

Rotary, Signature Landscaping claim division championships

Kevin Love pitched five-plus innings with 11 strikeouts to lead Rotary to a 7-1 win over Monker Grotto in the Norwalk Little League Major Division championship game.

In the AAA Division, Signature Landscaping's Jake Somma outduelled Johnny Swick of Marinello's Deli and the Landscapers took the title with a 1-0 victory.

Major Division

Love allowed only one run on three hits and a walk and closer Brandon Cruz came on to get the final out on three pitches in Rotary's 7-1 victory.

Philip Uva led the Rotary offense with two hits and three RBI; Ryan Evans tripled, drove in a run, walked twice, scored twice and had two stolen bases; Nick Calabrese doubled and scored a run and Ricky Mejia got on twice and stole three bases, including home in the first.

Monker Grotto's Nate Cutting and Johanan Knight combined to fan nine. Michael Stein and Matthew Salata had one hit each. Edward Petrillo scored.

Monker Grotto 4 Rotary 2

Paul Salata pitched a complete game to send Monker Grotto to the championship game. Salata had 14 strikeouts and allowed only two runs. Salata helped his cause by going 2-for-2. Knight, Stein, Cutting and Peter O'Conner all had singles.

For Rotary, Evans had 12 strikeouts. Love had a single and scored a run. Evans had an RBI double and scored on a single by Thomas Henderson. Alex Marcarelli and Ryan

NORWALK LL

Searles both had bunt singles in the third.

Matarese 10, Lions 1

Hunter Sharkey pitched six innings for the complete game victory and struck out 12. Sean Welch went 3-for-3 with a grand slam homer, three-run triple, and a double, finishing with seven RBI. B.J. Buckle had an RBI single for the Lions.

Eagles 5

Monker Grotto 1

Brendan Mills pitched five solid innings, striking out eight and allowing only one run. Brendan Hanzlik pitched out of a bases loaded jam in the sixth and struck out three. Tom Arduino scored twice and Guillermo Rosales scored.

For Monker Grotto, Cutting pitched 5 1/3 innings striking out nine and allowing only one hit. Greg Goldstein closed the game, facing only two batters. Knight and Edward Petrillo each had a pair of hits for Monker, Cutting and Joey Benincaso one hit each and Tim Furgiuele had a hit and an RBI.

Laurel AC 4

Kiwanis 1

Matt Diurno pitched five innings and allowed only two hits. Mike Bogus led the Laurels with a single, double and two RBI. Chris Winthrop had two singles, and Angel Nieves doubled. Matt Diurno and Scott Brandfeller had singles.

For Kiwanis, Bobby Butler singled and tripled and scored, Justin Hufnagel doubled and singled home a run and



Signature Landscaping captured the championship in the Norwalk Little League AAA Division with a 1-0 victory over Marinello's Deli in the title tilt. Members of the championship team, front row, from left, were Joey Somma, Danny Frattaroli, Evan Uva, Patrick Coulter, Alex Canevari. Second row, from left, Ryan McGonigle, Jack Coulter, Shane Kilcoyne, Trey Canevari, Jake Somma. Back row, from left, Tysen Canevari, Todd Somma, Scott Coulter

Kyle Pisacrita doubled and pitched 3-2/3 shutout innings.

Jaycees 9, Lions 3

Edwin Owolo had a single, double, two RBI and two runs scored to lead the Jaycees. Corey Hayes had two hits and two RBI; Matt Crowley singled and scored twice; Jared Smith doubled and scored twice; Harrison Hefferan and Max Lawrence both singled and scored. Alex Scallion and Lawrence held the Lions to three runs and four hits.

For the Lions, Daniel Romanello had a bases-loaded two-RBI single in the fifth. Brian Beaumonte, Buckle and Sean Geerchken had hits, and Brendan Brown and Makik Massey scored.

Eagles 9, Matarese 5

Trey Newcomb went 5-1/3 innings with nine

strikeouts and two walks. Yesid Rodriguez had the save. Newcomb had three hits and scored twice. Brendan Hanzlik had a two-run single; Brent Bestercy and Rodriguez added hits and runs scored; Matt Arduino had an RBI and scored, Shawn Hanzlik scored and Kevin Melendez drove in one and scored.

For Matarese, Ben Kubie had two hits and two RBI and Trevor Burns singled and drove in a run.

AAA Division

Signature Landscaping 1 Marinello's Deli 0

Jake Somma and Swick, for Marinello's Deli hooked up in a classic pitcher's duel in the AAA Championship game. Somma struck out five and allowed only one hit in 4 2/3 innings

of work. Alex Canevari pitched the final 1-1/3 innings, striking out two without allowing a baserunner to earn the save.

