FINAL SCORE: N.C. Wesleyan 5, Cortland 4

ROCKY MOUNT, N.C. – North Carolina Wesleyan scored on a fielder's choice grounder with one out in the bottom of the ninth inning to defeat Cortland, 5-4. The Bishops improve to 8-5, while the nationally 24th-ranked Red Dragons fall to 1-2.

Cortland had tied the game with a run in the top of the ninth. With two outs and no one on following a double play, freshman Joey Russo (Inwood/Lawrence) doubled off the fence in right field. Freshman Billy Rizzo (Liverpool) pinch-ran for Russo and stole third, then scored when junior Ricky Piovesan (East Norwich/St. Dominic) reached on a throwing error by the third baseman.

In the bottom of the ninth, however, Cortland reliever Brandon Olbrys (Windsor) hit Nate West with a pitch with one out and walked the following batter. West advanced to third on a passed ball and Matt Smith followed with a grounder to Cortland first baseman Travis Robinson (Ilion). Robinson fielded the ball to his left and fired home, but West barely beat the tag for the winning run.

Cortland took a 1-0 lead in the third inning Sophomore Shawn Ensel (Clifton Park/Shenedehowa) was hit by a pitch with two outs, moved to second on a walk by sophomore Will Groff (Queensbury) and scored on an RBI single by junior Jimmy Basnight (East Norwich/St. Dominic). The lead grew to 2-0 in the fourth when Robinson led off with a double and scored on Russo's two-out double.

The hosts tied the game in the bottom of the fourth with a pair of unearned runs off Cortland starter Jim Dougher (Liverpool). The first run, set up by an errant pick-off attempt, was plated by Brian Massey's RBI single. An error later in the inning allowed the second run to score with two outs.

Cortland regained the lead in the top of the sixth on a two-out solo homer to left by junior Andy Mead (Baldwinsville/C.W. Baker). The Bishops answered in the bottom of the inning when Massey doubled, moved to third on a ground out and scored on a wild pitch. The hosts took a 4-3 lead in the eighth on a two-out error.

Dougher pitched five and one-third innings, allowing only four hits and no walks. He gave up three runs, one earned, and struck out four. Junior Jason Chyr (Vernon/Vernon-Verona-Sherrill) gave up no hits and one unearned run in two innings. Sophomore Jon Rockfeld (Islip Terrace/East Islip) finished the eighth inning and Olbrys started the ninth. Russo finished 2-for-4 with two doubles and an RBI and Mead was 1-for-3 with his homer.

Kyle Robertson started for N.C. Wesleyan and allowed four hits and three runs in seven innings. Brian James pitched the final two innings and earned the win. Massey was 2-for-4 with two RBI.

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Cortland (1-2): Jim Dougher, Jason Chyr (6), Jon Rockfeld (8), Brandon Olbrys (9) (L, 0-1) and Shawn Ensel N.C. Wesleyan (8-5): Kyle Robertson, Brian James (8) (W, 1-0) and Cale Strickland, Chris Masters (7)

HR - Andy Mead (C) 3B - none 2B - Joey Russo (C) 2, Travis Robinson (C), Mark Wooten (NCW), Brian Massey (NCW)