PORT CHARLOTTE, FLA. – Senior Zach Tacelli (Latham/Shaker) singled in the winning run with one out in the bottom of the ninth inning to lead the nationally-second ranked Cortland baseball team to a 9-8 victory over fifth-ranked Rowan Thursday afternoon. Tacelli finished 3-for-4 with three RBI for the Red Dragons, who improved to 7-3 on the season. The Profs fell to 9-2 with the loss.

Cortland opened up a 1-0 lead in the bottom off the first on senior Andrew Mead’s (Baldwinsville/C.W. Baker) sacrifice fly to deep center field. After Rowan plated two runs in the top of the second off Cortland junior starter Jimmy Dougher (Liverpool), the Red Dragons tied the score in the home half of the inning when Tacelli scored on a double-play groundout.

The Profs took a 4-2 lead with a pair of runs in the seventh inning and held the lead until the bottom of the eighth when Cortland scored five times. Junior Will Groff (Queensbury) started the rally with a one-out single. After senior Jim Basnight (East Norwich/St. Dominic) drew a walk, junior Travis Robinson (Ilion) singled to right field to bring home Groff. Robinson stole second and an intentional walk to Mead loaded the bases. Senior Ricky Piovesan (East Norwich/St. Dominic) tied the game at 4-4 with a sacrifice fly. Tacelli followed with a two-run single and sophomore Matt Vitalone (Rome/Rome Free Academy) capped the inning with an RBI double.

Rowan responded with four runs in the top of the ninth to take an 8-7 lead. Freshman George Jweid (New Hartford) eventually ended the Profs’ big inning with a strikeout. In the home half of the ninth, Groff drew a walk and stole second. Basnight worked a walk and Robinson moved both base runners up with a sacrifice bunt. Mead was then intentionally walked for the second time in the game to load the bases. Piovesan tied the game with a walk setting up Tacelli’s big base hit to left field to end the game.

Groff was 2-for-4 with two stolen bases and three runs, Robinson went 2-for-4 with two steals and an RBI and Piovesan drove in two runs. Dougher worked seven innings, allowing four runs, three earned, on 11 hits with one walk and six strikeouts. Jweid earned the win with his third of an inning of work.

**Cortland 9, Rowan (N.J.) 8**

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One out when winning run scored

Rowan: Joe Cichy, Gary Winkler (8), Bobby Fox (8), Tyler Dempsey (9) (L) and Paul Urbanovich (Profs: 9-2, ranked 5th in Div. III)
Cortland: Jimmy Dougher, Justin Mattes (8), George Jweid (9) (W, 1-0) and Shawn Ensel (Red Dragons: 7-3, ranked 2nd in Div. III)

2B – Matt Vitalone (C)