Danny Frattaroli singled and Jack Coulter's fly ball scored Ryan McGonigle with the game's only run.

For Marinello's, Swick hurled five innings, allowing 1 unearned run, scattering five hits and fanning five. Tommy Benincaso finished up. Benincaso had the lone hit in the first inning.

Marinello's Deli 10

Evans Distribution 4

The combination of Swick and Tommy Benincaso sent Marinello's Deli to the championship game. Swick came in relief and retired all four batters he faced, striking out three. Benincaso retired the two batters he faced, striking

out 1.

At the plate, Benincaso singled twice, had three RBI and scored twice. Nick Granata singled, doubled, had an RBI and scored three runs. Swick tripled in a run and scored twice. Mike Dilorio singled in a run and Nathan Brenn had a single and a run scored.

For Evans, Kyle Mossop singled in a run and scored two. John Skroly singled in a run. Jimmy Evans pitched well in relief.

Stew Leonard's 2

Diamond Deli 1

In a pitching duel, Isaac Keehn of Stew Leonard's struck out 11 in 4-2/3 innings, allowing no runs and only three hits. Scott Whalen pitched the final 1-1/3 innings allowing one run on two hits. On offense, Anthony Bombace, Keehn, Whalen and Peter Baez had one hit each.

Italia 8

C&C Landscaping 2

Alex Marino led Italia to its first playoff win, going 3 1/3 innings with 10 strikeouts. Jack Potochney got the save, going 2 2/3 innings with six Ks. Isaiah Rodriguez went 3-for-3, with a single, double, triple, two runs scored, and three RBI. Marino went 2-for-2, with two runs and two RBI. Andrew Goldstein added a double. Matt Pinho, Christian Willkehr, and Ricky Clark also had hits for Italia.

C&C's Eric Palacio made two great catches. Logan Raymond, Nicholas Howard and Connor Mastropietro all pitched well. Nicholas Howard had a couple of hits and Matt Howard scored twice.

West Norwalk stars win Bethel tourney

The West Norwalk Cal Ripken 12-year-old all-star team went 4-0 and captured the championship of the 16th annual Al Leonard tourney in Bethel.

In Game one, Chris Cotaling pitched a six-inning masterpiece to defeat New Fairfield, 3-0. The offense was led by Mike Terzian with two hits, Charles Lomanto with a double and Ty Doris with a hit and a run scored. Solid defensive plays were made Matt Downey to preserve the shutout.

Game two saw West Norwalk come from behind for a 7-3 victory. Down 3-1 to Danbury, West Norwalk rallied for three in the fifth and three more in the sixth and held on for the win.

Jake Melnick pitched four strong innings and Cameron Haber pitched the last two to get the win. The offense was led by Haber who had three hits and two RBI. Terzian added two hits

CAL RIPKEN BASEBALL

and Leo Andriuk had a two-run single to aid in the comeback. Left fielder Tyler Tsang and first baseman Chase Stumpf were strong in the field.

In Game 3, West Norwalk trimmed the host team from Bethel by an 11-2 margin. Up to that point, Bethel had won its three games by a combined score of 32-0.

Bethel jumped out 1-0 in the top of the first but West Norwalk answered with two runs in the bottom of the first and never looked back. Scoring three more in the second and four in the third, West Norwalk put the game out of reach.

Cotaling pitched another complete game victory with five strikeouts.

The offense was led by Ryan Connors with two hits, three runs scored and one RBI. Cotaling added two hits,



The West Norwalk Cal Ripken 12-year-old all-stars went 4-0 and captured the championship of the Al Leonard tournament in Bethel. Team members were, back row, from left, coaches John Downey, Mike Connors and Andy Andriuk. Middle row, from left, Matt Downey, Jake Melnick, Ty Doris, Mike Terzian, Cameron Haber and Chase Stumpf. Front row, from left, Kei Pritsker, Charles Lomanto, Chris Cotaling, Ryan Connors, Tyler Tsang and Leo Andriuk.

two runs scored and an RBI, and Kei Pritsker and Terzian also had timely hits.

In the championship game, a rematch with New Fairfield, West Norwalk scored a 6-3 victory.

New Fairfield took a 1-0 lead in the top of the first but West Norwalk bounced back to take the lead in the bottom of the second on an RBI double by Andriuk and a two-run homer by Pritsker.

West Norwalk went up 6-1 in the bottom of the

fourth on a three-run homer by Haber.

