PORT CHARLOTTE, FLA. – Western New England scored five runs in the third inning and held off Cortland the rest of the way in a 5-4 victory over the Red Dragons. Cortland had a seven-game winning streak come to an end with the loss. The nationally 24th-ranked Red Dragons were 7-1 in their eight Florida games and are 8-3 overall. The Golden Bears, last year’s Great Northeast Athletic Conference champions, were playing in their first game of the season.

Jason Connelly earned the win for Western New England, scattering 10 hits over eight and two-third innings. He struck out five, did not walk a batter and gave up four runs, two earned. Chris Anderson retired the lone batter he faced for the save.

Cortland senior Mike Burnett (Westfield) dropped to 1-2 with the loss. He allowed eight hits and two walks in four innings. He struck out two and gave up five runs, three earned. Sophomore Jon Rockfeld (Islip Terrace/East Islip) gave up only one hit in four and one-third scoreless innings out of the bullpen. He struck out five and walked three.

Western’s big inning started with back-to-back singles by Ryan Kravontka and Bobby Zoller. An error allowed Justin McGee to reach and load the bases and Jeff Maurutis followed with an RBI single. A Matt Hackney groundout plated a run and, after an intentional walk to Chris Mahoney loaded the bases, Tom Horgan singled in two runs to increase the lead to 4-0. Josh Jacobs finished the scoring with a sacrifice fly to center.

Cortland got two runs back in the bottom of the third. Shawn Ensel (Clifton Park/Shenendehowa) tripled with one out and scored on Will Groff’s (Queensbury) second triple of the game. Groff finished the game 3-for-5. Joey Russo (Inwood/Lawrence) ground out to short to score Groff. The Red Dragons added a run in the fourth as Steve Newman (Henrietta/Rush-Henrietta) reached on a two-out error, moved to second on another error and scored on an RBI single by Jimmy Basnight (East Norwich/St. Dominic). Basnight was 2-for-4 in the game.

Western threatened in the fifth as three straight singles to start the inning knocked Burnett out of the game. Rockfeld, however, struck out the next three hitters to keep the game at 5-3. Cortland had a good scoring chance slip away in the seventh. Basnight led off with a double and moved to third on a groundout, but Connelly struck out the next two batters.

In the bottom of the ninth, junior Ricky Piovesan (East Norwich/St. Dominic) reached second on a one-out error. Pinch-runner Billy Rizzo (Liverpool) moved to third on a groundout and Ensel was hit by a pitch. Zach Tacelli (Latham/Shaker) ran for Ensel and stole second. Groff reached on an error that allowed Rizzo to score and Tacelli to go to third. Anderson entered the game and, on his first pitch, retired pinch-hitter Johnny Giametta Jr. (Marlboro) on a hard liner to left to end the game.

Maurutis was 3-for-5 and Hackney and Horgan each had two hits for the Golden Bears.

**Western New England 5, Cortland 4**

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Western New England (1-0); Jason Connelly (W, 1-0), Chris Anderson (9) (Save, 1) and Matt Hackney Cortland (8-3); Mike Burnett (L, 1-2), Jon Rockfeld (5), Nick Wilson (9) and Shawn Ensel

3B - Will Groff (C), 2B - Pat D’Auria (C), Jimmy Basnight (C)