FINAL SCORES: Cortland 11, Rensselaer 2; Ithaca 8, Cortland 5

TROY, N.Y. – Cortland jumped out to a 10-0 lead after three innings on its way to an 11-2 victory versus Rensselaer at the NCAA Division III regional at Joe Bruno Stadium. The Red Dragons, however, were eliminated from the tournament that evening after losing 8-5 to Ithaca College. Cortland, which was making its 12th straight NCAA appearance, finishes the season with a 29-16 record, one win shy of its 11th consecutive 30-win campaign.

Senior Neal Heaton Jr. (Bellport) was 4-for-4 with a home run and four RBI, all in the first five innings before being replaced. His three-run, opposite-field homer over the rightfield fence capped a five-run second inning. Sophomore Jimmy Basnight (East Norwich/St. Dominic) was hit by a pitch with the bases loaded and junior Steve Newman (Henrietta/Rush-Henrietta) drove in a run with a sacrifice fly to plate the first two runs of the inning.

In the third, Cortland scored once on a wild pitch, followed by senior Kyle Bestine’s (Westfield) RBI single. Newman tripled in two runs and Heaton singled home a run to extend the lead to 10-0. Rensselaer (27-17) scored twice in the sixth on RBI singles by Dan Quinn and Brian Marine, and Cortland added its final run in the seventh on Nate Gagnon’s (Wilton/South Glens Falls) RBI fielder’s choice.

Newman finished 3-for-5 with three RBI, senior Josh Young (Rochester/Brighton) was 3-for-4 and freshman Will Groff (Queensbury) was 2-for-5 with a double. Senior Mike Hubbs (Averill Park/Tamarac) earned the win, allowing only three hits and no runs in five innings. He finishes the season with a 7-3 record and completes his Red Dragon career tied for eighth with 18 victories.

Against Ithaca, the region’s top seed, Cortland allowed two runs in the second, four in the third and two in the sixth to fall behind 8-1. The Red Dragons slowly chipped away at the lead, scoring once in each of the last four innings to draw within 8-5. Cortland had 18 baserunners in the game on 12 hits, two walks and four hit batters, but left nine on base and hit into two double plays and left nine runners on base.

Newman was 3-for-3 with an RBI triple. Groff was 2-for-4 with an RBI and sophomore Andy Mead (Baldwinsville/C.W. Baker) was 2-for-4. Young and Bestine also drove in runs.

Red Dragon junior starter Mike Burnett (Westfield) was knocked out in the third inning. He allowed six hits and six runs, five earned. Sophomore Nick McPartland (Beacon) allowed six hits and two runs in three and one-third innings. He fanned three and walked two. Sophomore Jason Chyr (Vernon/Vernon-Verona-Sherrill) retired all nine batters that he faced over the final three innings. He struck out four, including three in the eighth.

Rob Litz was 2-for-5 with a triple and four RBI to lead Ithaca (34-8). Eric Maya went 3-for-4 with an RBI. Craig Howe earned the victory, giving up seven hits and three runs over six and one-third innings.

Post-Tournament Notes: Newman was Cortland’s lone representative on the regional all-tournament team. He batted .667 (8-for-12) with two triples, a stolen base and four RBI in three games...Brockport defeated Ithaca, 8-2, in the championship round on Saturday.

(linescores on next page)
NCAA Div. III Baseball Regional
Friday, May 21, 2004; Joe Bruno Stadium; Troy, N.Y.

Cortland 11, Rensselaer 2

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Cortland: Mike Hubbs (W, 7-3), Jim Dougher (6), Jon Rockfeld (9) and Kyle Bestine, Matt Ellis
Rensselaer: Luke Calzone (L, 3-3), Brian Rickert (3) and Brian Marine (Red Hawks: 27-17)

2B - Will Groff (C), Flynn Cochran (R)
3B - Steve Newman (C)
HR - Neal Heaton Jr. (C)

Ithaca 8, Cortland 5

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Ithaca: Craig Howe (W, 4-0), Ryan Mays (7), John Dowling (8) and Craig Nels (Bombers: 34-8)
Cortland: Mike Burnett (L, 7-2), Nick McPartland (3), Jason Chyr (7) and Kyle Bestine (Red Dragons: 29-16)

2B - Nate Gagnon (C)
3B - Rob Litz (I), Steve Newman (C)