New Fairfield mounted a rally in the top of the sixth, scoring two runs and having bases loaded one out. West Norwalk turned to Jake Melnick to save the game and he did by striking out the No. 3 hitter and getting the cleanup hitter to ground out.

Mike Terzian pitched five innings. Also contributing on offense were Melnick, Tyler Tsang, Pritsker and Terzian with two hits apiece.

Griffin confident he can help Clippers

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Blake Griffin heard the doubters who wondered why he was joining a college team coming off a 16-15 season.

"A lot of people, when I committed to Oklahoma, asked me, 'Why did you commit there? Why didn't you go to Kansas or Duke or somewhere like that?'" he recalled Tuesday. "I just said, 'You'll see in a couple years.'"

"I'm a big believer in not always following the most popular thing to do. Make your own path. Do you own thing."

Griffin won't have a say in which team he joins in the NBA, with the Los Angeles Clippers expected to select him with the top pick in Thursday's draft. But good thing he enjoys forging a new path. He'll have to do just that to rewrite the history of a franchise best known for its blunders on and off the court.

"It doesn't bother me at all," Griffin told the Associated Press. "All that stuff happened in the past. That's exactly what it is: It's in the past. No one can do anything about it now. If I am with the Clippers, it's going to be all about the future. No disrespect to anybody, but I could care less what happened 20 years ago, 15 years ago."

Or this past season, when the Clippers went 19-63. But Griffin has made good on a guarantee of a turnaround once before. Oklahoma went 23-12 and reached the second round of the NCAA tournament his freshman year. By his sophomore season, the Sooners were 30-6 and advanced to the national quarterfinals before Griffin turned pro.

NBA

Still, Oklahoma wasn't exactly the Clippers of college basketball. The Sooners were a recently successful program sidetracked by NCAA violations, not one of the professional sports franchises most associated with ineptitude and misfortune.

Or maybe the Clippers just need a talent infusion. Griffin prefers to focus on the impact one well-timed draft pick can make on a team, recalling that the Cleveland Cavaliers were 17-65 before they received the top choice in 2003.

"Getting a guy like LeBron changes everything," Griffin said. "I'm not trying to compare myself to him. But there's been a lot of teams that were not so great, and you have to start somewhere. You have to grow from somewhere."

Griffin could have turned pro after his freshman season but felt he needed the extra year to fully prepare himself for the NBA. The 6-10, 248-pound forward averaged 22.7 points and 14.4 rebounds in earning national player of the year honors as a sophomore.

He'll have to lean on all that additional experience and basketball knowledge to try to lead a turnaround in LA.

Griffin saw at Oklahoma how a team's attitude evolves as players learn to win.

"It's a different mindset," Griffin said. "You go into games — you respect your opponent, but you're confident. It's amazing the difference between a team that can win 20 games and a team that wins 30 games."

Jets to wear corporate patch on practice jerseys

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The New York Jets are taking advantage of a new NFL rule this summer that will allow them to place a corporate logo on their practice jerseys as a source of additional revenue.

The rule allows teams to sell sponsorships on their practice jerseys, and the patches can be no larger than 3 1/2-by-4 1/2 inches. The patch the Jets will wear starting in training camp features the logo of Atlantic Health, a New Jersey-based health care provider that owns naming rights on the team's training facility in Florham Park, N.J.

"In this climate, teams have to find ways to deliver additional value to their corporate sponsors because everyone is facing their own unique challenges," said Matt

Higgins, the team's executive vice president of business operations. "It's an example of trying to go the extra mile to deliver value."

Terms of the deal — first reported by the Daily News last week — weren't disclosed, but Higgins confirmed Tuesday the Jets will earn extra revenue. Houston and Green Bay are among other teams exploring similar options.

"When we first did the agreement, we looked for ways to maximize (Atlantic Health's) exposure through impressions at the facility and through the media," Higgins said. "The original agreement contemplated that if the NFL ever changed the rules, they would have the ability to put their patch on our jerseys."

Sponsor logos are common in U.S. auto racing and golf events,

but the NFL allows only one logo to be worn on a practice jersey. The Phoenix Mercury recently announced it will become the first WNBA team to put a sponsor's name on its jerseys.

"The NFL wants to be certain that the brand you're associating with meets the high standards of the league, so there are controls," Higgins said. "There's no desire to NASCAR-ize the jerseys, so there's only one allowed at a time."

The Jets are also working with the state of New Jersey, as well as New York and Connecticut, on developing instant lottery games that could reap an additional \$1 million in revenue.

Higgins said he expects the team to make an announcement within the next few weeks on the games.