win over Pittsfield, thanks to home runs off the bats of Pat Nalley and Jesse Cole. Joe Zongol pitched well, giving up one run on one hit in five innings of work.

With the score tied at four in the bottom of the eighth, Nalley reached base with a one-out single and advanced to second on a ground out by John Mollicone. Mike DeLaca came up and hit a grounder to Pittsfield shortstop Wilson Matos, who made an error on the play, allowing Nalley to score.

Cory Riordan, who came on to relieve Zongol in the sixth, struck out the side in the top of the ninth to preserve the win. With the win, Danbury ran its record to .500 at 16-16.

The following day, the Westerners were no-hit by Southern Division rival Newport to drop to 16-17.

After three scoreless innings, Newport scored two runs in the fourth and fifth innings and shut out Danbury, 5-0. With the win, Newport stayed atop the division, running its record to 18-14.

The Newport offensive attack was led by Stephen Douglas and Cyle Hanker, who each hit home runs off of Brian Murphy. Four Newport pitchers combined to strike out 11 Westerner hitters and allow one walk.

After being no-hit, the Westerners got back to their winning ways and .500 with a 3-2 win over Torrington.

The first three runs of the game were scored on home runs. Torrington hit two against Danbury starter Uohon Yi off the bats of Justin Lepore and

Steffan Wilson. Danbury's Mollicone hit a home run in the second inning that tied the score at one against Torrington starter Sean Spicer.

Danbury scored an unearned run in the sixth and a run in the seventh, thanks to the bat of Mollicone, who led off the inning with a double.

Yi pitched well after giving up the home runs, going 7.1 innings, and striking out five before running into trouble in the top of the eighth. Frank Hassan came on in relief to get the final two outs of the inning and close the door in the ninth to pick up his fifth save of the season. Yi improved to 3-0.

On Saturday, the Westerners were upended by North Adams 9-1 to fall to 17-18 on the season.

Bethel resident Luke Calzone started for the Westerners, but couldn't get out of the first. He lasted 0.1 inning, giving up three runs on two hits. New Milford's Jeremy Shaw came on in relief and pitched 2.2 innings, giving up one run on two hits.

Danbury's lone run came in the seventh when Brad Olt knocked in Jesse Cole with a single. The run was the only blemish for North Adams starter Steve Kost, who allowed four hits and struck out six.

On Tuesday, the Westerners got retribution against North Adams with another one-run victory, 4-3, their third of the week.

Mollicone continued his power surge with a solo home run in the first inning to give the Westerners the early lead. North Adams tied the score at one as Brandon Menchaca homered off Brian Murphy.

Jose Ortiz gave the Westerners a 4-1 lead in the third when he smacked a three-run homer off North Adams starter Evaa Scribner.

North Adams scored two runs in the sixth, led by Kris Watts, who hit his team's second home run of the contest.

Brian Murphy pitched 7.1 innings, giving way to Hassan, who struck out three hitters in 1.2 innings to pick up his sixth save. With the win, Murphy ran his record to 2-3 on the season.

Post 31 advances to Round of 16

New Milford Legion team again makes some noise in postseason

BY LAURA MCCUSKER
Sports Editor

The New Milford American Legion team continued its winning ways on Sunday, defeating Newington 5-2 in a State Tournament "Play-in" game at Torrington. The win sends Post 31 to its second straight trip to the Connecticut Legion Round of 16, in the team's fourth year of existence.

Newington got in the scoring column first on Sunday, plating a run in the



Photograph by Robin Goord

Alex Crowcroft of the New Milford American Legion team about to make contact with a pitch in a recent game. Post 31 has made it to the Round of 16 for the second straight year.

New Milford 5
Newington 2

ResultsB2
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top of the first inning, when lead-off batter Joe Cousineau hit a bunt single, stole second, and scored on a fielder's choice.

New Milford, which went into the game with 20 wins, wouldn't trail for long, though. Post 31 racked up three runs in the bottom of the frame, taking the lead for good. Ron Newkirk got it started with a single, followed by walks to Ryan Marcoux and Alex Crowcroft, loading the bases. Pat Hendricks then drove in a run with a single, with Will Elwell also singling, plating two more.

Staked to a 3-1 lead, pitcher Crowcroft took charge, allow-

ing only one run on three hits over the next eight frames. He issued just one free pass and struck out four.

"Alex had another outstanding game. His breaking ball was his money pitch and was almost unhittable. Add in his moving fastball and he was overpowering," said Post 31 head coach Dan Olson. "We played good defense behind him, and although we made a couple of errors, they were on tough plays."

It was also impressive for Crowcroft to get the complete game win, since a complete game is nine innings in the postseason. All during the regular season, games run only

seven innings.

New Milford lacked on a run in the second on a Marcoux single and Crowcroft RBI triple. The fifth run came in the fourth, as Ryan Madden doubled, coming home on a Marcoux single.

Offensively, Marcoux was too hot for either of Newington's two pitchers to handle, roping three line drive singles. Crowcroft was also a tough out, picking up a single and triple, while Elwell had two clutch hits and Madden a double.

Newington's Ken Cook started, giving up all five runs on eight hits, walking four and striking out four.

Eric Fenjason finished up, tossing the last two innings, allowing no runs on two hits, walking none and fanning one. Nick Damino doubled, for his team's only extra base hit.

New Milford, now 21-7 on the season, will play in the Round of 16 at Palmer Field in Middletown, taking on Waterbury at 10 a.m. on Saturday. Post 31 played Waterbury three times during the regular season, and won all three games. A win there will have Post 31 playing on Sunday at 4:30 p.m., while a loss sends the team to a Sunday 10 a.m. game.